



*A Union of Professionals*

**2008 Historic Election: A Teachable Moment  
AFT-Designed Lesson Plan**

**The Use of Technology in the 2008 Presidential Election**

**Grades:** 5-8

**Content areas:** Language arts, social studies and technology

**Objectives:** Students will understand the candidates' widespread use of technology and how it influenced voter turnout in the recent election.

**Materials needed:** Index cards; signs or posters with "Agree," "Disagree" and the technology statement below; chart paper; journal notebooks

**Instructional procedures:**

- Before class begins, place a blank index card on each student's desk.
- Post two signs on opposite sides of the classroom. One should say "Agree," the other "Disagree."
- Post the following statement at the front of the class.  
***The internet and other technology played an important role in the 2008 campaign and helped the candidates connect with voters on a personal level. This influenced voter turnout"***
- Ask students to think about the statement carefully and decide whether they agree or disagree with it and write their reasoning on the card provided.
- Have students go to the appropriate sign based on whether they "agree" or "disagree" with the statement. The "agree" group and the "disagree" group each will need to select a recorder who will write down everyone's reasons for selecting their group on a piece of chart paper. In both of the groups, have students give their reasons for why they agree or disagree with the statement. (This is the reasoning they put on their index card.)
- Post the charts on the wall and begin a discussion related to the statement about technology using everyone's ideas.
- Call on volunteers to explain the ideas presented by the two groups, encouraging students to provide specific reasons, facts and examples to illustrate their point of view.

In your discussion ask the following questions:

- Was the Internet an important tool for the 2008 campaign? Why or why not?
- Was any segment of the population more heavily targeted by Internet campaigning? If yes, which segment and why?
- Do you think young voters (ages 18-25) fit in to the Internet campaigning strategies? How?

- Did the Internet play a role in fundraising for candidates? If yes, in what way? Why is this important?
- If you were a voter, would you read candidate blogs or participate in live chats with candidates? Why or why not?

Have students go to candidates' Web sites and write critiques of the sites and their effectiveness in providing relevant information.

### **Extension activity**

Have students select one interest group or organization and research its Web site for the group's position on President Obama's policies. Have students track the organization's selected Web site activities between now and the end of the school year, and write weekly journal entries. Key questions to address in students' journal writing:

- What are the top issues for this organization?
- How does the organization or group believe the Obama administration plans to address its concerns?
- How does this group plan to use technology to garner support for its issues?

At the end of project, have students tell the class how their selected organization advocated for its issues over the past several months.