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The Issues, the Process, the Parties: A Political Guide for Educated Dummies

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The Issues, The Process, The Parties: A Political Guide For Educated Dummies

by

April Margarella

A Project in Creative Studies

Submitted in Fulfillment
of the Requirements
for the degree of

Master of Science

December 2008

Buffalo State College
State University of New York
Department of Creative Studies

Abstract of Project

The Issues, The Process, The Parties: A Political Guide For Educated Dummies

This project was about the creation of a simplified guide booklet, which introduces the fundamental basics of the American Political System. The content of the book was developed based on the issues, process and parties that make up a United States election.

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Department of Creative Studies

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Dates of Approval:

Cynthia Burnett

April Margarella

Dedication

To my Mother

*Your strength and determination during election season will never go unnoticed by me.
One day that glass ceiling will be shattered.*

And

To the “under dog”, sometimes it’s the best place to be.

Acknowledgments

Most importantly, I would like to thank my professors' at the International Center for Studies in Creativity. Without the guidance and support from Cynthia Burnett and John Cabra, I may have never gotten to this point in the program. Thank you for believing in me, especially at the beginning!

I would also like to thank my parents, who have been there for me no matter what situation I put myself in. You have always been there for me every step of the way. Dad, thank you for helping me through my collegiate years, especially financially. Mom, without your desire for politics and your race for the New York State Assembly, this project would have been non-existent. You will always be a winner in my eyes.

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Section One: Background to the Project

Purpose

I love politics; I love every single thing about it. From the issues, to the platforms, to even the unimportant political gossip, I am completely engulfed with this topic. However, my friends are not. The majority of them do not have a clue as to how to even attain an absentee ballot, which is surprising since many are college educated. Through everyday conversations, I also realized that they based a lot of their information on comedic television, and celebrity endorsements.

I wanted to come up with a way to make politics fun; an easy guide to learning about what you need to know about the subject of politics. My overall purpose for this project was to have readers feel comfortable when the topic of politics arises in a conversation. I really wanted to create a product that would assist as a guide, but not overindulge too deeply into topic to bore the reader. Simplicity was my main goal in creating. I did not want readers to become confused with the information that they were reading. Instead readers should walk away with an understanding and excitement of learning something new.

My other reason for doing this project is that my mother is highly involved in politics and has run for the Assembly Seat for New York State. I was so proud of her, despite her loss, and consider her to be a great influence as to why I chose to do this project subject.

Description

My project is a booklet that contains basic information that every voter should know when picking a candidate. It pertains to three subjects involved in the electoral process of a candidate. The most dominant of the three is the “Issues” section which is based on the relevant issues of America for the election year 2008. The booklet also describes what these issues are

and will provide a very clear understanding of each one. These issues include categories and sub categories.

- International Issues including; foreign policy, homeland security, war & peace, free trade, immigration, energy & oil;
- Domestic Issues including; gun control, crime, drugs, civil rights, jobs and environment;
- Economic Issues including; budget, economy, government reform, taxes, social security, welfare and technology;
- Social Issues including; education, healthcare, abortion, families, corporations.

Along with the issues listed above, this section also offers different viewpoints on the issues from past Presidential candidates. To help the reader understand some of the issues, there are questions incorporated with the specific issue so the reader can help form their own views.

For this section, the readers will be able to determine, as a personal finding, what issues they are most passionate about. They are also advised to write down those findings. At the end of the “Issues” section, the reader should be able to move onto the “Parties” section to match up their personal findings with the appropriate political party.

The second section of the booklet, the “Parties”, is a listing of every political party to date and an explanation of their platforms. This section is divided into “Past Parties” that have ran a Presidential candidate and “Current Parties” for the 2008 election.

The “Past Parties” section explains why the political party was formed, the year that it was created and any major accomplishments that they may have accomplished. The decline of the party is also mentioned for the parties that are not around today.

The “Current Parties” section includes where to find additional information if you have found a party that has matched your personal findings from the “Issues” section. This section also includes the purpose of the party and the year it was founded.

The third section of the booklet, the “Process”, provides information about the actual electoral process. You will find information on how the President is picked with an explanation of how the Electoral College works with an insight into how primaries and caucuses are conducted. This information is made to be very light hearted and somewhat comical so the reader’s interest will be kept.

The “Process” section also includes a list of every United States president that we have had. This information is accompanied by the vice president, number of terms the president served, and the political party that they represented in office. The oath that is stated to sworn in the next president of the United States is located at the very end of this section.

Rationale for Selection

The overall idea of my project was based on information that I received after doing a research paper for a Political Science class. I found that my peers (young voters) were uninformed when it came to acquiring and knowing about political information, This is information that they will need to know throughout their lives, so in rationalizing for this project, I wanted a way to make the information attainable. I decided on making a booklet; which I felt should have the characteristics of being fun, informative, and understandable for the everyday reader.

The literature that I had come across helped shape the topics that I wanted to discuss throughout the booklet. I narrowed down the three broad topics that I felt needed to be discussed and added additional useful information found from other sources.

What This Project Adds Creatively to Myself and Others

Creative Problem Solving (CPS) guided me throughout this whole process. While deciphering the actual product that was going to be created, I spent a lot of time focusing on divergent thinking. My class helped with this process by using the tool brainstorming with post-its. I had a lot of good ideas but really could not settle on just one. Needless to say, the class also stepped in and helped me converge on an idea that I was completely excited about developing.

The creative aspect of this project was the most significant for me. It is easy to spew out information, but to make it interesting and reader friendly required a lot of creative and critical thinking. This project confirmed for me that with creativity and the use of divergent thinking, great ideas can be developed. However, in order to fully develop those ideas, convergent thinking is also essential for success.

