

2

The 2024 presidential elections



Source: Adobe Stock/3desc

2 a

Warm-up: politics and me

Speaking

Get into small groups and talk about the following:

- » How interested are you in politics?
- » Do you follow the presidential elections in the USA once in a while? Why / why not?
- » In Austria, young people are allowed to vote at 16. Why should young people go to the polls?

2 b

The electoral campaign quiz

Lead-in

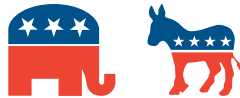
Do the following quiz to find out how much you know about the US electoral system.

1. Which two parties dominate US politics?

- Democrats and Libertarians
 Republicans and Democrats

Conservatives and Liberals

2. Which of the two main parties do these icons stand for?



elephant:

donkey:

3. How long is the term of office for a US president?

- three years four years six years

4. How many terms can a person serve as president?

- one term two terms three terms

5. Who makes the laws in the United States?

- the president
 Congress (House of Representatives and Senate)
 the Supreme Court

6. Which of these groups have never made it into the White House? (3 correct choices)

- Native Americans women
 African Americans first-generation immigrants

7. Why could Arnold Schwarzenegger not run for president?

- because English is not his mother tongue
 because no party supported him
 because he was not born in the USA

Source: Adobe Stock/eMIL

Supreme Court:
Oberster Gerichtshof

Snap Shot ✨ [O]

2 c

Speaking

Which American presidents have you heard of?

1. With a partner, look at the images and write down the names.
2. Talk about why you know these presidents and what else you have heard about them. What was / is remarkable about them?



1



2



3



4



5



6

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2 d

Vocabulary

Election vocab

You are going to watch a video clip on the US elections. Before watching, study the words in the VocabBooster. Also read the explanations on the right. Look up the words you do not know.

VocabBooster

citizens: to register to vote • to vote • to go to the polls • to cast a vote

US electoral process: primary • caucus • debates • campaigns • to nominate a candidate • to win the party's nomination / national convention • electoral campaign • elections • voting machines

Electoral College: group of 538 people who actually elect the president

inauguration: the day when the president-elect is sworn in and takes office

register: As there is no general register [*Wählerverzeichnis*], people have to register to vote.

caucus / primary: forms of pre-elections [*Vorwahlen*] to find out which candidate has most support

voting machine: In the US, you can cast your ballot using scanning / voting machines or a paper ballot.

You can also send in an absentee ballot [*Briefwahl*].

2 e

Listening

Learning how the US presidential elections work

You are going to watch a short [video clip](#). Watch for the main facts. Then, fill in the missing information in the infographic below.



Requirements:
Presidential candidates have to be



1

2

3

Step 2: The official nomination takes place at the



6

There, the candidate also chooses a candidate for

7

Step 1: Who will be a party's candidate is decided in



4

5

Step 3: the elections in November: The voters elect the _____ 8
which consists of _____ 9
electors. They elect the president. To win, a candidate needs _____ 10
electors.



The **inauguration** takes place on

11



Source: Freepik, Adobe Stock/Free Icons

2 f

Reading

Learning how the Electoral College works

Read the classroom magazine text about the Electoral College. Choose the correct question from the list (A–I) for each paragraph (1–6). There are two extra questions that you should not use. Write your answers in the spaces provided. The first one (0) has been done for you.

Who officially picks the US president?

0 ---

That honor goes to the Electoral College – a group of people called electors who represent all 50 states and Washington, D.C. They cast the official votes for president in December, about one month after Election Day. Their votes are called electoral votes.

1 ---

Americans vote on Election Day. This is known as the popular vote. But they aren't voting directly for president, even though the presidential candidates' names are on the ballot. They are voting for their state's electors – people who have pledged to support a particular candidate.

2 ---

Each state has the same number of electors as it has members in the Senate and the House of Representatives. Every state has two senators, but the number of representatives depends on a state's population. More people mean more electors – and more electoral college votes.

3 ---

There are 538 electors in the Electoral College. Each elector gets one electoral vote. A candidate needs a majority of the electoral votes cast to win in the Electoral College. That works out to at least 270. Most states use a “winner takes all” rule regarding electors: the candidate who gets the most votes from people in a state wins

all of that state's electors. In Maine and Nebraska, however, electors can be split between candidates.

4 ---

That situation is unlikely, but it has happened once before – in 1800. If it occurs, the House of Representatives would elect the president from the top three candidates.

5 ---

In 1787, the Framers of the US Constitution clashed over how the president should be chosen. Should citizens vote directly for the nation's leader? Or should Congress decide? They compromised by having states vote through the Electoral College.

