

Election 2008

A New President



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The Candidates

Because of the power and influence of the United States, the president, as our leader, has one of the most important roles in the world. Although the president is the head of just one of the three branches of government, the president—with the exception of the vice president—is the only official elected by the entire nation. As a result, the president stands as a symbol not only of the federal government, but of the entire country as well.

The Constitution lists rules about who can become president of the United States. By law, anyone who meets these qualifications is eligible.



Qualifications for U.S. President

- ✓ natural-born citizen
- ✓ at least 35 years of age
- ✓ a resident of the U.S. for at least 14 years



As you read about the different political candidates, what other qualities or characteristics do you think a president should have?

Notable Candidates in History

1789

1796

1828

1844

1872

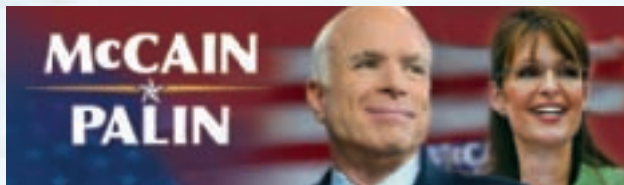
George Washington runs unopposed for election as president.

Presidential candidates representing two rival political parties compete for the first time: Federalist John Adams and Democratic-Republican Thomas Jefferson.

Andrew Jackson and John Quincy Adams exchange personal attacks in the first true “mud-slinging” campaign.

Democrat James K. Polk is the first “dark horse,” or unexpected candidate, to win the presidency.

Equal Rights Party nominates the first woman, Victoria Woodhull, to run for president and the first African American, Frederick Douglass, as vice president.



John McCain

Present position:
U.S. senator from Arizona

Born: August 29, 1936;
Panama Canal Zone

Lives in: Phoenix, Arizona

Education:
U.S. Naval Academy, B.S., 1958
National War College, 1974

John McCain comes from a distinguished military family. His father and grandfather were U.S. Navy admirals. McCain served as a naval pilot in the Vietnam War. His plane was shot down, and he was held prisoner by Vietnamese Communists for five years. After his release, McCain was honored as a war hero. Leaving the Navy, McCain was elected as a U.S. representative to Congress from Arizona in 1982. Four years later, he won election as a U.S. senator from Arizona. He is serving his fourth term in the Senate.

Sarah Palin

Present position:
Governor of Alaska

Born: February 11, 1964;
Sandpoint, Idaho

Lives in: Wasilla, Alaska

Education:
University of Idaho, B.S., 1987

Raised in Alaska, Sarah Palin worked as a sports reporter for local television and newspapers. In the 1990s, she served on the Wasilla, Alaska, city council and was elected the city's mayor in 1996. She later served as chairperson of the Alaska Oil and Gas Conservation Commission. In 2006 Palin was elected governor of Alaska, the first woman to hold the post. She became known for her efforts to fight corruption in Alaskan politics.

Barack Obama

Present position:
U.S. senator from Illinois

Born: August 4, 1961;
Honolulu, Hawaii

Lives in: Chicago, Illinois

Education:
Columbia University, B.A., 1983
Harvard University Law School, J.D., 1991

Of multiethnic background, Barack Obama was born in Hawaii to a white American mother from Kansas and a black father from Kenya, East Africa. After his parents divorced and his father returned to Africa, Obama stayed with his mother and was raised in Indonesia and Hawaii. Completing his higher education, Obama worked as a civil rights lawyer and taught law at the University of Chicago. In 1996 Obama was elected to the Illinois Senate and then to the U.S. Senate in 2004.

Joseph Biden

Present position:
U.S. senator from Delaware

Born: November 20, 1942;
Scranton, Pennsylvania

Lives in: Wilmington, Delaware

Education:
University of Delaware, B.A., 1965
Syracuse University, J.D., 1968

Born to a working-class family, Joseph Biden was raised in the suburbs of Wilmington, Delaware. After serving in local politics, Biden was elected to the Senate from Delaware at age 29. Through six terms in the Senate, Biden has become a skilled legislator. Having served on the Senate Judiciary and Foreign Relations Committees, Biden is known as an expert on issues related to foreign affairs, national security, drug policy, and crime.

1928



Al Smith of New York is the first Roman Catholic to gain a major party's nomination for president.

1964



Senator Margaret Chase Smith (R-Maine) becomes the first woman to seek a major party's nomination for president.

1972



Shirley Chisholm (D-New York) is the first African American woman to seek a major party's presidential nomination.

1984



Democrat Geraldine Ferraro is the first woman nominated for the vice presidency by a major party.

