


U.S. PRIMARIES: CHOOSING A CHALLENGER

Introduction

Focus

This *News in Review* story looks at U.S. politics as the Democratic Party chooses a challenger to run against President George W. Bush this November. It provides a brief background to the U.S. electoral system, profiles the main candidates and their chances against Bush, and surveys the key issues that are emerging in the campaign.

 Sections marked with this symbol indicate content suitable for younger viewers.

Every four years, Americans elect their president. The process is lengthy, dramatic, complex, and for those aspiring to be candidates for the job, extremely expensive. So far, the presidential election race of 2004 is proving to be no exception. While incumbent Republican President George W. Bush is assured of his party's renomination, the opposition Democrats have almost completed the important process of choosing their party's nominee to oppose him in the November general election. From a field that originally included 10 candidates just a few months ago, only two serious contenders remained in the race by early March 2004.

The initial front-runner in the race, former Vermont governor Howard Dean, who most pundits believed to have the nomination locked up in early 2004, performed very badly in the primaries and announced his withdrawal from the race on February 18. Meanwhile, Massachusetts senator John Kerry, who many observers had given almost no chance of success as 2004 began, clearly emerged as the favourite. Along with Dean, a number of other high-profile Democrats saw their candidacies crash and burn over the primary season, including Connecticut senator and 2000 vice-presidential nominee Joseph Lieberman, retired NATO general Wesley Clark, and Missouri representative Dick Gephardt. Primaries continued into March, with the all-important "Super Tuesday," where voters in 10 states, including New York, California, and Ohio marked their ballots. By then, only North Carolina senator John Edwards and two minor

candidates, African-American activist Rev. Al Sharpton and Ohio representative Dennis Kucinich, remained in the field against Kerry. After Super Tuesday, on March 2, 2004, the field had finally narrowed to one obvious choice: Senator John Kerry of Massachusetts.

To most Democrats, the major factor determining their choice of the party's nominee is "electability." Their desire to remove Bush from office is so great that they want to be sure that the person who runs against him in November will appeal across a wide spectrum of voters, crossing party lines. They know that Bush's Republicans are flush with campaign contributions. They also recognize that Bush's self-styled image as the resolute "war president" who led the struggle against international terrorism in the wake of the September 11, 2001, attacks holds a potent electoral appeal to many Americans. But they are also convinced that Bush may be vulnerable on a number of fronts. These include the difficult occupation of Iraq, the sputtering U.S. economy, and his administration's perceived extreme-right-wing stance on key social issues such as abortion, same-sex marriage, and gun control.

The primary season comes to an end in late spring. John Kerry is the clear front-runner in the race for the Democratic nomination and will likely be named as the party's candidate at the national convention in July. A month later, Republicans will meet to crown George W. Bush as their party's nominee for re-election. Around Labour Day, the official presidential race will begin, culminating in the election itself on November 2. Early opinion polls

Definition

Super Tuesday refers to the day when 10 states hold primaries, with 151 delegates to be won. In 2004, Kerry won a smashing victory and virtually sealed his party's nomination.

Quote

"You give me a chance at George Bush and I'll let get you back the White House." — John Kerry, *Toronto Star*, March 2, 2004

point to a close race between Bush and his most likely opponent, John Kerry. But much could change in a presidential

election year, and the eventual outcome of the race is unclear as of early 2004.

To Consider

1. Why is President Bush practically assured his party's nomination for president?

2. What quality do most Democrats see as vital in their selection of a candidate? Do you agree with this approach? Explain.

3. Name the main candidates who have sought the Democratic nomination. Which of them were still in the race by early March 2004?

4. Who won Super Tuesday? _____

5. What are likely to be some of the main issues in the U.S. presidential election campaign this year?

6. Do you believe Bush will be defeated? Explain.

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Elections in the U.S.

Did you know . . .

The last U.S. President to serve more than two terms was Franklin Delano Roosevelt, popularly known as FDR?

Two Countries, Two Different Political Systems

Canada and the United States are both democracies, but the two countries have very different systems of government. Here in Canada we have a parliamentary system inherited largely from Great Britain. But the United States, a country born in revolution against its British colonial rulers, established a presidential-congressional system shortly after gaining independence. In the U.S. the president is the head of state and of government, and is elected every four years. Presidential elections always take place in leap years, on the Tuesday after the first Monday in the month of November. Today, no one can serve more than two terms as president; for this reason, President George W. Bush, who was first elected in 2000, is seeking his second and final term in office.

