

Knox College - Department of Educational Studies

Teacher: S.L. Hinman Grade Level: 6-12

Subject: US History

Lesson/Unit focus: Whistle Stop Campaigning

Students will:

- Students will use a variety of technological and information resources (e.g., libraries, databases, computer networks, video) to gather and synthesize information and to create and communicate knowledge.
- Students will apply a wide range of strategies to comprehend, interpret, evaluate, and appreciate texts.

Materials:

Copies of handouts related to presidential use of trains for campaign purposes.

Duration:

1 class period – 55 minutes

Academic Language:

A whistle stop or whistle-stop tour is a style of political campaigning where the politician makes a series of brief appearances or speeches at a number of small towns over a short period of time.

Anticipatory Set:

1. Ask students to nominate cities that they would love to visit for a political convention that would nominate a presidential candidate. Consider the weather, the attractiveness of the city, the message that might be sent by selecting that city.
2. Explain that Chicago has been the nation's most popular political convention city, in part because of its geographic centrality. Between 1860 and 1996, Chicago hosted 14 Republican and 11 Democrat presidential nominating conventions, plus one notable Progressive Party assembly. Chicago's closest competitors for the most presidential conventions are Baltimore with 10, followed by Philadelphia's 9.
3. Introduce the 1930s trunk and explain that delegates and journalists were travelling from around the country to the conventions in Chicago. Chicago hosted a double convention in 1932. First, Republicans gathered in the new Chicago Stadium

- during the depths of Great Depression to re-nominate President Herbert C. Hoover. Two weeks later, Democrats gathered in the same hall and selected Franklin D. Roosevelt over Al Smith on the fourth ballot. Roosevelt flew to Chicago to deliver the first-ever convention acceptance speech.
4. Ask what students know about the depression era. Prompt them by asking questions such as what had happened to jobs? What was prohibition? Many people were abandoning farms and trying to travel to better locations. What part did the dust bowl play in the challenges for families?

Teaching-Checking for Understanding:

5. Explain that when candidates were named in the 1930s and 40s, they spent a significant amount of their time on a whistle stop tour.
6. Distribute the Hoover Whistle Stop article. Ask students to read the first paragraph and underline or highlight facts. (Suggested answers: 12 million people unemployed, 18 million on relief)
7. Explain that articles may include both facts and opinions\judgments. Have students read the next two paragraphs and underline judgments. (Suggested answers: without political skills to sell himself, shy, compassionate leader, cold, uncaring figure, responsible for what was going wrong in American economy)
8. Divide the class into 3 groups and distribute one article to each group. Direct students to read the article. Each group should select 5-6 items to highlight in the reading. They should be prepared to share those with the class and then explain whether the highlighted items are fact or opinion.
9. Have students share their findings from the following:
 - a. Pullman Car History
 - b. The President's Secret Train Station
 - c. U.S. Car No. 1
10. If time permits, create a facts and opinions bulletin board with the articles and each group's fact and opinions list.



Getting on Track with a Presidential Campaign

Directions: As you read the article, list interesting information about the ways trains are used by presidents and presidential candidates. Circle whether the item is a fact or an opinion. Be prepared to share your ideas with the class.

1. _____
_____ Fact or Opinion
2. _____
_____ Fact or Opinion
3. _____
_____ Fact or Opinion
4. _____
_____ Fact or Opinion
5. _____

Fact or Opinion