2000



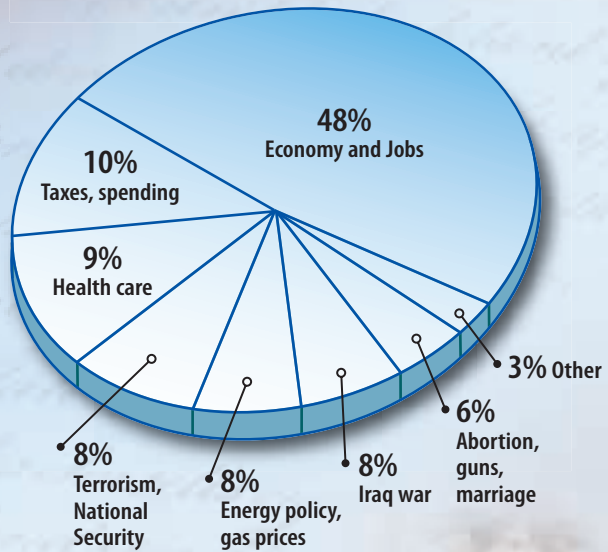
Connecticut senator Joseph Lieberman becomes the first Jewish American to run on a national ticket.

2008



Barack Obama becomes the first African American to be elected president.

The Issues



A host of issues—the economy, health care, and the Iraq war, for example—grabbed the attention of voters in the 2008 presidential race. When asked what issue was the most important in determining their vote for president, here is how registered voters responded one month before the election.

VOTERS AND THE ISSUES

Source: *Newsweek* Poll conducted by Princeton Survey Research Associates International. Oct. 8-9, 2008

How the Candidates Voted

McCain's and Obama's voting records on selected issues, 2005-2008

	★ McCain	★ Obama
Trade		
Pass Central America Free Trade Agreement (2005)	Y	N
Economy and Jobs		
Increase minimum wage to \$7.25 per hour (2007)	Y	Y
Pass \$700 billion financial rescue package (2008)	Y	Y
Education		
Provide \$52 million for community learning centers (2005)	N	Y
Shift \$11 billion from corporate tax loopholes to education (2005)	N	Y
Immigration		
Allow illegal aliens to take part in Social Security (2006)	Y	Y
Begin comprehensive immigration reform (2007)	Y	Y
Declare English as the official language of the U.S. (2007)	Y	N
War on Terror		
Restrict business with foreign countries with links to terrorism (2005)	N	Y
Allow a phased withdrawal of troops from Iraq (2006)	N	Y
Reauthorize the Patriot Act (2006)	Y	Y
Preserve habeas corpus for Guantanamo detainees (2006)	N	Y
Redeploy non-essential U.S. troops out of Iraq in 9 months (2007)	N	Y

Where the Candidates Stand

REPUBLICAN



Economy and Taxes

- ★ Lobbyists' influence blamed for financial crisis; favors greater government oversight
- ★ End taxes on unemployment benefits
- ★ Cut capital gains tax to raise incentive to save and invest
- ★ Treasury Department to guarantee 100 percent of savings for 6 months
- ★ Lower tax rates on retirement savings plans
- ★ Increase tax deductions for people selling stock at a loss

Energy

- ★ No taxes on windfall profits
- ★ No drilling in the Arctic, but support for offshore drilling
- ★ No ethanol subsidies
- ★ Expand nuclear power

Health Care

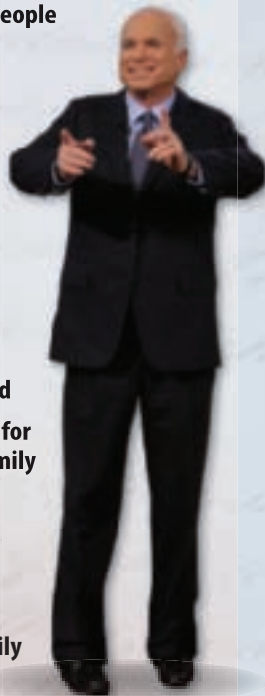
- ★ Free-market, consumer-based
- ★ \$5,000 refundable tax credit for health insurance to every family

Education

- ★ Federal government should play a limited role in public education; education primarily a state and local concern
- ★ Keep No Child Left Behind Act's emphasis on standards and achievement; focus on individual achievement rather than group averages

Foreign Policy

- ★ Iraq—early and continuing supporter of war; favors troop increase; against timetable for troop withdrawal but projects all troops home by 2013
- ★ Iran—use economic and diplomatic pressure, work closely with European allies
- ★ Trade—honor NAFTA and other agreements; international reduction of trade barriers



