

# Proposing a Solution

**Estimated Time:** two, 40 minute classroom periods

## I. Objectives

As part of this lesson, students will:

- examine key election issues in the 2008 election.
- evaluate a candidate's plan for specific election issues.
- develop problem solving skills.
- work cooperatively to propose a solution to one issue.

## II. Materials and Resources

- Project Presidency 2008: Compare the Issues
- Chart paper and markers
- Overhead projector
- Computer with Internet access
- Student notebooks or journals
- Copies of **Proposing a Solution** handout
- Printed copies of the **Compare the Issues** Web page (optional)

## III. Introduction

1. Tell students that they are going to vote on a school issue. Write these statements on the board or on chart paper.

**Issue A:** *Schools should no longer serve unhealthy foods like fries, hot dogs, and fried chicken.*

**Issue B:** *Schools should be able to serve all types of foods, but should offer a healthy option each day.*

2. Pass out a blank sheet of paper (or student journals) and ask students to vote for one of the two issues. Then ask them to write a brief explanation of why they voted for the issue.
3. Hold an informal discussion, asking students to explain which issue they voted for and why.
4. Then explain to students that voters often decide which candidate they will vote for based on important issues and how the candidates plan to deal with those issues.
5. Ask students if they know any of the issues that are important to voters in the 2008 election. If students are not familiar with the issues, explain that there are many issues, but some of the more critical issues include: the economy, education, health care, the war in Iraq, and the environment. Tell students that they are going to examine these issues in detail and will offer their own solutions to some of the problems.

#### IV. Procedures

1. View and read the Project Presidency 2008: Compare the Issues with your class. You may do this by projecting the Web site over a projector or an interactive whiteboard, having students access the site individually or in groups depending on your classroom technology, or by printing off copies and reading the article as a group.
2. Discuss the material with the class. Ask volunteers to read the information about each issue to the class. Pause after each issue and answer any questions students may have. To help students get a better understanding of each issue, use these discussion and activity tips:
  - Education:** Ask students to think of other ways the government helps to pay for their education (for example, school buses, administration pay, computers and other technology, summer school, after-school programs, art and music classes, library books, media center, and so forth). Explain that the government uses tax money to pay for education-related expenses.
  - Environment:** Ask students to list other ways we hurt the environment. On a chart paper, list ways we can help save the environment.
  - War in Iraq:** If possible, display a world map or a map of the continent of Asia. Point out where Iraq and Afghanistan are located. Explain that Iraq is located in the Middle East in the continent of Asia. Ask students to name other countries they know about in the region. Use colored thumbtacks to show Iraq, Iran, Afghanistan, Pakistan, and Saudi Arabia.
  - Health Care:** If possible, compare the cost of a hospital stay, an eye-glass exam, a prescription, or a co-payment in 1990 and today. Explain that the cost of medical care has risen drastically in the last fifteen years and that some people, particularly senior citizens, cannot afford to pay the rise in cost.
  - Economy:** Create a sample budget of a typical family's expenses (rent, groceries, household bills, car insurance, and so forth). Have students add the total monthly and yearly expenses. Then explain that the average median income in 2006 was \$48,201 (this is the most recent research issued in 2007 by the U.S. Census Bureau). Ask students how the economy affects larger families, families with only one income (which might be less than the average), and the elderly who are on Social Security benefits.
3. Divide the class into six groups. Distribute copies of the **Proposing a Solution** handout.
4. Ask each group to discuss the issue on the handout and how the candidate plans to deal with the issue. Then ask them to explain whether they agree or disagree with the candidate's plan.
5. Finally, ask groups to propose their own solution to the problem.
6. When they have completed the handout, ask representatives from each group to summarize the issue, or problem, and their solution to the problem in front of the class.
7. After each group summarizes their issue and new proposal, you may extend the lesson by asking the class for other solutions and discussing how these issues affect their communities, the United States, and the world.
8. Have students explain in their journals what they have learned about the candidates and their stand on the issues. In addition, ask students to reflect on which of the two major candidates supports their own views on the issues.

## **V. Assessment**

- Students have actively participated in both class and group discussions.
- Students' journals reflect understanding of the issues.

## **VI. Extensions**

1. Ask students to choose one of the issues and write a report about the issue. Students should write a brief summary of the issue and compare and contrast how each of the candidates plans to deal with the issue. Encourage students to use photos in their reports.
2. Ask students to write a letter to the editor of your local newspaper suggesting a solution to one of the main issues of the 2008 election.
3. Have students bring in articles related to any of the issues in the 2008 election. Allow 5 minutes at the beginning or end of the day for a brief summary of the article. Then have students place the article in a three-ring binder for future reference. (You can divide the binder into two or three sections—one for each of the candidates.)
4. Record one or two political ads that explain how each candidate might deal with one of the issues. Show the ads to students and have them discuss the pros and cons of each ad.

## **VII. National Standards**

National Council for the Social Studies  
Thematic Strands

- People, Places, and Environments
- Individual Development and Identity
- Individuals, Groups, and Institutions
- Power, Authority, and Governance
- Global Connections
- Civic Ideals and Practices

National Council of Teachers of English  
Language Arts Standards

- Standard 3 Evaluation Strategies
- Standard 4 Communication Skills
- Standard 5 Communication Strategies
- Standard 6 Applying Knowledge
- Standard 7 Evaluating Data
- Standard 12 Applying Language Skills