This project will improve the quality of people's lives by teaching them important information about an everyday topic- politics. This booklet is an easy resource to fall back on for any election season, not just the Presidential election. Reading just the side comments inside the booklet will make the reader more knowledgeable on the subject matter. Most importantly, it will add a little bit of reassurance to the reader if a real life conversation arises about politics at work, school, or in their everyday life.

Section 2: Pertinent Literature

Introduction

The following literature has guided me extensively throughout the process of creating my master's project. These books have enriched the information that was included in my project and added quality to the project itself. The three books from the "Parties" section helped form the guiding process for each of the three sections.

"Issues" Section

Issues - Election Center 2008 - CNN.com. (n.d.). Retrieved October 10, 2008, from <http://www.cnn.com/ELECTION/2008/issues/>.

Political Leaders' views on the Issues. (n.d.). Retrieved October 10, 2008, from <http://www.ontheissues.org/Issues>

On the Issues: Taxing and Spending - Election Guide 2008 - The New York Times. (10/27/2008). Retrieved October 28, 2008, from <http://elections.nytimes.com/2008/president/issues/taxes.html>.

These three websites helped with the "Issues" section of the booklet. I used Internet resources because they provided more current information (because of the 2008 election), then the information I found in books. I did not want just one source for this section since all three sites are so extensive. I found the reoccurring themes for the 2008 election and decided on taking the issues that were based in all three of the sites to provide the guide of the "Issues" section.

The literature that was read for the "Parties" section helped provide a more extensive base of knowledge for the "Issues" section. The political parties of the past were all formed based on political issues that were bothering a specific group of people. This led a path towards the understanding of where the political issues we have today stem from.

"Parties" Section

CQ Press. (2001). *Political parties in America*. Washington DC: Congressional Quarterly.

The “Parties” section of my project revolved around this piece of literature. It provided a detailed list of every political party that was formed in United States History. This book included a history of how every political party was established, along with the years in which they began and ended. In the back of the book a list of every President and Vice President the United States has had was provided, along with their party affiliation age and state in which they resided. In addition it had an in depth look at every election up until 1996. This book also incorporated the name of all the parties that had nominated a President and Vice President along with a list of the names who ran under them.

Milkis, S. (1993). *The President and the Parties: The Transformation of the American Party System since the New Deal*. New York: Oxford University Press, USA.

This book gave a more extensive insight into the two major parties and how they have evolved from President Roosevelt (New Deal Era). This book dove straight into the “politics” behind both parties. It was a great read for understanding as to where our two main parties have come since this time. Reading this information also gave insight as to the issues that were around, and how they are still visible with us today.

Jewell, M., & Olson, D. (1978). *American state political parties and elections (The Dorsey series in political science)*. Chicago: Dorsey Press.

This source gave a widespread outlook into the Republican and Democratic Parties. The authors explained how these two parties nominated their candidates but focused for the majority of the book on state party affiliations. This source was written quite some time ago, and was used mainly for a quick look into the understanding of local government parties.

“Process” Section

DiClerico, R. E. (2000). *Political parties, campaigns, and elections*. New Jersey: Prentice Hall.

This book helped me along with the “Process” section of my project. It provided me with very valuable information about caucuses and primary voting. What was also interesting about this book was that it had an extensive review of each different aspect of a primary. It also included a review of the financing and party compliance that is used to provide for the candidates. This book led the foundation for this particular section of my booklet.

Curry, T. (10/14/2008). *Election Day worry: 'Does my vote count?' - Decision '08*. Retrieved October 16, 2008, from <http://www.msnbc.msn.com/id/27074741>

This website focused more on the understanding of the Electoral College. It aided as a resource for the “Process” section as well. It was an article that answered every day voter’s questions like if ‘your’ vote counts, and why it is necessary to vote. This laid down a strong foundation for the understanding of the section.

McCaffrey, P. (2004). *The United States election system*. New York: H.W. Wilson Company.

Before beginning this project, I found that this book was very useful in grasping all aspects of what this booklet will be based upon. For me, it was a “warm-up” book, which allowed me to explore the various parts for this projects core elements. The history of the voting process that this literature explored opened my mind for some information that I may have wanted to put in the other sections. Most of the information was a good reminder as to what was previously learned in my own past. I felt this became a more useful guide to understanding the information better, if this project were to be replicated.

Section 3: Process Plan

Introduction

For this project, it was imperative to get background information of the topic before I begin diving into the specific issues. This helped me to generalize the different areas that I specifically wanted to work with. I would suggest that literature would be a better foundation to start with, then researching the information on the internet. Although, you will get the most recent of the information surfing the web, I have found that the most accurate is in the books.

After acquiring the specific information that I wanted to work with, I decided to start with the “Parties” section. I began here because I felt a more in-depth lesson of the history of politics was needed as the basis of the booklet. When learning about the parties, a link between the issues and the president elect helped to provide an understanding of what people were clearly thinking during that time. By doing this section first, it helped provide a path with an aim of giving me more of a basic understanding as to what the other two sections would entail.

After writing and listing the vast majority of political parties this country has had, the “Issues” section was the next part I decided to work on. There was no specific reasoning behind this, except for the fact that I felt I should understand the specific issues going on before my vote is casted. All of the issues discussed were current for the 2008 election. The majority of this information was taken from on-line resources, so it was up to date. However, many of the issues have been around and an on-going debate for many of the past Presidency’s as well.