DEMOCRAT



Economy and Taxes

- ★ Federal rollback of regulations blamed for financial crisis; calls for greater government oversight
- ★ Tax breaks for businesses that create new jobs
- ★ Penalty-free withdrawals allowed from retirement savings
- ★ A 90-day reprieve for homeowners facing foreclosures
- ★ Suspend unemployment taxes and extend benefits
- ★ Federal lending agency to help financially-ailing cities and states

Energy

- ★ Tax windfall profits
- ★ No drilling in the Arctic and offshore
- ★ Provide ethanol subsidies
- ★ No support for nuclear power

Health Care

- ★ No requirements on small businesses
- ★ Reform of Medicare and Medicaid to reduce fraud

Education

- ★ Federal spending of \$18 billion a year on early childhood classes, teacher recruitment, and other initiatives
- ★ Rewrite No Child Left Behind Act; keep emphasis on standards and accountability but offer aid to high-need schools

Foreign Policy

- ★ Iraq—early opponent of war; opposes troop increase; withdraw 1 or 2 brigades a month to finish within 16 months
- ★ Iran—use direct diplomacy; tighten economic sanctions
- ★ Trade—amend NAFTA to favor U.S. workers; end tax breaks for companies that outsource jobs



Historic Elections



The Election of 2008 is historic with the election of Barack Obama, the nation's first African American president. Read about other significant elections.

1800 **Peaceful Transfer of Power**



The election of Thomas Jefferson marked an important event in American history. At the time, the Federalists controlled the presidency and the Congress. They could have refused to step down and overthrown the Constitution. Instead, they respected the people's right to choose the president. The election of 1800 demonstrated that the power to govern could be peacefully transferred from one political party to another.

1860 **Secession and War**



Republican Abraham Lincoln won every Northern state and a clear victory in the Electoral College. Many Southerners did not trust a Republican president to protect their interests. For them, the only choice was to leave the Union. By March 1861, seven Southern states had seceded to form the Confederate States of America. With the Union split in two, the threat of civil war loomed on the horizon.



Election Milestones

1800



Peaceful Transfer of Power

1824



John Quincy Adams wins the presidency, but it requires a vote in Congress; supporters of Andrew Jackson make charges of a corrupt deal.

1840



William Henry Harrison is the first president to die in office; Vice President John Tyler assumes the presidency, establishing a precedent that later becomes law.

1860



Secession and War

1872



With the passage of the Fifteenth Amendment (1870), African American males vote for the first time in a presidential election.

1876



Reconstruction Ends

1876 Reconstruction Ends



On Election Day, Democrat Samuel Tilden had 184 electoral votes, 1 short of a majority. Republican Rutherford B. Hayes won 165 electoral votes, leaving 20 votes in dispute. When a special commission awarded all 20 disputed votes to Hayes, many people concluded that a deal had been made. The Democrats accepted Hayes as president in exchange for the removal of federal troops from the South. The era of Reconstruction was over.

1932 Government Expands



As the effects of the Great Depression worsened, Democratic candidate Franklin D. Roosevelt was elected president, promising "a new deal for the American people." Roosevelt persuaded Congress to create many new social and economic programs. When Roosevelt became president in 1933, about 600,000 people worked in the federal government. By the time he died in 1945, more than 3 million workers served in the federal government.



1960 Television Campaigns

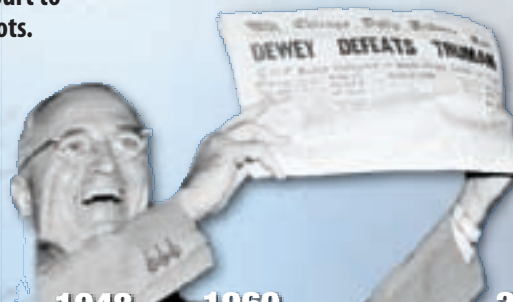
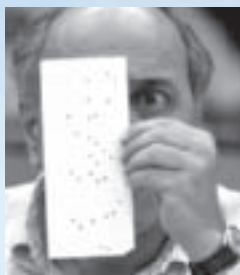


Compared to earlier campaigns, the 1960 campaign made new use of television. Both major parties spent large amounts of money on television ads. The televised presidential debates may have been the turning point in one of the closest elections in American history. Kennedy seemed relaxed and outgoing, while Nixon struck many as formal and stiff in manner.

2000 Supreme Court Resolves Election



When the polls closed, neither Democrat Al Gore nor Republican George W. Bush had the necessary 270 electoral votes to be declared the winner. Bush held a narrow lead in Florida, but a dispute arose over ballot recounts in the state. Bush asked the Supreme Court to stop a hand recount of ballots. In *Bush v. Gore*, the Court ruled the election results should stand as counted. As a result, Bush won Florida and the presidency.



1912

1920

1932

1948

1960

2000 2008

Third party candidate Theodore Roosevelt wins 27 percent of the popular vote—the highest percentage ever for a third party.

