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This lesson provided by:

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System: Tuscaloosa County

School: Hillcrest High School

Lesson Plan ID: 29880

Title: The Impact of Political Debates in the Television Age

Overview/Annotation: This technology-based lesson encourages active engagement in the state elections process as part of a unit to prepare for debates to be held in the Fall of 2010. The lesson may also be adapted for use as a stand alone lesson. Student groups research television debates from 1960-2008 and collaborate on a wiki to present an overview of each debate and analyze the impact of these political debates on elections.

Other lessons in this unit are Why Vote?, How Do You Vote:What Do You Need to Know to Vote in Alabama?, and Analyzing Gubernatorial Debates: The 2010 Election.

Content Standard(s):	SS(7) Citizenship	9. Identify individual and civic responsibilities of citizens of the United States.
	SS(7) Citizenship	12. Explain how the United States can be improved by individual and collective participation and by public service.
	SS(12) United States Government	6. Describe the development and functions of special interest groups.
	SS(12) United States Government	7. Trace the development and impact of the media on the political process and public opinion in the United States.
	SS(12) United States Government	8. Identify roles political parties play in the functioning of the political system of the United States.
	SS(12) United States Government	10. Identify constitutional provisions of the executive branch of the government of the United States.
	TC2(9-12) Computer Applications	3. Demonstrate advanced technology skills, including compressing, converting, importing, exporting, and backing up files.
	TC2(9-12) Computer Applications	10. Analyze capabilities and limitations of current and emerging technologies.
	TC2(9-12) Computer Applications	12. Use digital tools to publish curriculum-related content.
	TC2(9-12) Computer Applications	13. Demonstrate collaborative skills using curriculum-related content in digital environments.

Local/National Standards: NCSS Standards

Theme X: Civic Ideals and Practices
 Social studies programs should include experiences that provide for the study of the ideals, principles, and practices of citizenship in a democratic republic.

- Middle School - By the middle grades, students expand their ability to analyze and evaluate the relationships between ideals and practice. They are able to see themselves taking civic roles in their communities.
- High School - High school students increasingly recognize the rights and responsibilities of citizens in identifying societal needs setting directions for public policies, and working to support both individual dignity and the common good. They learn by experience how to participate in community service and political activities and how to use democratic process to influence public policy.

Primary Learning Objective(s): Students will analyze the impact of televised debates on the selection of candidates and the election process.

Students will collaboratively utilize a wiki to document their research and analysis of televised political debates.

Additional Learning Objective(s): Students will work collaboratively utilizing a wiki and will become proficient in utilizing technology for problem-solving.

Approximate Duration of the Lesson: Greater than 120 Minutes

Materials and Equipment: The Debates Web Quest will need to either be copied or added to the wiki for students to use in their research. Students will need access to suggested resource materials such as, but not limited to those listed below.

Technology Resources Needed: Teachers and students will need access to the Internet through laptops/computers.

Teachers should be familiarize themselves with wikis if they are not already familiar with their

construction and use.

Web Sites for Teachers

[The History of Presidential Debates: Before Television](#) - From PBS

[Presidential Debate History](#) - From AllPolitics

[Televised Debate History](#) - Museum of TV

Web Sites for Students

Much of the research material ends with the 2000 election. The 2004 and 2008 materials are there to aid groups assigned those debates.

[C-Span's Election Debates Page - 2004 Election](#)

[2008 Election Debates Page - ProCon](#)

[2008 Presidential Candidates Debate C-Span](#)

[Televised Debate History](#) - Museum of TV

General tips on embedding C-Span video and clips to the wiki in case some students wish to do so.