The last section that was written was the “Process” section. This was to make sure that all of the prominent information was covered before a vote would be established. The books that were listed above under the “Process” section were the sources for the main information of this section. I also have copies of registration voter cards, as well as what an absentee ballot actually

looks like. They are all attached at the end of the booklet for actual visualization for knowledge as to what they will look like when received.

I saved the funny quotes and facts for the last part of this project. I felt that it must be written out this way so everything would flow together. I considered it a good idea to have a funny quote or fact before each issue that was discussed for the “issues” section. This was in order for each topic to be more understandable. I also took a number of quotes from past presidents to add authenticity and life to the subject matter as well.

When it came time to assemble the booklet, I formatted the sections differently than the way I wrote them. I felt that the “Issues” section should be first. I wanted the reader to write down what they felt passionate about while reading the section. Having the reader interact with the booklet added a sense of ownership for this subject. After that was accomplished they were to move onto the “Parties” section. I wanted the readers’ personal findings to compare to a specific party, whether it a major or third party. I felt it was essential for the reader to see that there are many options than just the major two parties that could fit their certain style of thinking. The final section added in was the “Process” section. After the readers’ established their issues and political party preference, voting would be the next step. Understanding the voting process including primaries and the Electoral College complete this booklet. This was the final format followed for the booklet.

Timeline (Estimated)

August

18th	Think of topic.....	1 hour
20th	Brainstorm.....	1 hour
25th	Diverge on topic ideas	3 hours
26th	Final Topic Decided.....	3 hours

September

2nd	Work on Concept Paper.....	3 hours
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4 th	Research for Concept Paper.....	2 hours
6 th	Finish writing Concept Paper.....	2 hours
10 th	Fix Correction on Concept Paper.....	2 hours
18 th	Collecting Data on Process Topic.....	3 hours
21 nd	Researching other Projects and Info.....	5 hours
24 th	Formatting the Project	3 hours
28 th	Finding info on the Issues.....	5 hours
30 th	Finding info on the Parties.....	5 hours
October		
3 rd	Constructing “Parties”.....	5 hours
5 th	Combining the “Parties” Info.....	4 hours
9 th	Writing “Parties” Section.....	5 hours
10 th	Continuing “Parties”.....	5 hours
14 th	Starting Section 1 of paper.....	2 hours
16 th	Finding funny quotes.....	3 hours
20 th	Current Bibliography.....	3 hours
22 nd	Sec 1,2 &3	5 hours
23 rd	Sec 1,2,& 3.....	4 hours
25 th	Finishing “Parties” Section.....	5 hours
28 th	Finalizing Sections 1,2 & 3.....	3 hours
29 th	Constructing “Issues” section.....	5 hours
November		
2 nd	Categorizing “Issues” Section.....	3 hours
4 th	Finishing “Issues” Section.....	4 hours
8 th	Finding Quotes for “Issues” Section.....	2 hours
12 th	Organizing “Process” Section.....	3 hours
14 th	Finishing “Process” Section.....	4 hours
15 th	Developing add in comments ALL	8hours (2days)
18 th	Finishing Sections 4.5.6.....	4 hours
24 th	Fixing All Sections.....	8 hours (2days)
26 th	Binding /Fixing Product.....	4 hours
28 th	Final Revisions.....	5 hours
	Loose Ends.....	10 hours
	Total Amount of Time.....	142 hours

Section 4: Outcomes

Introduction

The final product that has been derived from this semester of work is a fifty-three- page political guide booklet. *The issues, the parties, the process: A political guide for educated dummies* is the complete title for this work. It will be directed towards students, adults, teachers, and any other person that feels the need to get more of an understanding on the subject matter of politics.

The Final Product

The cover of my booklet stems from a picture that was taken over the summer while I was living at home in Staten Island, N.Y. I decided to incorporate a picture of the city skyline as the cover for this booklet. I felt this to be a very appropriate theme to set for the potential reader. The basis for many political parties and voting issues has stemmed from New York State. The voter information included in the booklet also pertains to New York State residents. Below is the front cover picture for the booklet.



When the reader opens the booklet, they will find a table of contents. There is also another table of contents for each of the three sections of the booklet. Each section starts with “In this section” and has a bullet list of the information the various sections will entail. Below is a smaller version of the three sections.

Example 1

The Issues

In this section:

- 2008 Presidential Issues
- Questions to think about when siding with an issue
- Different views of past presidential candidates

READ THE INFORMATION BELOW EACH ISSUE, AND SEE WHICH SPECIFIC TOPICS YOU FEEL MOST PASSIONATE ABOUT AND WRITE THEM DOWN. AT THE END OF THIS SECTION YOU SHOULD BE ABLE TO FIND A PRESIDENTIAL CANDIDATE THAT RELATES THE MOST WITH YOU!!!

Example 2

The Parties

In This Section:

- Past Political Parties that have ran a President
- Current Political Parties of 2008
- All include the year their purpose and where to get more information

Example 3

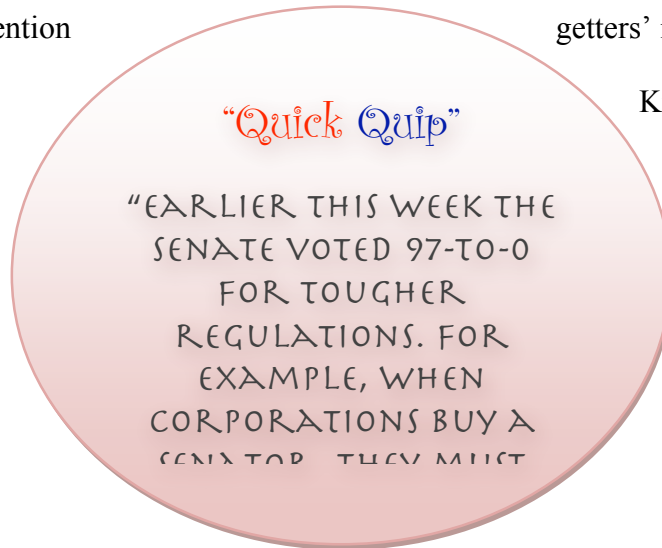
The Process

In this section:

- Primaries
- Caucuses
- Electoral College
- Past Presidents

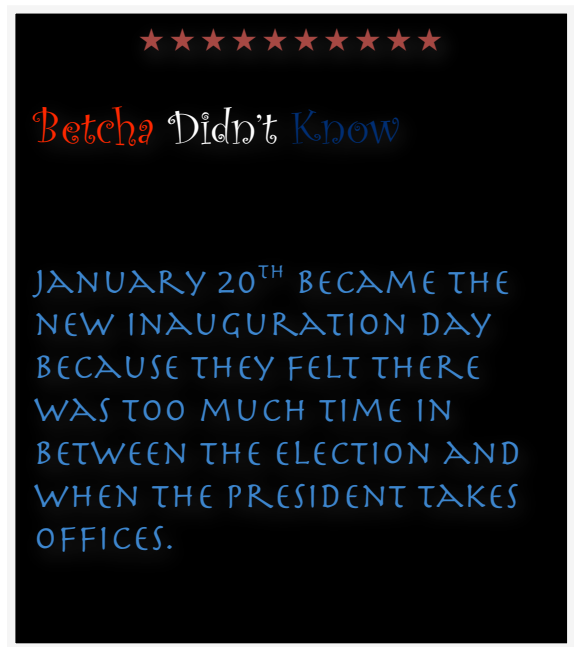
In order to keep the readers' attention, I incorporated four different kinds of 'attention getters'. These 'attention getters' included "Quick Quips", "Betcha Didn't Know", "Fact or Fiction" and "Two Cents". Below are examples of all four.

"Quick Quips" from politicians



"Betcha Didn't Know", "Fact or Fiction" Below are examples of consisted of quotes and comedians.

"Betcha Didn't Know" incorporated interesting facts that people would most likely not know.



Fact or Fiction?

SOCIAL SECURITY CARDS
WERE FIRST ISSUED IN
1936.

FACT! THEY WERE FIRST
ISSUED IN NOVEMBER OF
1936. OVER 420 MILLION
NUMBERS HAVE BEEN

“Fact or Fiction” was statements based on

information that I thought people should know but had never learned or forgotten.

“Two Cents” was a section that I decided to include so my own opinion could be incorporated into the booklet.

Two Cents: HEALTHCARE COMPANIES AND
HOSPITALS RECEIVE MORE MONEY WHEN PEOPLE ARE SICK.
IT WOULD BE INTERESTING TO SEE WHAT WOULD HAPPEN IF
THE GOVERNMENT GAVE INCENTIVES TO HOSPITALS THAT
KEPT THEIR PATIENTS WELL AND PUNISHED THEM WHEN
UNNECESSARY HOSPITAL STAY AND TESTS ARE BEING

The final product was spiral bound and printed, on an off white color, of card stock. The booklet has the theme colors of red white/grey and blue to incorporate the colors of the United States of America. For more product samples, see Appendix B.

Section 5: Key Learning's

Introduction

Creativity and politics have more in common than one would suspect. When a subject as dry as politics is being explored, creativity is the escape route to take in order for it to have quite the opposite effect. I looked mainly for the essence of each issue. The three sections threw out new pieces of information that either I never learned or had forgotten about. What I incorporated are the simple things that we should know as voters and Americans, but are simply forgotten and tossed aside. Below is a summation of the key learning's that I have established from creating this project.

Content- Creative

My creative inspiration began with a quote from Franklin Delano Roosevelt. "The country needs and, unless I mistake its temper, the country demands bold, persistent experimentation. It is common sense to take a method and try it; if it fails, admit it frankly and try another. But above all, try something" (as cited in <http://www.motivational-inspirational-corner.com/getquote.html?startrow=21&categoryid=177>, 2002).

Before I even began my project, I knew I needed some type of motivation. In staying with the theme of politics, I looked up inspirational quotes from past Presidents. The above quote has been my back bone throughout the whole creation of this booklet. At times when creating this booklet, I became frustrated at the amount of information I had, and the lack of a creative

approach it took. This quote reassured me to just keep trying, it will get where I want it to go eventually

My overall product has followed the Torrance Incubation Model (TIM) (Torrance, 1979). The three stages the model attests to have been incorporated in this booklet. The cover and title of the booklet act as the first stage for the TIM model. The picture of New York City and the title "*A political guide for educated dummies*" heightens the readers' anticipation for what they will possibly be reading in this booklet.

The first part of the booklet the "Issues" deepens the readers' expectation, which is Torrance's second step. At the bottom of the table of contents, the booklet asks the reader to write down the issues that he or she feels the most passionate about. The result will include a possible presidential candidate that will pertain to the issues picked. At this point, the anticipation is held for the reader to see who their potential candidate will be.

The third step of the TIM model is to extend the learning. The "Parties" section allows the reader to take their personal findings and relate them to a current political party. When that party is found there is a section where you can attain more information on your own about that specific group. The TIM model also has a set of skills associated with the three steps that should be incorporated. The following three skill sets have been incorporated in this booklet.

