# AP US Gov: The Race for the Presidency of 2020

**The Issues Primer:**

**The Economy**:  When Bill Clinton ran for the Presidency in 1992, his mantra was "It's the economy, stupid!" Wall Street has rallied to a strong position since the 2007 recession and economic growth is at an all-time high, unemployment is at an all-time low, but many middle-class Americans feel they are getting squeezed economically and can't get ahead. Trade tariffs have harmed the farming and manufacturing sectors in many agricultural states.

**Foreign Policy:**  Mission is not accomplished! US troops are still in Afghanistan (since 2001) and some are urging that US troops be sent to Syria and Yemen after the recent civil war has displaced millions of people, sparking a refugee crisis in Europe. Under President Trump, the U.S. has withdrawn from the UN Human Rights Council, the Paris Climate Agreement, and continues to criticize NATO. Concerns about Russia's influence on US elections, nuclear capability in North Korea and Iran continue to be an issue. A migrant crisis from Central and South America continues to make immigration a hyper-partisan topic.

**Social Issues and Domestic Policy:**  Education has been a major issue during this time of tight state and local budgets and increased demands for accountability of teachers and schools nationwide. High school graduation rates are at a historic high while performance on college preparedness exams are lowering.

 Mass shootings and high rates of gun violence have placed gun control at the top of the agenda.

The War on Drugs has led to racial disparities in incarceration rates and overcrowded prisons while failing to address issues of addiction, leading many to seek reforms in the criminal justice system and the legalization of marijuana at the federal level. Tens of thousands of Americans are dying each year from drug overdoses.

After four years of intense polarization by race, gender, class, and political affiliation, America is looking for someone to unite the nation and heal its wounds.

**Environment and Health Care:**

On the environment, little action has been taken. President Trump withdrew the United States from the Paris Climate Agreement and has opened federal lands to fracking and oil production. Meanwhile hurricanes, droughts, and floods continue to increase in intensity, causing billions of dollars in destruction and the displacement of thousands of people from their homes.

A major conflict remains at the federal level over the Affordable Care Act, or Obamacare.  The law requires (almost) all Americans to have health insurance and imposes tax penalties on those who fail to purchase insurance.  It allows everyone, even those with pre-existing conditions, access to health insurance and provides assistance to those who can't afford it.

However insurance companies have stopped participating in many state markets and millions of people continue to be priced out of affordable health care. Republicans have tried unsuccessfully to repeal and replace Obamacare, as the patient protections are popular and there has yet to be a plan that increases the number of those insured.

**The Campaign Tasks:**

*Candidates:*

Task A: Candidate Bio, Campaign Announcement and Stump Speech

Task B: Interest Group Interviews, Debate, Final Appeal


*Campaign Team:*

Task A: Social Media Account, Campaign Ad 1, Assist with Debate Prep

Task B: Campaign Ad 2, Get Out The Vote appeal


*Media:*

Task A: Polling, Debate Prep, Candidate Interviews, Social Media Account

Task B: Debate Management, Scandal Coverage, Endorsement Op-Ed


*Interest Groups:*

Task A: Issues Intro Pamphlet and Presentation

Task B: Candidate Interview and Endorsement Advertisement

# AP US Gov: Mock Campaign: Candidate Task Card

**Objective:** Develop a candidate with a biography, values, and positions with a plan to engage voters and win an election.

**Task A: Candidate Bio, Announcement, and Stump Speech**

Part of the appeal of your candidacy comes from your personal story, which stems from the biography of you as a candidate. This can be entirely fictional, or you can include parts of your real life into your character. Here are prompts you should include in your presentation as a candidate:

| *Personal Background:* | *Professional Background* |
|---|---|
| Where are you from? | Political Experience |
| What kind of life have you had? | Business and/or Professional Experience |
| What are your successes? Failures? | |
| What are your values? | |
| What are your positions on the issues? | |
| Why do you want to be President? | |
| What will you do as President? | |
| What makes you a unique candidate? | |

**Stump Speech:** Prepare a speech to announce your candidacy for the Presidency. Introduce yourself to voters and make your intentions clear of **WHY** you are running, **WHAT** you will do as President, and **WHY** you are the BEST candidate to win in November. Presentation is key. Plan on your speech to be between 3 and 5 minutes. Afterwards, make yourself available to media for follow up questions.

**Task B: Interest Group Interviews, Debate, Final Appeal to Voters**

**Interest Group Interview**

As a candidate you need to send a signal to voters on where you stand on the issues. Your campaign also cannot rely solely on itself to get out the vote. You need support from interest groups. You need to respond to the interest group's questions during an interview so they can determine whether they will endorse you or not.

**Debate Prep and Debate**

This is your time to shine on the stage! You need to be able to present yourself as someone who is presidential, professional, and knowledgeable for the job. This requires preparation for the debate.

You know your stances, but start digging up facts to help support your beliefs. Also know your proposals in and out so that you can ask questions.

Be prepared to answer questions about your plans for the economy, health care, taxes, terrorism, gun control, criminal justice, education, and climate change. You will have limited response time during the debate so start practicing timing yourself to keep your responses under 1 minute.