[C-Span Video Library - How to Clip and Embed C-Span Video](#)

On the influence of presidential debates;

[Presidential Debates Rarely Game-Changers](#)

[Can Winning Debates Affect the Election Outcome?](#)

[Presidential Debates, Who Wins?](#)

Technology has altered the impact of debates. Links below:

[Technology and the Presidential Debate](#)

[How Will Technology Influence the 2008 Presidential Election?](#)

[Social Media Will Influence the Next Presidential Campaign. Or Will They?](#)

Pre-debate suggestions:

[Debate 101: How to Watch a Debate](#)

Debate History

[The History of Political Debate](#)

Background/Preparation:

Teachers will need to construct the wiki prior to beginning the lesson. Two potential wiki platforms are ([Wikispaces](#) or [PBwiki](#)). Wikispaces will allow teachers to set up ad-free wikis at no cost. If choosing protected settings that allow only students in the group to edit the pages, teachers will need to obtain email addresses from students and send them an invitation to join the wiki. Students will need to accept the invitation and follow instructions in their email to join. One suggestion - have students type in their own address into your wiki invitation - it keeps the mistakes due to legibility issues to a minimum.

Teachers should instruct students on the early history of debates since this lesson's emphasis is on televised debates. Two sites that provide a good summary of this content are [The History of Presidential Debates: Before Television](#) - From PBS and [Presidential Debate History](#) - From AllPolitics.

Procedures/Activities:

Begin the lesson with a brief introduction to the history of political debate. Formal debate has been a part of our political process only a short while. For much of our history, there was little in the way of campaigning directly to the people. In fact, direct campaigning was discouraged. It was definitely not "politics as usual." Campaigning was "unseemly" and was left to written forms of communication with the public. Newspapers were controlled by political parties and many were used to further the ambitions of the party and particular candidates. Debate was mostly limited to the floor of Congress. The most famous of the pre-electronic debate era was the debate between Abraham Lincoln and Stephen Douglas in 1858. Douglas only agreed to debate because Lincoln followed him to his speaking engagements and made comments from the audience. The series of debates between the two candidates were serious and issue oriented. Because Lincoln and Douglas were running for the U.S. Senate, those watching the debates were there out of interest only, because senators were still being elected by the legislatures.

A couple of good resources for the early history of political debates are:

[The History of Presidential Debates: Before Television](#) and [Presidential Debate History](#).

Since this lesson emphasizes the television debates, the teacher should provide the background

on this topic.

At this point in the lesson assign the web quest. Note: This can be placed on the wiki for Internet access to the assignment or it can be copied and distributed to the students. If copied, the teacher will need to provide the addresses for the links since they are embedded on the page. Some or all of the questions may be addressed on the wiki by students either on their page or in the discussion section of the class wiki.

Next assign student groups to work on a particular election's debate. Students will research their assigned debate and create a PowerPoint to upload to the wiki and present to the class. Have students address the question of their debate's impact on the election and on electoral politics in general on the wiki. This can be done on their wiki page or in the discussion section of the class wiki or both. A rubric for assessing the wiki and PowerPoint is attached above.

It should be expected that it will take one to two class sessions to do the web quest and another week of in or out of class time to complete the wiki work and presentation.

Attachments:**Some files will display in a new window. Others will prompt you to download. [PowerPoint-WikiPresentationRubric.doc](#)
[DebateHistoryWebQuest.doc](#)

Assessment Strategies: Assessments include the web quest handout, wiki work participation- PowerPoint presentations.

Extension: Students who are best able to utilize the technological resources may be grouped with those less so. Utilize the expertise in the classroom.

Remediation: Students who are less able may be paired with those who are more adept with the technology.

Each area below is a direct link to general teaching strategies/classroom accommodations for students with identified learning and/or behavior problems such as: reading or math performance below grade level; test or classroom assignments/quizzes at a failing level; failure to complete assignments independently; difficulty with short-term memory, abstract concepts, staying on task, or following directions; poor peer interaction or temper tantrums, and other learning or behavior problems.

[Presentation of Material](#)

[Environment](#)

[Time Demands](#)

[Materials](#)

[Attention](#)

[Using Groups and Peers](#)

[Assisting the Reluctant Starter](#)

[Dealing with Inappropriate Behavior](#)

Be sure to check the student's IEP for specific accommodations.

**Variations Submitted by
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Alabama Virtual
Library



Hosted by Alabama
Supercomputer Authority



The University of Alabama at
Birmingham



The Malone Family Foundation



Thinkfinity



2007 - 2009 Digital Education
Achievement Award

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