The information in this booklet was light and simplistic. These characteristics fall under the skill of "Elaborate but Not Excessively" (Torrance, 1979). The reader was not overwhelmed with information. The attention getters placed throughout the booklet added the elaboration of a specific subject needed, but not to the extent of overhauling too much information.

When it comes time for the reader to find a party that fits their interests, the reader must "Be Original" (Torrance, 1979). This second skill set will potentially keep the reader looking at

third parties instead of just the original two parties most people will flock too. The reader may vote the same way, but for the time being, they are slowly moving away from the obvious choice.

The final skill set has to do with the structure of the booklet. “Visualize it Rich and Colorfully” (Torrance, 1979) pertains to the color and font use, the booklet incorporates. These colors and styles will catch the readers’ eye and make them interested in reading the information on the paper.

Content-Key Learning’s

I found myself becoming intrigued with the large amount of information that I felt I had acquired in such a short period of time. While gathering information I was caught by surprise by the amount of simplistic governmental facts that I did not know.

While creating the “Process” section of my booklet, I had found it interesting to know that the President is not really elected until the actual electors who are chosen, do so. What is even more interesting is that there is no Constitutional law stating that the chosen electors have to vote the same way of the state’s popular vote. This process is done on the first Monday after the second Wednesday in December (Longley, R. 2007).

The “Parties” Section revealed how much both of our two main parties have changed throughout time. The Republicans are portrayed now as being somewhat conservative but were quite the contrary when they first began. President Lincoln was seen as a threat by Southern Democrats because he wanted to do away with slavery altogether. This had caused a big divide in the Democratic Party since “pro-slavery” was a main belief that the party had been founded

on. (Congressional Quarterly, 2001) This has since changed, but the Democratic Party had split and evolved many times, compared to the Republican Party.

Process

I have finally realized while creating this booklet that my preference is for implementing. After taking the Foursight measure and receiving my results, I did not consider myself an implementer, until I began my creative journey with this project. I found myself disregarding my original plan. I began implementing different ideas that I thought were better, to later find out that they were not. Instead of fixing mistakes, I could have been working and improving other sections.

When it came to implementing ideas, I feel the “Parties” section received the most harm. I had decided to list all of the past political parties that had nominated a presidential candidate as well as a current list of 2008 political parties. This is an example of how I ran with an idea when I should not have. Since I did this section first, I decided to go in depth with it. Upon completion, the section lacked attention getters. I felt that the other two sections should be completed first since much time was spent on the information gathering. The “Parties” section would have had more attention getters if all of the parties were not written about.

Although the “Parties” section was hurt by my implementer preference, the rest of the project had then made more sense while researching. In doing this section first, I found it to lay the foundation for the rest of the booklet. In this instance, my preference both helped and hindered the booklet.

Throughout this process, I learned that my state of mind needed to be changed. I should have taken more time to clarify exactly what I wanted to do instead of just doing it. Overall, I

would have spent less time making mistakes and more time on the minor details of the final booklet.

The creative aspect of this booklet was the most important and difficult process for me. I would come up with one idea and fly with it, until I realized it would not work out the way I wanted it to in other sections. This would then cause me to start over. The booklet for the most part turned out as expected, but the process was draining. I could not differentiate which were more important, attention getters or more information. Essentially they are both the same; however, the attention getters were more complex to construct in a document. The little sections which included “Two Cents”, “Betcha Didn’t Know”, “Fact or Fiction”, and “Quick Quips” looked so simple, but were the most difficult for me.

Originally, I wanted to put in funny cartoons on top of all the sections. I found out after trying to create a few, that was not going to work. What I envisioned and what I tried to draw on paper came out as two different things, so I decided to get rid of that idea. The cartoons were something that I really would have liked to work. If I had more time, I might have learned how to draw or found someone willing to draw for me. My original plan in creating the little sections, was to come up with the catchy titles, and then find quotes to match. After getting engulfed in the material I was reading, I decided to jot down what I found interesting. I would come up with the catchy titles after rereading the material I gathered.

In the end, this whole process helped my project become a final booklet. Although it did not run as smoothly as I had hoped, I could not have asked for a better turnout than the booklet that I have created.

Section 6: Conclusion

Introduction

My overall experience with developing my product was quite enjoyable. To be honest, I was quite overwhelmed with the task at hand and thought many times about changing it. I am however, very happy that I stayed with this topic. I proved to myself that I can make something that may seem “boring” to others, interesting.

There is a lot of creative freedom that comes along with developing a product, which I felt helped and hindered my process. After the completion of this project, I have come to realize the importance of knowing my Foursight preference. I noticed my preference was my biggest downfall in creating. I decided to just do, instead of incubating and figuring out all of my possible options. Looking back on many of my past courses, I see that is a common trend that sometimes hindered the quality of my work. I have been working a lot on clarifying situations instead of just plunging in with a solution.

Creativity, for me, develops when I am focused and enjoying my subject. I had found my creative atmosphere to be interesting. Whenever I found some downtime at my job, I would work on little pieces of my project. Almost all of my ideas that I had developed at work were used. I do not have an explanation for this. My theory is that maybe I enjoyed the rush of doing something I was not suppose to be doing. I had so much passion for this subject that intrinsic

motivation must have played a factor. This motivation made my product that much more fun to create.

Next Steps

What I see myself doing now is taking a break from the topic itself. The hype of the 2008 election bored me with my topic towards the end. When my interest returns, I may have my older sister draw some cartoons for it, like I originally had planned. I feel that illustrations are the one minor detail that is missing from my product. I may eventually try to get the booklet published as well.

