



TRY IT AT HOME: ELECTION 2020 CANDIDATE COMPARISON

Objectives

Research the candidates and complete the chart below to compare and contrast their values, experience, and policies. Decide who you would vote for if you were old enough and/or discuss with your parents who they are voting for and why. Then encourage your parents to vote! Go with them if you can.

Principle of Humanism Supported by Lesson

- ★ *We ask questions and are open-minded, critical thinkers.*
- ★ *We aim to be honest, responsible, compassionate, and empathetic.*
- ★ *We strive to protect and sustain the earth, its resources, and other species.*
- ★ *We use reason and science to seek natural explanations to events in the universe and to solve problems.*
- ★ *We hold to the principle of the separation of church and state.*
- ★ *We recognize human rights, justice, fairness, and diversity as essential elements of society.*
- ★ *We strive to experience life and develop as individuals.*
- ★ *We work to learn about and from both personal and world histories.*

Materials Needed

Here are some web resources to help you with this projects:

Go to this site to find out what U.S. legislative district you live in (it will be a number between 1 and 8) and what state senate district you live in. It will also tell you who your current representatives are.

<https://www.gis.leg.mn/iMaps/districts/>
<https://www.legis.iowa.gov/legislators/districtMaps>

Go to this site to see your sample ballot for the primary election based on where you live.

<https://myballotmn.sos.state.mn.us/>
https://ballotpedia.org/Iowa_elections,_2020

Differentiation for Age Groups

Youngest (ages 8-11) and Middle (Ages 11-13) - grab a caring adult to help you find and look up your voting district information and to help you find your sample ballots.

Oldest (Ages 14-17) Older campers may enjoy having deeper conversations with their caring adults about where they stand on certain issues or policies they see while researching candidates.

Activity Instructions

Learn!

Background Material

The National General Election is Nov. 3, 2020 when citizens vote for the candidates of their choice for a variety of positions among different political parties. But before we get to the general election, citizens must decide who they want to represent their political party in the general election. When more than one person wants to be the candidate within their political party, states hold **primary elections** to choose the one candidate for each party who will run in the **general election**.

For example, in 2018, more than one person wanted to be the Democratic candidate and the Republican candidate for governor. Citizens who identified with each party voted for the candidate of their choice. In the Minnesota primary election, Tim Walz won the most votes among Democrats and Jeff Johnson beat out other Republicans who hoped to become the candidate for their party. Later, in the general election, Tim Walz and Jeff Johnson ran against each other and Walz won to become our current governor.

This year Minnesota's primary election date is August 11 (Iowa's primary already occurred June 2nd this year). Several people are competing for various elected positions within the different parties. You may be seeing campaign ads for these candidates on the internet and on TV, seeing lawn signs, and receiving campaign literature in the mail. People can vote early through the mail or in person, or they can wait to vote on August 11th at the polling site in their neighborhood.

National Offices and Candidates

U.S. Senator: Every state has 2 U.S. senators who are elected for 6 years and represent the whole state. Amy Klobuchar (D) is one of our senators from MN. She is not on the ballot this year. Tina Smith (D) is our other senator and she is up for election this year. Many people are running against her -- other Democrats as well as people from other political parties.

U.S. Legislator: Minnesota is divided into 8 legislative districts of approximately the same number of people in each district, Iowa is divided into 4 districts. Citizens vote for one person in their legislative

district to represent them in the U.S. House of Representatives. Legislators are elected or re-elected every two years.

Minnesota State Offices and Candidates

State Senator – Minnesota has 67 senate districts for a total of 67 senators who represent us at the state capitol in St. Paul. Every Minnesotan is represented by one senator in their district. Similarly, Iowa has 50 senators that represent their state.

State House Representative – Each senate district is divided into two parts – A and B – to create 134 subdistricts for our state house representatives (134 in total). Every Minnesotan is represented in St. Paul at the capitol by one additional person from their sub-district A or B. Likewise in Iowa there are 100 seats in the state House of Representatives.

There are many other elected positions that could appear on a ballot and varies from city to city and county to county.

Create!

Create your own chart based on the one attached at the end of this document. Included here are the most well-known candidates running for U.S Senate and U.S. House of Representatives – but you may compare and contrast all candidates if you wish (look at sample ballot). Then fill in the state candidates running in your area to compare and contrast. In some cases, the candidate may have no significant opponent.

In the primary, you must choose one candidate within one party. You cannot vote for more than one person for each position.

Exploration

Once you find the candidate running for office, check out their websites to learn more about what their values, experience, and policies are. Keep note of what types of issues you see on a local and a national level.

Discussion

After comparing candidates which parties did you end up siding with more? Were you surprised by any of your picks?

Did you find any issues or policies that candidates did NOT address on their websites? How can you find out what a candidate thinks about issues not listed on their websites?

Were you able to find information on any third party candidates that are running? What did you think about their stance on issues and policies? Do you think you may want to vote for a third party candidate?

Do your parents or guardians know who they are voting for this election and primary season? Are you able to help show them the similarities and differences between candidates?

Ask your parents or guardians if you might be able to go to their polling places with them to vote or watch them fill out any mail in or absentee ballots. Was this process easy to do? Was anything confusing?

Additional Resources

Find your polling place: <https://www.vote.org/polling-place-locator/>

U.S. Senate Candidates	Party	Values	Experience	Policies	Other info of interest
Tina Smith	DFL				
Paula Overby	DFL				
Jason Lewis	Republican				
?	Republican				
U.S. Representative	Party	Values	Experience	Policies	Other info
	DFL				
	DFL				
	Republican				
	Republican				
State Senate	Party	Values	Experience	Policies	Other info
	DFL				
	DFL				
	Republican				
	Republican				
State Rep.	Party	Values	Experience	Policies	Other info
	DFL				
	DFL				
	Republican				
	Republican				