Bush is a Republican, one of the two major political parties in the United States. The main opposition to Bush is the Democratic Party, which held the presidency for two terms under Bush's predecessor, Bill Clinton. In the Canadian parliamentary system, there is always a leader of the official opposition political party in place to challenge the prime minister and his government. But in the United States, the party that does not control the White House must choose its contender for the presidency early in an election year, to be ready to run against the incumbent in November. In addition to their presidential nominees, both parties will also choose candidates for the office of vice-president. These two run together as a team known as the "party ticket" in the November presidential election. Dick

Cheney, Bush's vice-presidential running mate in 2000, is expected to run again with him in 2004. Should anything happen to the president that would make him unable to continue in office, the vice-president would automatically succeed him.

Because Bush is a sitting, or incumbent, president and is very popular within his own Republican Party, he faces no serious opposition in his bid to head the party ticket this November. But the opposition Democrats are hoping that the candidate they eventually choose to run against Bush will be popular enough to unseat him. This is usually a difficult feat to accomplish, since in the United States incumbent presidents often hold a great political advantage over their challengers. But Bush's father, George Bush Sr., lost the presidency after only one term to the Democrats' Clinton in 1992. The Democrats are hoping to repeat such an upset this year as well.

Selecting a Candidate

The method of choosing a presidential nominee in the United States is very complicated and time-consuming. Even though the presidential election is not until November, the race among the Democratic candidates began in 2003 and reaches its peak in early 2004. Beginning in January, and continuing into the late spring, the 50 U.S. states will use different methods to allow voters to select their favourite among the various candidates for the presidential nomination. These include state primary elections, caucus meetings, and conventions. The first such test was held in the state of Iowa in January,

where voters met in local meetings or caucuses to express their preferences. In the weeks that followed, many states held primaries, or elections where voters marked their ballots in favour of one of the candidates. The purpose of the primaries and caucuses is technically to choose delegates to the party's national convention, to be held in Boston in late July. By then, it is widely expected that one of the candidates for the nomination will have won enough delegates to gain victory. A month later, the Republicans will convene in New York to renominate Bush. Only then will the official presidential election campaign begin, culminating in the all-important vote itself in early November.

Electing a President

Once the two parties have named their candidates for president and vice-president, the race for the White House will begin in earnest. The four candidates will crisscross the country to promote themselves and their policies to the voters, criticize their opponents, engage in a series of televised debates, and spend millions of dollars on election advertising, mainly on television. On November 2, 2004, Americans will go to the polls to elect their new president. But the winner will not necessarily be the person who gains the most votes overall across the country. In fact, in the 2000 election, Al Gore, the Democratic candidate and former vice-president under Bill Clinton, actually received more votes than Bush. But the victor in a U.S. presidential election is not the person who wins the most votes. Instead, he or she must carry enough individual states to gain a majority of votes in the Electoral College.

This body, established under the U.S. Constitution of 1787, is composed of "electors" from each state. Their num-

ber equals the state's total representation in the U.S. Congress. Each state is entitled to two senators, and a number of members of the House of Representatives allotted on the basis of "representation by population," or "rep. by pop." This means that large states like New York, California, Texas, Illinois, or Ohio are more important to win than relatively small ones such as Wyoming or Alaska. The Electoral College is composed of 538 members, including three from the District of Columbia, which has no representatives in Congress. The winning candidate in a presidential election must carry enough states to guarantee a majority of at least 270 votes in the Electoral College. The 2000 election between Bush and Gore was very close, and the final result was not determined for months after the voting took place. This was because the totals in the state of Florida were in dispute. The candidate who ended up winning this state would gain a majority in the Electoral College, and hence the presidency.

On December 13, 2004, just over a month after the presidential vote, each state's electors will meet in their respective capitals to cast their electoral votes for the candidate who carried their state. The results are then sent to Congress, where they are officially announced in January 2005. Only after the Electoral College has determined who the president will be can he or she be inaugurated and take the oath of office at a ceremony in Washington, D.C., on January 20, 2005. The term of office officially begins on that date.