For the most part, this project could be added onto extensively. It could be a useful source for a high school or middle school American history class. My mother, who is a social studies teacher, found the booklet useful for a first year history teacher. It would be used as a quick reference guide for information. The booklet could then be incorporated with a textbook series for the teacher. Elaborating on the information and adding more attention getters are the two main areas in which this project could be added onto as well. For a long-term goal, the booklet could be specialized for each of the fifty states. The back of the book could hold that states voter registration information since it varies from state to state.

After getting the satisfaction of creating and finishing a final product, I see myself setting a new goal for myself once a year. I am going to call it my Creative Resolution, which will be made every September. While working on this project, I had thought about a lot of other things that I wanted to create. My next project will be a series of children's books entitled *The Neighborhood Kids*. The inspiration for this idea came about when I was researching different ways to bind books. I had found it interesting that I could create a book and it could be sold on

Amazon.com. I am planning on basing the books on little adventures that I had with my neighbors while we were growing up.

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[Republican Party 2008 Platform](#)

Appendix A

The Issues, The Process, The Parties: A Political Guide for Educated Dummies

Name: April Margarella

Date Submitted: 9/8/09

Project Type: **A Skill to Improve the Quality of Life for Others**

What Is The Project About?

The concept of this Masters' Project is to help people understand the different aspects of the voting process. The purpose is to have people understand how the voting process works and the different missions of all political parties. It is essentially a guide to any questions that a voter would need to know in order to understand the electoral process. A booklet will be put together that will include all of this information.

Rationale For Choice:

I have a love for politics, but my friends unfortunately do not. The past two Presidential elections have made me especially realize that a lot of my friends do not understand what the whole process is all about. A lot of them assume politics and parties are a certain way, when in reality they are not. With election time growing near I felt that there should be some type of handbook made to guide the public through the electoral process.

With the presidential election so heated and a history in the making President for either party, I knew that having a booklet of voter information would help people make a more educated decision than listening to biased media. The booklet is intended to help people look for deeper information that is based on the issues they find important and not just what the media decides is important.

What Will Be The Tangible Product or Outcome?

The outcome of this project will be a physical booklet informing people about the many issues to think about when voting for a presidential candidate. It will essentially combine the facts along with light hearted humor. Each page will have a comic, cartoon or amusing quote to sustain the interest of the reader.

There will be three sections to the booklet. The first section of the booklet, the issues, will be put together explaining the issues our country is faced with today, along with questions that should be thought of when deciding on a potential candidate prior to an election.

The second section, the process, will explain the electoral process and how each state is broken down into points and how the final solution is made for the candidate chosen. The second section will also include how the Democratic and Republican primaries are conducted. Local elections and their process of electing candidates will also be included.

The third part, the parties, will include basic information on the two major parties and a listing of all the parties and what their mission is. There will be a list of all United States Presidents and the political party that they won under. In the back of the booklet will be a sample voter registration form as well as an absentee ballot with information on how to attain them.

What Criteria Will You Use To Measure The Effectiveness Of Your Achievement?

The key result in when deciding the overall effectiveness will be the reaction that is received by people after viewing the tangible product. A criteria used to measure the effectiveness would be if people who did not understand the subject matter beforehand walk away with an understanding and new knowledge that they find useful.

I expect to have the tangible version make an impact on the way people vote. I would essentially like people to understand the basics of an election, how voting works and basic issues that should be thought about when voting for each candidate.

Who Will Be Involved or Influenced?

Younger voters as well as uninformed voters should be influenced by this project. They are the main target and essentially why I came up with this project.

The influence I expect to have is to help people make an educated vote that matches what they believe are important issues. I would like readers to be able to know what questions they should focus on come election time, instead of just listening to what the media decides they see as important. Most of all, I expect this project to make the reader feel comfortable that they picked the candidate that best suits their issues.

My intended readers will be my friends ages 18-25 along with classmates and teachers in the Creative Studies Program at Buffalo State College.

When Will this Project Take Place?

This project will take place throughout the duration of the semester. The majority of the booklet is acquiring the research to put it together. To make sure that I have an appropriate grasp of information that is useful to people, I will set aside time to show people and to ask them what they think.

Where will this project occur?

This project will occur in Buffalo, New York in the United States of America. There will be no significant relations to the area in the completed project; however approval will be citizens in the state of New York.

Why Is It Important To Do This?

This project is important for United States Citizens around the country. We have a great privilege to be able to decide who we want as to be our President. We should be making the best decision possible and this book of information will provide the appropriate questions and theories to think about when deciding on that monumental decision.

Also, there are many people in this country that do not know how to vote or acquire the appropriate paper work. Every citizen has the privilege to voice their opinion and this will hopefully make it a little easier to do so.

Another goal is to have people feel more comfortable when the issue of politics comes up in conversation. Many educated people tend to find politics either boring or corrupt. Having the knowledge of the dominate issues will hopefully increase the readers knowledge and will increase the comfort level if ever faced with a discussion. The readers should come away with an understanding of the issues and questions that should be asked of every candidate.

Personal Learning Goals:

- To understand each Political Party and what they stand for.
- To acquire knowledge on how to help the public correctly choose a leader.
- To bring a creative direction to the final product and information acquired so it is interesting to readers.
- To create interesting comics and quotes to energize readers.
- Being able to realize the significant impact of research for elections by learning things that I had never known before.

How Do You Plan To Achieve Your Goals And Outcomes?

The first step for achieving the outcome is to gather as much data as possible on the issue. Once the base of the knowledge is gathered, it will be organized and grouped in specific areas. The final project will also have comics and light hearted quotes about the subject matter, in order to keep the attention of the reader and to better understand the topic. In order to see what the public deems important, I will ask people what they see as an important issue when electing a candidate, whether locally or nationally.

