

Obama Wins Presidency
NewsDepth November 6, 2008
Classroom Activities



<http://www.time.com/time/photogallery>

Overview:

History was made on Tuesday when Barack Obama won the Presidential Election, making him the first ever African American President. He decisively defeated John McCain 349 Electoral College votes to 162, as of November 6, 2008. Obama said, upon learning of his victory, "Because of what we did on this day, in this election, at this defining moment, change has come to America." His message of change and unity resonated across party lines and helped propel him to his convincing and historic win. He also drew strong cheers and silent tears as he declared at the beginning of his acceptance speech, "If there is anyone out there who still doubts that America is a place where all things are possible, who still wonders if the dream of our founders is alive in our time, who still questions the power of our democracy, tonight is your answer."

Subject Matter: Social Studies and Language Arts

Grade level: 4-5

Standards Met:

Students will determine ways in which citizens promote common good and influence government including voting.

Students will use maps to identify the location of major physical and human features.

Students will determine a purpose and audience for writing and vary language and style as appropriate to audience and purpose.

Classroom Activities:

1. **Activity #1** Discussion about the Presidential Election (10-15 minutes)

- Barack Obama will be our next President as a result of the election on Tuesday. His victory was considered convincing and historic. Why was it considered historic? Why do you think it was so convincing? Share with your students this fun CNN video showing how the Ron Clark Academy in Atlanta "rock the election" and their reactions to these questions:

<http://www.cnn.com/video/#/video/politics/2008/11/05/ec.brown.ron.clark.school.cnn>

- Barack Obama used three words throughout his campaign that people began to chant over and over again. What were those words? YES WE CAN. What did he mean? YES WE CAN what? What is it he thinks we can do with him as President?
- The New York Times website has a video and a script of Obama's acceptance speech. If time permits, you can watch highlights of his speech in which he answers those questions.
<http://elections.nytimes.com/2008/results/president/speeches/obama-victory-speech.html#>

2. Activity #2 What is Your Dream? (20-30 minutes)

- Barack Obama drew strong cheers and silent tears as he declared at the beginning of his acceptance speech, "If there is anyone out there who still doubts that America is a place where all things are possible, who still wonders if the dream of our founders is alive in our time, who still questions the power of our democracy, tonight is your answer."
- As all of you know, it takes a lot of hard work, determination, and persistence to make our dreams come true. We need to set goals for ourselves, and go about doing our best to achieve these goals. Take a few minutes and think about one long term goal that you have set for yourself. Write a paragraph telling us about that goal and what you think you need to do to accomplish it. Share their answers.

3. Activity #3 Famous Firsts Internet Scavenger Hunt (30 Minutes)

- Have students select a partner or assign students to a small group depending on how many computers you have
- Find the answers to the scavenger hunt handout (first one finished wins a prize; most correct answers wins a prize)
- **Answers:** 1. George Washington 2. John Quincy Adams 3. Thomas Jefferson 4. Andrew Jackson 5. Richard Nixon 6. John Tyler 7. Abraham Lincoln 8. John Adams 9. James Buchanan 10. Benjamin Harrison
- As an alternative or additional activity, have students come up with their own Presidential firsts. Here are some resource sites:
<http://www.pocanticohills.org/presidents/firsts.htm>
<http://www.funtrivia.com/en/World/Presidential-Firsts-13746.html>
<http://www2.scholastic.com/browse/article.jsp?id=4665>

4. Activity #4 Going to College with the Election (15-20 minutes)

- Even though the popular voting for the president has been completed, Barack Obama still has to be elected by a very important college. What college will elect him as our next president?
- When and how will this happen?
"On the Monday following the second Wednesday of December, by federal law, each state's electors meet in their respective capitals and cast their votes, one for president and one for vice president. These electoral votes are sealed and transmitted from each state to the president of the Senate, who, on the following January 6, opens and reads them before both houses of

Congress. The candidate for president who has attained the majority of electoral votes (270) is then declared the president.”

<http://www.cnn.com/2008/LIVING/studentnews/07/22/one.sheet.electoral.college/>

- In this election, Obama “turned several red states blue”. What does that mean? Visit <http://www.270towin.com/> to see the colors of all of the United States as a result of the election. What color is Ohio?

5. Activity #5 A Letter to Malia (assignment)

- Malia and Sasha are President Elect Barack Obama’s two daughters. What did their parents promise them they could have right after the election? You are right, a new puppy. The puppy will be an adopted rescue dog, and the girls are very excited. Malia, the oldest daughter, is 10 – just about your age. As a prewriting activity, ask students to respond to this question: If you had one hour to talk to Malia, what would you talk about? Then make this overnight assignment: Using proper letter form, write Malia a two paragraph letter. You can tell her anything you want to about yourself, but you need to come up with 2 questions you would like to ask her.
- Give the students one night to write the letter. They are to ask for assistance from their parents or a family member. Have them share the letters when they return to class the next day, or post them somewhere in the room.

Presidential Firsts Scavenger Hunt



1. Who was the first president of the United States?

2. Who was the first son of a President to become a President?

3. Who was the first President to serve eight full years?

4. Who was the first President born in a log cabin?

5. Who was the first President to resign from office?

6. Who was the first President born in the US?

7. Who was the first President to be assassinated?

8. Who was the first President to live in the White House?

9. Who was the first President to be a bachelor?

10. Who was the first President to have electric lights in the White House?

Bonus Question:

*Who will become the first African American President?