Not Just a Presidential Election

Unlike Canadian elections, which are only federal, provincial, and municipal at any given time, Americans may find themselves voting for representatives of

all three levels of government in the same election. Besides the president, voters in some states will be electing a U.S. senator. The 100 senators serve six-year terms, but about a third of them stand for re-election every two years on a rotating basis. In addition, the 435 members of the House of Representatives will be up for re-election, as their terms only last for two years. The two political parties compete strongly to win a majority in one or both houses of Congress, since this can give them considerable political leverage, even if the opposing party holds the presidency. Currently, George W. Bush's Republicans have narrow majorities in both houses of Congress, a situation the Democrats would like to change in their favour, even if they are unsuccessful in unseating the president himself.

Americans will also be voting for officials at the state and local levels of government. Each state has a governor, who plays a role in state politics similar to that of the president at the national level, and a state legislature usually composed of two houses like the federal Congress. In addition, some cities and towns will be electing their mayors and local councils. In a few states such as California, voters may also be asked to cast ballots in favour of or against a

series of propositions, or referendum issues. All in all, Americans have quite a few choices to make on election day, and certainly have their work cut out for them.

Despite the excitement and media attention a presidential election race usually receives, overall voter turnout in the United States is far less than it is in Canada. On average, only about 50 per cent of registered voters bother to cast their ballots on election day. Registered voters only comprise about two-thirds of the total eligible adult voting population. By contrast, in Canada the turnout of voters in a federal election usually exceeds 70 per cent, and in crucial votes such as the Quebec sovereignty referendum of 1995, it can even reach 90 per cent. Generally, the poor and racial minority groups do not bother to vote in U.S. elections. Some believe that this is because they tend to be marginal to U.S. society and do not see the issues of concern to them being addressed by the two main political parties there. In Canada, on the other hand, there is a multiparty system where a number of political parties with divergent views on important issues compete for voters' support in federal elections.

Activities

1. Form groups and make a list of what you think are the major similarities and differences between the Canadian and U.S. political systems. Which system do you think is more effective and democratic? Why?
2. Why do you think the founding fathers of the United States established the Electoral College as a way of electing a president? Can you see any problems with this system? Do you think it should be changed? Why or why not?

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Main Issues in the 2004 Race

In every U.S. presidential election, a few key issues usually emerge to dominate the campaign and clearly distinguish the policies of the competing candidates. In 2004, the main issues are shaping up to be the war and occupation of Iraq, national security and the war on terrorism, the state of the U.S. economy, and the growing social and cultural divide in U.S. society.

The War and Occupation of Iraq

President Bush proudly boasts that the Anglo-American invasion of Iraq in early 2003, and the subsequent military occupation have been a resounding success. In his view, the toppling and capturing of former Iraqi dictator Saddam Hussein and the first steps toward the establishment of a democratic regime in that country have been positive for Iraq itself, for the Middle East region in general, and for the United States' role in the world. Bush has committed himself to withdrawing U.S. troops from Iraq by the end of June 2004, well before the presidential election is held. He hopes that by then some kind of interim Iraqi government will be in place, and U.S. forces will no longer be required to ensure stability and law and order there.

Bush's opponents in the Democratic Party take a very different view of the war and the occupation. They accuse him of having led the nation into war under false pretences. No evidence of the weapons of mass destruction he originally claimed posed such a grave threat to the security of the United States has been found. They also charge Bush with having damaged the United States' relations with the global com-

munity, and especially with the United Nations, by invading Iraq without broad international backing, and causing friction with a number of key allies, such as France, Germany, and Canada, all of whom opposed the invasion. Democrats believe that the continuing loss of American lives in Iraq, coupled with the rapidly escalating financial cost of the occupation, may turn public opinion against Bush.

National Security and the War on Terrorism

In the wake of the September 11, 2001, terrorist attacks on New York and Washington, the Bush administration launched a war on international terrorism and passed laws tightening up homeland security in the United States itself. Bush claims that the war on terrorism has led to some major successes so far, especially in Afghanistan and Iraq. At the same time he argues that it must be continued until all of the U.S.'s enemies abroad have been crushed once and for all. His administration also believes that measures such as the Homeland Security and U.S. Patriot Acts, which some argue are restrictive, heavy-handed, and possibly even unconstitutional, are in fact necessary when the country is in a state of war and facing a possible repeat of the terrible September 11 events.