Evaluation:

In order to correctly evaluate this project, there will be a consensus of questions that are plaguing voters. The goal is to keep this as interesting as possible, but also informative.

Once the final product is complete, it will be shown to many different people. It will be broken down into societal sections, to model how actual parties break down the public so it is accepted by everyone.

Prepare Project Timeline:

September-Oct 12th

- Gather information from friends/forums of political questions
- Research on topics
 - o Political issues
 - o Questions to ponder to make voting decision
 - o How the electoral process works (points)/Primaries

- o Basic information of major parties and what they stand for
 - Start planning creative aspect of booklet
- October**
- Misconceptions/Questions from public answered
 - Sections 1, 2&3 completed
 - Attain absentee ballot/Voter registration card
 - Have booklet design and sections completed
- November**
- Sections 4, 5 &6 completed
 - Finish any loose ends

Identify Pertinent Literature or Resources:

The majority of the literature will be from online sources and books about the voting process and issues that are relevant towards voters today. Also, the public and everyday voters will play a part in this project to ensure that the quality of information is relevant and helpful.

Appendix B

Sample Pages

The Issues

JOBS/UNEMPLOYMENT

IN MORE RECENT MONTHS THE CRASHING ECONOMY HAS RESULTED IN MANY JOB LOSSES THROUGHOUT THE COUNTRY. ANOTHER PROBLEM IS THAT MANY JOBS ARE BEING OUTSOURCED FOR CHEAPER ACCOMMODATIONS THAT OTHER COUNTRIES PROVIDE. ALSO, MANY ISSUES CONCERNING ILLEGAL IMMIGRATION AND CHEAP LABOR HAVE CURRENTLY RISEN.

FOR THIS ISSUES THINK ABOUT:

- ✚ REGULATIONS FOR THE OUTSOURCING OF JOBS
- ✚ MINIMUM WAGE RATE
- ✚ IMMIGRATION LAWS

TAX POLICY- Federal Taxes

WITH THE CURRENT NATIONAL DEBT AND THE PLUMMETING ECONOMY, POLITICIANS NEED TO FIND A WAY TO FIX THIS MESS. THE MAIN QUESTION TO ASK YOURSELF HERE IS **WHAT TAX BRACKET DO YOU FALL UNDER?** MANY POLITICIANS PROMISE MANY VARIOUS TAX PLANS. MOST OF THEM TAX ACCORDING TO THE AMOUNT OF MONEY THAT YOU ARE CURRENTLY MAKING. SOME WILL RAISE YOUR TAXES IF YOU MAKE A CERTAIN AMOUNT, SOME WILL LOWER THEM AND SOME MAY PROMISE THAT THEY WILL STAY THE SAME. DEPENDING ON THE AMOUNT OF MONEY YOU MAKE ANNUALLY WILL HELP DECIPHER WHO IS THE RIGHT CANDIDATE FOR YOU.

State Taxes – WHEN ELECTING YOU LOCAL POLITICIANS MAKE SURE YOU ARE AWARE OF THEIR TAX PLANS AS WELL SINCE THEY CONTROL WHAT YOU PAY FOR YOUR

CIVIL RIGHTS

WHAT SHOULD YOUR RIGHTS BE? AFFIRMATIVE AND EQUAL OPPORTUNITY HAVE BEEN ISSUES THE COUNTRY HAS BEEN TRYING TO IMPROVE ON FOR OVER THE PAST FEW DECADES AND ESPECIALLY THE 2008 PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION THE ISSUE OF LGBT HAS SURPASSED THE ABOVE TWO. ALTHOUGH ALL SOMEWHAT RELATED, BELOW IS AN EXPLANATION OF A NEW TYPE OF CIVIL RIGHT MANY AMERICANS ARE FIGHTING FOR.

Betcha Didn't Know!
IN 2004 MASSACHUSETTS WAS THE FIRST STATE TO LEGALIZE SAME SEX MARRIAGE. Betcha Didn't Know

The Parties

Current Political Parties

AS OF THE 2008 PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION

THE 2 MAJOR PARTIES

WHEN FRANKLIN D. ROOSEVELT BECAME PRESIDENT HE COMPLETELY REFORMED THE DEMOCRATIC PARTY WITH HIS POLICIES FROM THE NEW DEAL. THE PARTY WAS UNITED AGAIN AFTER THE SPLIT FROM THE CIVIL WAR AND THE DEMOCRATIC PARTY HAS BEEN SOMEWHAT UNITED ON ISSUES SINCE THEN.

THE DONKEY (SYMBOL FOR THE DEMOCRATIC PARTY) WAS FORMED BY ANDREW JACKSON. HIS ENEMIES FELT THAT HE WAS A "JACKASS" FOR HIS VIEWS SO JACKSON USED THE DONKEY AS A SYMBOL FOR HIS CAMPAIGN POSTERS.

★★★★★★★★★★

DEMOCRATIC PARTY

★★★★★★★★★★

YEAR: 1828- CURRENT

PURPOSE: IN THE 2008 ELECTION THE PARTY STOOD FOR:

Fact Or

Fiction?

- UNIVERSAL HEALTHCARE
- SECURING THE NATION WHILE PROTECTING CIVIL RIGHTS
- HONEST GOVERNMENT
- IMMIGRATION
- ENERGY INDEPENDENCE
- SECURE RETIREMENT

THE GOP STANDS FOR "GRAND OLD PARTY".

