

Candidate Flip-Flop or Evolution?

Objective:

Students will analyze and evaluate candidate position changes.

Students will:

- develop critical thinking skills
 - analyze personal opinions
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Resources/Materials:

- 2020election.procon.org
 - internet access
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Preparation:

- Teachers should identify topics with position changes from candidates. A summary chart may be found [here](#). Students can also examine position changes for the 2016 presidential candidates [here](#).
 - This assignment may be completed in writing or as an oral presentation.
 - Teachers may want to give background on the idea of a flip-flop or an evolution in thought. President Barack Obama stated that his position on gay marriage had evolved over time to eventually support same-sex marriages. However, Mitt Romney's position changes in the 2012 election against incumbent Obama were described as flip-flops by the media.
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Activity:

1. Assign a candidate (or allow students to pick) and a specific position change. For example, Joe Biden has changed his position on the US/Mexico border wall.
2. Students should analyze the position change and determine whether they believe the change to be a flip-flop, evolution, or another type of change. Have students think about whether there is any implied judgment in noting that a candidate's position on an issue has changed.

3. Students should include and analyze whether they favor one of the positions, and whether their personal opinions influence whether they believe the candidate has evolved or flip-flopped.
 4. Students may also consider outside forces for the candidate's position change: party platforms, the topic being in the news, an evolution of opinion in society in general, etc.
 5. Have students discuss why a candidate such as Bernie Sanders does not have any position changes.
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Evaluation:

1. Quality of writing or oral presentation
2. Analysis of position change
3. Analysis of personal opinion