While Democrats acknowledge that the war on terrorism must be pursued, and that the hunt for Al Qaeda leaders such as Osama bin Laden should be continued, they question some aspects of Bush's national security policy. They note that since September 11 there have been no further terrorist acts committed

Definition

When discussing negotiations *multilateral* means many-sided. *Unilateral* means one-sided and *bilateral* means between two sides.

in the United States. World opinion, once so sympathetic to the U.S. after that date, has largely turned against the country because of its perceived unilateral, aggressive, and short-sighted approach to conducting the anti-terrorist struggle. They think that instead of targeting specific countries, it would be more effective to work multilaterally with allies and the United Nations to share intelligence in the war on terrorism. They also believe that the U.S. should use its influence to seek a solution to difficult global conflicts that spawn terrorism, such as the ongoing dispute between Israel and the Palestinians. Despite their differences with Bush over the issues of national security and the anti-terrorist war, Democrats have to be very careful not to appear to be “soft” on them and have Americans interpret their criticisms as unpatriotic, or even treasonous.

The U.S. Economy

The U.S. economy showed signs of both strength and weakness in early 2004. Economic growth is high, and unemployment and inflation are relatively low. The much-anticipated recession following September 11, 2001, did not last long. President Bush claims that his economic policies like tax cuts and encouragement of business have stimulated the economy by giving the average American consumer more purchasing power. Bush’s economic policies are guided by his firm belief that outside of national security and defence, government should play only a limited role in the lives of Americans. So far, he and his advisors have been careful not to neglect economic issues in their focus on the anti-terrorist struggle. They are well aware of George Bush Sr.’s experience. Confident of a re-election victory following his tri-

umph in the Persian Gulf War of 1991, he did not concern himself with the recession that followed it. His Democratic opponent, Bill Clinton, using the slogan “It’s the economy, stupid,” scored points by attacking Bush Sr.’s inability to address economic issues of concern to ordinary Americans. He rode the issue all the way to the White House in 1992.

Bush’s Democratic opponents have made the state of the U.S. economy a central issue in their attacks on his policies. They charge that his tax cuts favour the wealthy at the expense of middle-class and low-income Americans. His promotion of global free trade has cost millions of jobs at home. They also claim that the large federal budget deficits the Bush administration is running up, thanks to his tax cuts and massive increases in defence and national security-related spending, will eventually pose a serious economic problem for the country. Many areas of the United States, including the once-industrialized Northeast and Midwest, have seen serious declines in traditional areas of manufacturing employment. Some Democratic candidates have blamed the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA), which came into effect in 1994, for these job losses. If most Americans believe President Bush’s boast that the economy is generally healthy, and likely to remain so, they may give him another term in office. But if their concerns about some of the weaknesses in the country’s overall economic performance and prospects grow, he may be in serious trouble.

The Great Divide in American Society

The United States is a nation that is deeply divided on a number of social

and cultural issues. This divide is clearly evident on such questions as same-sex marriage, capital punishment, abortion, the decriminalization of marijuana, and the role of religion in the nation's public life. Bush's supporters tend to come from a group in U.S. society known as social conservatives. These people generally uphold traditional notions of the family, as well as harbouring deeply religious views that shape their opinions on a wide range of issues. While they are mainly concentrated in the southern and mid-western states, there are significant concentrations of social conservatives throughout the country. Mobilized through their local churches and organizations promoting a conservative position on social issues, they are a potent electoral force whose beliefs on these matters motivate them to vote for candidates whose policies reflect their views. Bush is aware of this, and his outspoken opposition to same-sex marriage, abortion, and more liberalized drug laws are well received by social conservative voters.

Conversely, many of Bush's opponents, who tend to favour the Democrats, take a more liberal view of such questions, and also believe that religion should be a private matter, playing no significant role in the nation's political life. American liberals fear the influence of what is termed the conservative "religious right" on their country's public policies, especially on such issues as abortion and greater equality for gays and lesbians. They frequently look to Canada as a model of what they believe to be enlightened public policies on these matters, in addition to admiring our country's opposition to the war in Iraq, and our system of universal, free medical care. On the other hand, social conservatives warn that the United States should avoid the Canadian example at all costs. Social and cultural issues play a much greater role in U.S. politics than they do in this country, and they may determine just how many voters on both sides of the great divide turn out to cast their ballots on election day this year.

Activities

1. Form groups to discuss the main issues that are emerging in the 2004 U.S. presidential election campaign. In your groups, decide which of them you think is most important, and how they are likely to influence the result of the election in November.
2. Organize a class debate on the main issues in the election, with each side representing the Republican and Democratic positions on them. Keen students might choose to represent Bush and John Kerry.

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Profiles of the Candidates

President George W. Bush: Republican Incumbent

“In our country, we must work for a society of prosperity and compassion, so that every citizen has a chance to work and succeed.”