6 ---

Not always. For example, in 2016, Republican Donald Trump won the presidency with 304 electoral votes, despite losing the popular vote to Democrat Hillary Clinton by about 2.9 million votes. (Experts say the “winner takes all” rule was one reason for the difference. Trump narrowly edged out Clinton in the popular vote of a few states with a high number of electors.) This situation has happened four other times in US history – prompting some Americans to advocate getting rid of the Electoral College altogether.

Framers: 55 delegates (more than half of them lawyers) debating and signing the key documents of the US and thereby framing the nation's constitution: Verfassung to pledge: to promise

to edge out: knapp / mit kleinem Vorsprung gewinnen to advocate: befürworten regarding: betreffend

- | | |
|-------------------------------------|---|
| A | Who do electors vote? |
| B | How is the Electoral College set up? |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | Who selects the president? |
| D | Which party supports the Electoral College? |
| E | Why is the election set up like this? |
| F | What happens in early November every four years? |
| G | Does the candidate who wins the popular vote always win the presidency? |
| H | What happens if neither candidate gets a majority in the Electoral College? |
| I | What else do Americans elect in November? |

0	1	2	3	4	5	6
C						

Test format
Multiple matching

Snap Shot

2 g

Speaking



Capitol: main building of US Congress (= parliament)
court case: Gerichtsverfahren

Biden vs Trump: the rematch many people are unhappy about

1. Read the info box below.
2. Get into pairs and explore what you know about the candidates. Take notes on the notepads below.
3. Go to the internet and find photographs showing the attack on the Capitol on January 6th, 2021. Describe in some detail what you see.

Donald Trump will most probably be nominated as presidential candidate by his party. He has the most support among Republican voters and, in some polls, even has the lead over Joe Biden. However, he is faced with several court cases, including one that investigates his role in the mob attack on the Capitol on January 6th, 2021. He still believes that the election of 2020 has been “stolen” although Joe Biden won the majority in the popular vote and in the Electoral College.

Joe Biden is the current president. Because of his age (81), many people think he should not run again. He previously served as vice president from 2009 to 2017 under President Barack Obama. As a senator, he was particularly outspoken on issues related to the Kosovo conflict of the late 1990s.

2 h

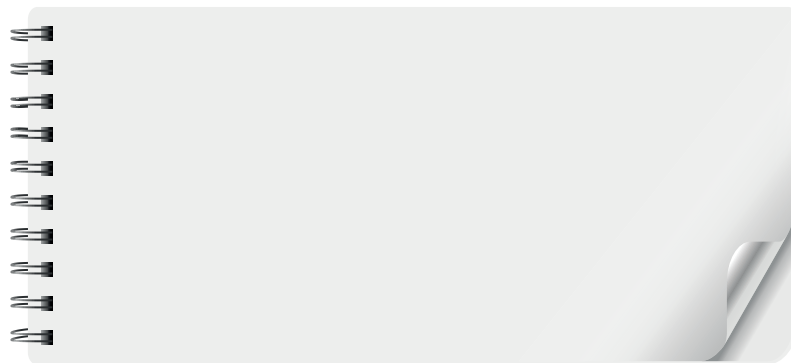
Listening



Getting to know 2024's candidates

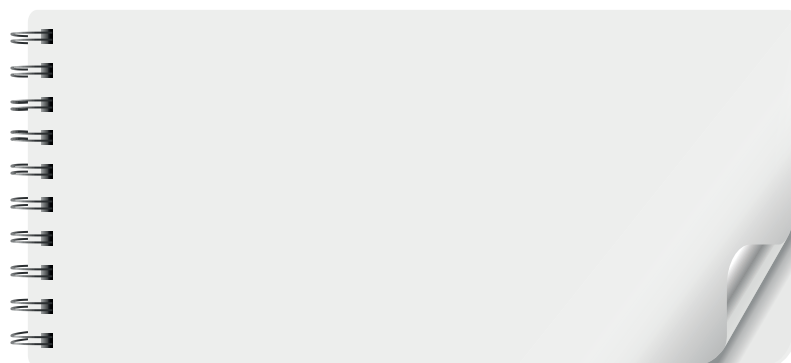
1. Watch the videos and complete your notes.
2. Then, get into pairs and discuss what makes a good president and why these two candidates would or would not make a good president.

Joe Biden (Democrats): Click [here](#) for the video clip.



Source: Wikimedia Commons/Adam Schultz (licensing: public domain)

Donald Trump (Republicans): Click [here](#) for the video clip.