With the passage of the Nineteenth Amendment, women vote in a presidential election for the first time.

Government Expands

Harry Truman is elected in one of the most surprising upsets in political history; early polls showed Thomas Dewey, the Republican candidate, with a big lead.

Television Campaigns

Supreme Court Resolves Election

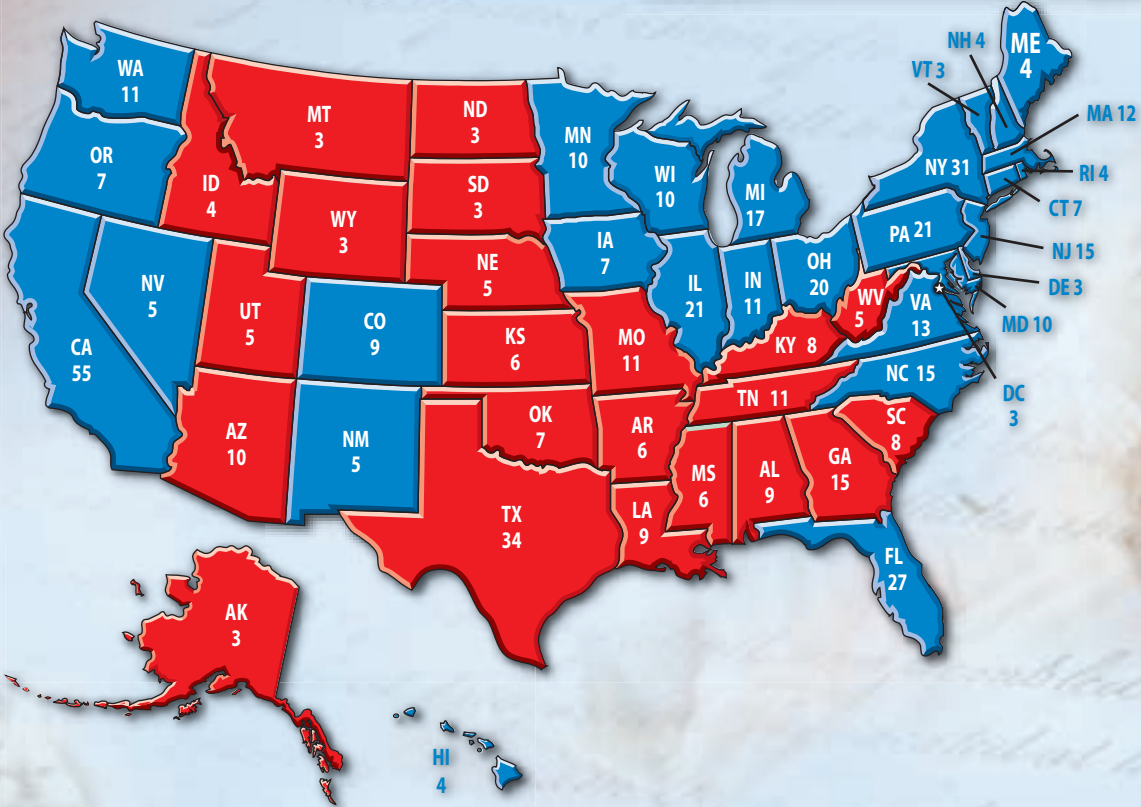
First African American President

Election 2008

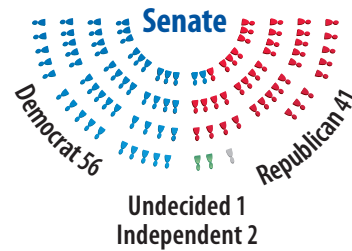
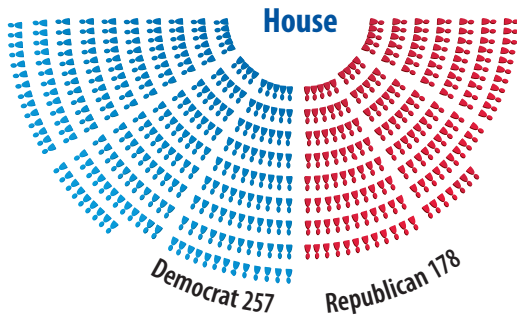
The Results

Presidential Candidate	Popular Vote	% of Popular Vote	Electoral Votes
Obama	66,882,230	53	365
McCain	58,343,671	46	173

*Numbers on map show electoral votes per state.



CONGRESSIONAL PARTY AFFILIATION*



Source: www.senate.gov, www.house.gov.
* All figures represent total number of voting members of Congress. Totals may change due to undecided races as of February 5, 2009.

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