George Walker Bush was born on July 6, 1946, in New Haven, Connecticut. His father, George H.W. Bush, had a long career in politics, serving as a U.S. senator, head of the Central Intelligence Agency, vice-president, and finally the country's 41st president, from 1989-93. Bush Jr., sometimes nicknamed either “Shrub” or “Dubya,” gained a BA from Yale University and an MBA from Harvard, and owned the Texas Rangers baseball team before entering politics. He was elected governor of Texas in 1994 and re-elected in 1998. After his father lost the 1992 presidential election to Democrat Bill Clinton, Bush Jr. was determined to regain the office for the family. His brother, Jeb Bush, has also pursued a political career, and is currently governor of Florida. In 2000, Bush Jr. contested the presidency against Democrat Al Gore, who was vice-president under Bill Clinton.

The election was very close, with Gore actually winning more votes than Bush across the country. The result in Florida was contested over a dispute regarding the kind of ballots that had been used, meaning that neither candidate had a majority in the Electoral College. But a few months after the election, the U.S. Supreme Court ruled in favour of the Bush campaign in the Florida vote, and he assumed the presidency in March 2001. Bush faced a major challenge to his leadership after the terrorist attacks of September 11,

2001, and responded by declaring war on international terrorism. He ordered the invasions of Afghanistan and Iraq, and has dramatically increased federal spending on national security and defence. He hopes that his record as a “war president” who has aggressively fought the terrorist threat will gain him enough support to win re-election in 2004. Immensely popular with conservatives within his own Republican Party, he faces no serious opposition to his renomination. His wife is Laura Bush, a former teacher.

John Kerry: Democratic Challenger

“An international policy where we stand alone is wrong. I will challenge George W. Bush for taking our country in the wrong direction.”

John Kerry, the junior Democratic senator from Massachusetts, was born on December 11, 1943, in Denver, Colorado. To the surprise of many, Kerry has emerged as the front-runner among the candidates seeking to win the party's nomination in the race against George W. Bush. He is a much-decorated veteran of the Vietnam War, who later spoke out against the conflict and organized anti-war veterans' protests in Washington, D.C. In 1971, testifying before the U.S. Senate Foreign Relations Committee, he pointedly asked its members, “How do you ask a man to be the last man to die for a mistake?” After pursuing a legal career, he had a brief stint in state politics before running for the U.S. Senate in 1984. He won, and was re-elected in 1990 and 2002. He is married to Teresa Heinz, heiress to the ketchup giant. Upon entering the 2004 presidential

Did you know . . .

War service has been a key element of success in U.S. presidential elections? In fact, the U.S. has elected 15 generals to the White House. The last elected war hero was Democrat John F. Kennedy.

race, he was initially not given much chance of winning. But his self-assured, low-key manner, strong positions on a number of crucial issues, and distinguished war record all appealed to Democratic voters looking for the most formidable challenger their party could put up against Bush and win control of the White House.

At many campaign rallies, Kerry has appeared with a group of fellow Vietnam veterans, whom he calls his “band of brothers,” and has used video clips of his wartime service in his television campaign advertisements. He has also received the strong endorsement of fellow Massachusetts senator Edward Kennedy, brother of John F. and Robert Kennedy. At first Kerry supported Bush’s decision to invade Iraq, but has become much more critical of the war and ongoing occupation of that country during the campaign. Kerry scored a big win in the Iowa caucuses in January 2004, and followed it up with an impressive string of primary victories that have clearly placed him in first place in the all-important delegate count. After Super Tuesday, Kerry swept the field of challengers for the Democratic nomination.

**John Edwards:
Democratic Challenger**

“We deserve a president who is close to our people, not the lobbyists in Washington, D.C. I will be a champion for regular people every day.”

John Edwards is a senator from North Carolina, and was born June 10, 1953, in Seneca, North Carolina. He grew up in a working-class family, and worked hard to gain a law degree in 1977 from the University of North Carolina. He pursued a legal career with great financial success and fame as a well-regarded trial lawyer. His wife is Elizabeth Edwards, whom he met in law

school. The couple faced a major personal tragedy when their son was killed in an automobile accident in 1996. Two years later, Edwards decided to enter politics, running in his home state as a Democrat against a popular Republican incumbent for the U.S. Senate. He won and became a strong advocate of legislation protecting patients’ rights in the privately run American medical system.