Source: Wikimedia Commons/Gage Skidmore (licensing: Creative Commons Attribution 2.5 Generic)

Snap Shot

2 i

Yet another quiz on US politics

Add-on

Do the additional [interactive quiz](#) on US politics.

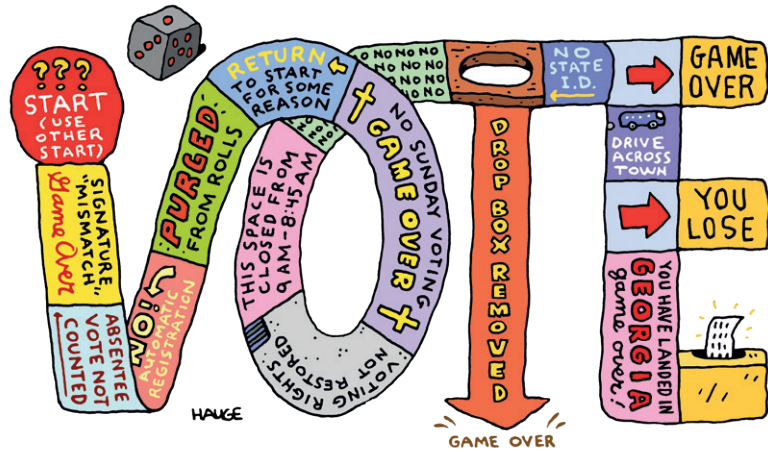


2 j

Working with a visual

Speaking

Get into pairs and look at the cartoon closely. Read all the sections carefully and check the words you do not understand. Discuss what the artist wants to tell us. Explain how our voting (registration) system is different.



Source: CartoonStock/Ron Hauge

2 k

Reading an extract from a young adult novel

Reading

In *You Say It First* by Katie Cotugno, the two protagonists – Meg and Colby – come from very different backgrounds. A voter registration call eventually triggers the start of something more.

1. Read the extract and highlight their different views on politics.
2. Get into pairs and discuss who you would agree with.
3. Speculate if a relationship between such different people has a chance.



Source: Katie Cotugno: *You Say It First* (Balzer + Bray, 2020)

undeterred:
unbeirrt



Styrofoam
carton

nope: no
shack: Hütte,
Bude

AE “That’s okay,” the girl said, sounding completely undeterred. “Is there another adult in the home I could speak with?”

He thought one more time of Keith at the station the other night: you’re eighteen, Colby. “I’m an adult,” he heard himself say.

“Great!” the girl exclaimed. “This is Meg with WeCount. Who do I have the pleasure of speaking with this evening?” Colby made a face at his reflection in the microwave. Who even talked like that? She sounded about eleven years old.

“This is Colby,” he said, opening the fridge and pulling out the Styrofoam carton of eggs and a stick of butter.

15 “Are you a registered voter, Colby?” “Uh,” Colby said again, “nope.”

“Well, that’s okay!” Meg said, in a voice like possibly he’d just told her he didn’t know how to read or wasn’t toilet-trained. “We-

20 Count is a non-partisan organization that works to empower Americans through voter registration. Voting is an essential way to defend our democracy and build a nation

with liberty and justice for all. I’d loveto help you get registered so that you’re ready to make your voice heard on Election Day.”

Colby dug a couple of bread butts out of the bag on the counter, wondering how many times per night she had to read that little speech, or if possibly she’d committed it to memory. “I’ll pass, thanks. Have a good night.”

“Are you sure?” Meg asked quickly. “If you’ve got access to a computer, I can talk you through it right now over the phone. It’ll just take a couple of minutes.”

35 If he had access to a computer? Jesus Christ. Colby rolled his eyes. He could just picture this girl in New York or Boston or wherever the hell she was, imagining she was calling him at his one-room shack. “What about the Electoral College?” Colby asked.

Meg from WeCount hesitated, just for a moment – surprised, probably, that he’d even had time to learn what the Electoral College was, considering his busy schedule of chewing toothpicks and shooting beer cans off fence posts. “I’m

45

Snap Shot ✨ [O]

civic obligation: Bürgerpflicht
 PAC: Political Action Committee; lobby to support or fight politicians; super PACs are very powerful lobby groups who donate lots of money for campaigns
 apathy: lack of interest

sorry?" she asked. "What about it?"
 "Well," Colby said, turning the stove on and knocking a spoonful of butter into the pan, not entirely sure why he hadn't already hung up on her. "I mean, tell me if I'm wrong, but hasn't the loser of the popular vote become president twice in the last two decades?"
 "I mean, that's technically true," she admitted.
 "But that's no reason not to –"
 "It kind of seems like a great reason not to. [...] And if that doesn't do it for you, there's always government corruption, super PACs, and basically the entire history of Congress."
 "Well, the system isn't perfect," Meg allowed [...]