FOR MORE INFORMATION:

WWW.DEMOCRATS.ORG

FICTION: THE GOP ORIGINALLY STOOD FOR "GALLANT OLD PARTY".

REPUBLICAN PARTY

YEAR: 1854- CURRENT

PURPOSE: IN THE 2008 ELECTION THE PARTY STOOD FOR:

- A SECURE GOVERNMENT
- REFORM FOR HEALTHCARE
- PROTECTING VALUES
- ENVIRONMENT PROTECTION
- EDUCATION MEANS A MORE COMPETITIVE AMERICA

FOR MORE INFORMATION: WWW.GOP.COM

The Process

Presidential Primaries

Qualifications to Run for President

Information can be found in the Constitution of the United States, Article II, Section 1, Clause 5

Eligibility

TO RUN FOR PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES YOU MUST BE A NATURAL BORN CITIZEN, OR A UNITED STATES CITIZEN. THESE CITIZENS MUST BE AT LEAST 35 YEARS OF AGE AND HAVE RESIDED IN THE UNITED STATES FOR AT LEAST 14 YEARS.

Fact or Fiction

A natural born citizen can be born outside of the U.S.

"FACT" If the parents are both U.S. Citizens and are living abroad temporarily (military), the child can still run for President.

THE PRIMARY January- June

A PRIMARY CONSISTS OF MORE THAN ONE PERSON FROM THE SAME PARTY RUNNING FOR THE SAME POLITICAL POSITION. A PRIMARY CAN HAPPEN WHEN RUNNING FOR ANY ELECTED POSITION, DISCUSSED HERE WILL BE THE PRESIDENTIAL PRIMARY.

THE YEAR BEFORE A PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION, THERE IS QUITE A BIT OF MYSTERY FLOATING AROUND AS TO WHO WILL BE THE TOP CONTENDERS FOR THE NEXT PRESIDENT-ELECT.

Closed Primaries IN ORDER TO VOTE IN A CLOSED PRIMARY YOU MUST BE A REGISTERED VOTER OF A SPECIFIC PARTY. IF THE PARTY YOU ARE REGISTERED UNDER IS RUNNING MORE THAN ONE CANDIDATE.

FOR EXAMPLE: IF YOU ARE REGISTERED UNDER THE DEMOCRATIC PARTY YOU MAY VOTE ONLY FOR A CANDIDATE RUNNING IN THE DEMOCRATIC PARTY.

The Process

United States

Presidents

CALVIN COOLIDGE

SERVED 2 PRESIDENTIAL TERMS

AUGUST 2ND, 1923- MARCH 4TH 1929

TOOK OFFICE AFTER DEATH OF WARREN G. HARDING

VICE PRESIDENT - SECOND TERM CHARLES DAWES

HERBERT HOOVER

SERVED 1 PRESIDENTIAL TERM

MARCH 4TH 1929- MARCH 4TH 1933

TOOK OFFICE AS A MEMBER OF THE

REPUBLICAN PARTY

VICE PRESIDENT

CHARLES CURTIS

FRANKLIN D. ROOSEVELT

Betcha Didn't

Know

FOR THE 2008 PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION THERE WERE 10 REPUBLICAN CANDIDATES AND

Quick Quip

"THE COUNTRY NEEDS AND, UNLESS I MISTAKE ITS TEMPER, THE COUNTRY DEMANDS BOLD, PERSISTENT EXPERIMENTATION. IT IS COMMON SENSE TO TAKE A METHOD AND TRY IT; IF IT FAILS, ADMIT IT FRANKLY AND TRY ANOTHER. BUT ABOVE

SERVED 4 PRESIDENTIAL TERMS
MARCH 4TH, 1933- APRIL 12TH 1945
TOOK OFFICE AS A MEMBER OF THE DEMOCRATIC PARTY
VICE PRESIDENT JOHN GARNER (1ST) HENRY WALLACE
(2ND) HARRY TRUMAN (3^{R.D})

HARRY S. TRUMAN

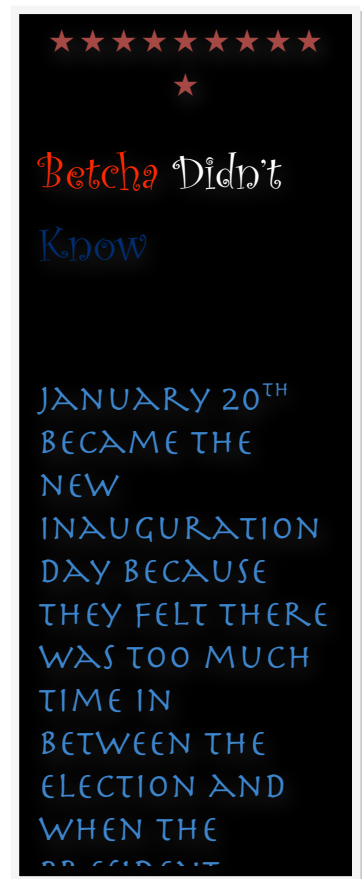
SERVED 2 PRESIDENTIAL TERMS
APRIL 12TH 1945- JANUARY 20TH 1953
TOOK OFFICE AFTER THE DEATH OF FDR
VICE PRESIDENT- SECOND TERM ALBEN BARKLEY

DWIGHT D. EISENHOWER

SERVED 2 PRESIDENTIAL TERMS
JANUARY 20TH 1953- JANUARY 20TH 1961
TOOK OFFICE AS A MEMBER OF THE REPUBLICAN PARTY
VICE PRESIDENT RICHARD NIXON

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Name _____

_____ Date