Edwards entered the 2004 presidential election because he was convinced that only a southerner like himself stood a realistic chance of ousting Bush from the White House. Edwards’ supporters note that the last three successful Democratic presidential candidates, Lyndon B. Johnson, Jimmy Carter, and Bill Clinton, have all come from the south. Edwards presents himself as a folksy, down-home populist who is in touch with the common people and will not sell himself out to vested interests. He has made his opposition to the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) a strong point in his campaign, claiming that it has cost jobs and increased poverty in the United States. As of late February, Edwards had positioned himself as the main challenger to John Kerry’s bid for the nomination, and seemed an appealing choice as a vice-presidential running mate for the Massachusetts senator should he win. After Kerry’s stunning victory on Super Tuesday, Edwards withdrew from the Democratic race.

**Howard Dean:
Former Democratic Challenger**

“This campaign is about more than issue differences. It is about something as important as our children. It’s about who we are as Americans.”

As the presidential election year dawned, most observers had virtually

Note

As of early March, there were still two minor candidates in the Democratic presidential race, the Rev. Al Sharpton, a spokesperson for African-American rights, and Ohio Representative Dennis Kucinich, whose policies include strong opposition to the war in Iraq and greater rights for American workers. Neither was given any chance of winning the party's nomination.

conceded victory in the race for the Democratic nomination to Howard Dean, former governor of Vermont. But on February 18, Dean announced to a group of dejected supporters that he was withdrawing from the race after failing to win a single primary or caucus vote. The collapse of Dean's once impressive bid for the party's nomination is one of the most dramatic stories of the presidential election race so far. Howard Dean was born in New York City to a wealthy family on November 17, 1948. He earned a medical degree from the Albert Einstein College of Medicine in 1978, and married Judith Steinberg, a fellow doctor in 1981. For the next decade, he ran a successful practice in Vermont, where he became the state's lieutenant governor in 1986. In 1991 he won election as governor, an office he held for the next 10 years. While governor, he earned a reputation for promoting socially liberal policies, such as granting benefits to same-sex couples, while at the same time following a fiscally conservative approach to state government spending.

Dean decided to enter the presidential race in 2003 because of his strong opposition to the war in Iraq, and his desire to see the Democratic Party become firmer in its stand against

Bush's foreign and domestic policies. He attracted a large and enthusiastic group of young supporters from across the country and successfully used the Internet as a means of raising large amounts of campaign contributions. Dean seemed to have the momentum to win the nomination, but when the first votes started to be counted in the state caucuses and primaries, the steam quickly went out of his campaign. After a disappointing third-place finish in Iowa, he concluded his speech to his workers with a high-pitched scream that may have done considerable damage to his political image. Regarded by some as the strongest candidate in terms of his opposition to Bush, others feared that his radical views might impair his chances of winning the White House. Upon his withdrawal from the race, his fellow candidates praised him for his commitment to the issues, his strong organization, and his contribution to making the Democrats more confident in their challenge to Bush's Republicans. For his part, Dean urged his supporters to rally around the party's nominee and work hard to defeat Bush in the election. Interestingly, Dean won one state on Super Tuesday—Vermont (his home state)—even though he had withdrawn from the Democratic race!

To Consider

In your view, what factors account most for John Kerry's success in the primaries?

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Memo to the Presidential Candidate

Further Research

To find out more about Bush and Kerry consult their official campaign Web sites at www.georgewbush.com and www.johnkerry.com.

Students should form groups and assume the role of political advisors to one of the following candidates for president of the United States: George W. Bush, Republican, or John Kerry, Democrat. They should brainstorm the candidate's image, record, voter appeal, and stand on the issues, and assess his major strengths and weaknesses. They should use this evaluation to design a successful campaign strategy for the candidate, stressing his positive qualities while also pointing out the weaknesses of his opponents. Groups should consult other sections of this *News in Review* story, including the discussion of the main issues in this year's presidential election campaign, and the candidate biographies, as sources of information for this activity.

When groups have finished brainstorming and preparing their presentations, each one should choose a spokesperson to present its campaign strategy to the rest of the class. One member of each group could also be selected to role-play one of the candidates in a debate with the other contestant for the U.S. presidency, based on the main issues in the campaign. The rest of the class could evaluate the performance of each candidate in the debate, and hold an in-class vote on who they think should become the next president of the United States.

Organizer: for Candidate _____

Themes	
Image	
Political Record	
Voter Appeal	
Policy on Key Issues	
Major Strengths	
Major Weaknesses	