# AP US Gov: Mock Campaign: Candidate Team Task Card

**Objective:** Manage media strategy, assist with policy and debate prep, and advocate for candidate to win an election.

**Task A: Social Media Account, Campaign Ad 1, Assist with Debate Prep**

Campaigns reach out to voters primarily through phone calls and the mail. However social media has become a free tool that campaigns use to reach wide audiences. In order to reach voters, you will be enacting two strategies.

**Social Media Presence:** Create a social media account for your candidate. Use frequent updates on policy, activities of the campaign, and voter outreach to develop a following for your candidate.

**\*DISCLAIMER\*** Be creative, **BUT** remember that although you are playing roles in a classroom assignment, the people involved are still STUDENTS with real lives. Avoid any kind of communication that would cause defamation, harassment, or harm to the real-life people behind the mock campaign. **\*\*\*\*\***

**Campaign Ad 1:**

You will be creating a mail or video advertisement to gain support for your candidate.

Your mailer or video must include the following:

Information about your candidate's qualifications, what they promise to do as President

Images

**BONUS POINTS** if you create a second attack ad, smearing your candidate's opponents.

See artifacts for examples.

**Debate Prep:** Assist your candidate in developing responses on policy and character. I recommend even doing a mock/practice debate.

**Task B: Second Ad, GOTV**

Your team will create a second ad, either video or mailer, and will also work to get your supporters to vote early or via absentee.

# AP US Gov: Mock Campaign: Media Task Card

**Objective:** Manage media strategy, host and manage debate, interview candidates, pose as public watchdog, and ultimately endorse a candidate in the race.

**Task A:** Polling, Debate Prep, Candidate Interviews, Social Media Account

**Polling:** Create and implement a poll to be conducted in the classroom. The purpose of this poll is to determine what kinds of issues are important to the voters, as well as to gather demographic data of each respondent such as age, gender, ethnicity/race, and any other demographic characteristics that will be informative to the candidates as well as voters.

**Debate Prep:** Establish the rules for the debate and create questions to be asked

i. How much time does each candidate get to address the audience? Will there be opening and closing statements?
ii. Are candidates allowed time to respond to attacks from other candidates on the stage?
iii. There are REQUIRED questions about health care, immigration, the economy, education, gun violence, criminal justice reform, and climate change. You can add anything else you want.

Submit a typed copy of the rules AND debate questions to joseph.nydle@dmschools.org so that I can print them off and give to the candidates so they are prepared.

**Candidate Interviews**: Observe announcements and stump speeches, then interview individual candidates. As a team, create one article that introduces voters to the candidates. Be sure to show the comparisons and contrasts between the candidates to help voters make informed decisions in the election.

**Social Media Presence:** Create a social media account for your media outlet. Use frequent updates on policy, activities of the campaigns, and other information you may find important to the public.

**\*DISCLAIMER\*** Remember that although you are playing roles in a classroom assignment, the people involved are still STUDENTS with real lives. Avoid any kind of communication that would cause defamation, harassment, or harm to the real-life people behind the mock campaign. **\*\*\*\*\***

**Task B: Debate Management, Scandal Coverage, Endorsement Op-Ed**

- Secure a location for the debate, create questions and rules, and manage the debate as well as its media coverage.

- You will be provided with a scandal involving one or more candidates. As a media team, you will be tasked with determining whether you will bury the story and choose not to cover it (therefore protecting the candidate) OR to break the story, expose the candidate, and potentially affect the election. The choice is yours!

- Newspapers and media often times offer an opinion-based endorsement of a candidate. You will be writing a one-page article endorsing a candidate who you support

**Some things to consider including in your op-ed:**

How the candidate's background makes them suitable to be the President

What policies/plans the candidate supports and why these are good for the country

If you need help, research some op-ed Presidential endorsements from The Des Moines Register, Chicago Tribune, New York Times, and so on…                    Submit your op-ed article to joseph.nydle@dmschools.org

# AP US Gov: Mock Campaign: Interest Group Task Card

**Objective:** Educate voters while advocating for a particular issue, and endorse/support the candidate that will best advance your cause.

**Task A: Issue Intro and Presentation**

Your task is to increase public awareness for the issues advocated by your particular organization. Not everyone knows the mission of your organization, so you will introduce your interest group and the causes you support.

Create a poster, powerpoint, or pamphlet that addresses the following and present to the class:
i.      What is the mission of your organization?
ii.     What positions/issues do you advocate on the behalf of?
iii.    Present any relevant statistics or information the class should know about.
        Ex: ACLU: "Stop and Frisk" is Unconstitutional, 1 in 4 women have had an abortion, etc.


**Task B: Candidate Interview and Endorsement Advertisement**

As an interest group, it is your job to try to get the candidate elected who will best further your cause as a policymaker. Part of your role in electioneering is to create the advertisement. Based on what you can learn about the candidates running, select one of the candidates you think would be best for your issue. For example: Planned Parenthood would likely endorse/support a candidate who opposed abortion restrictions.

To best identify the candidate that will further your cause the most, interview each candidate. Create a survey of 8-10 questions that will help you identify the candidate's stances on your issues.

Ex: ACLU:

1.  What is your solution for reducing racial disparities in drug sentencing?
2.  Should internet providers be required to share information about a person's user activity to government organizations if that person is suspected of links to terrorism?



You will be creating a mail advertisement to be sent to voters to gain support for your candidate.

Your mail pamphlet or flyer must include the following:

Information about your candidate's qualifications and/or why they are best for your interest

Images

See artifacts for examples.