but it's our privilege and responsibility as citizens to engage with it. We need to vote like our rights depend on it, Colby – because they do."
 [...] Colby wondered if that was in her manual or what. "Can I ask you a question, Meg?" he said. "Like, I'm not trying to be rude, and if you get some kind of bonus for me signing up, then you can go ahead and tell your boss I did it, but do you really think you're changing the world here? Like, calling people up one by one and trying to sell them on their civic obligation?"
 "Well, I certainly don't think apathy is going to get us anywhere," Meg snapped.

Source: Katie Cotugno: *You Say It First* (Balzer + Bray, 2020)

21 Practising prepositions and particles

Language in use

You are going to read a review of the YA novel *Yes No Maybe So*. Most prepositions and particles of phrasal verbs have been removed. Write the correct word in the blanks. The first one (0) has been done for you.



Becky Albertalli, Aisha Saeed: *Yes No Maybe So* (Balzer + Bray, 2020)

AE

Yes No Maybe So is the activism novel teens need right now

Unlike in a typical YA fiction, the teens in *Yes No Maybe So* aren't fighting vampires, being whisked away by immortal beings, or falling into⁰ messy love triangles. Instead, they're getting involved _____¹ their local elections. *New York Times* best-selling authors Becky Albertalli and Aisha Saeed pull _____² their personal experiences _____³ local activism and combine their talents to tell the story of Jamie Goldberg and Maya Rehman, two teenagers set on making a difference _____⁴ their community.

Jamie loves politics and dreams of running _____⁵ office one day, but his fear _____⁶ public speaking holds him back. He volunteers to help when a special election _____⁷ the Georgia State Senate is held, along _____⁸ the less-than-enthusiastic Maya Rehman. Encouraged _____⁹ her parents, Maya begrudgingly joins the campaign to fill her free time for the summer. Instead _____¹⁰ hanging with her best friend and enjoying a previously planned family trip to Italy, she's knocking _____¹¹ strangers' doors to ask _____¹² their votes now – and emotionally preparing herself for her first Ramadan _____¹³ her parents' separation. As the summer progresses, the election heats _____¹⁴. So does Jamie and Maya's relationship. The pair begin to realize they may be invested _____¹⁵ more than just the campaign.

Yes No Maybe So is a very 2020 coming-of-age story, littered _____¹⁶ topical references both to national politics and online culture. Social media incites many points of conflict, and Albertalli and Saeed demonstrate an understanding of the role it plays _____¹⁷ the formation and destruction of young people's relationships. It's not just GIF-sharing and text back-and-forths that Albertalli and Saeed use, though. The authors also dig _____¹⁸ the insecurities and anxieties of adolescence, the highs and lows of first love, and how the 2016 presidential election has shaped Generation Z's social consciousness and aptitude for activism.

to whisk away: wegbringen

begrudgingly: widerwillig, ungern

Ramadan: islamischer Fastenmonat

littered: gefüllt
 to incite: provozieren

formation: Entwicklung

consciousness: Bewusstsein

aptitude: Talent

Source: Abigail Atkeson: *EW talks YA* (ew.com/book-reviews/2020/02/27/yes-no-maybe-so-becky-albertalli-aisha-saeed/)

Snap Shot ✨ [O]

2 m

Speaking politics

Speaking

Get into pairs and discuss the following:

- » Would you like to read either of these books (*You Say It First, Yes No Maybe So*)? Give a reason for your opinion.
- » Should political issues be tackled in young adult novels? Why / why not?
- » How do you feel about getting involved in a campaign? Which issues would make you become active?

2 n

Writing a blog comment

Writing

You have just come across the following blog post by an American teenager.

posted by **jpate0207**

30 Jan; 2:57 pm

In my home country, the United States of America, we have two main political parties, the Democrats and the Republicans. I live in a state where all 6 of our representatives to the federal government in Washington are Republicans. Also, I can't vote because I am only 16. You might think that this would mean I cannot influence my government, but I have found ways around that like writing to government officials, attending local government meetings, and having professional conversations with policymakers, experts, and my friends and family.



Source: Adobe Stock/jesadaphorn

Write a short **comment** of about 150 words in which you

- » think of two rules that would be beneficial for a democratic voting system (parties, voting age),
- » discuss if young people get enough political education at school,
- » describe the role of social media to get informed about politics.