

II.G.15

The Other Side of Modernity

Barack Obama's presidency and its consequences – „Has Change Come?“

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Barack Obama war der erste afroamerikanische Präsident der USA. Große Hoffnungen, insbesondere der afroamerikanischen und jungen Bevölkerung der USA wurden auf ihn gesetzt, vieles sollte sich nun endlich zum Besseren wenden und die Gesellschaft der USA sollte (rassen-)gerechter werden. Doch hat sich die US-Gesellschaft wirklich signifikant gewandelt, sind soziale Ungleichheit und Rassismus unter Obama abgebildert worden? Diese Aspekte werden in dieser Reihe untersucht und von den Schülerinnen und Schülern von unterschiedlichen Materialien bearbeitet und beurteilt. In einer abschließenden LEK werden sie ihre im Verlauf des Unterrichts gewonnenen Erkenntnisse an und kommen zu eigenen Urteilen.

KOMPETENZPROFIL

Klassenstufe: 11/12

Dauer: 16 Unterrichtsstunden

Kompetenzen: Kenntnisse über landeskundliche Besonderheiten der USA in Bezug auf Gesellschaft und Politik erlangen; die Komplexität der US-Politik in Bezug auf Veränderungen in der Gesellschaft analysieren und bewerten

Thematische Bereiche: Contemporary History/„Landeskunde“

Auf einen Blick

1./2. Stunde

Thema: US – Elections – an Introduction

M 1 Elections in the USA – What do you know? / Bildimpuls mit Recherche und Brainstorming

M 2 Elephant vs Donkey: the major political parties of the USA / Darstellung der Republikaner und Demokraten, Textarbeit und Vergleich

3./4. Stunde

Thema: The Person Barack Obama

M 3 Barack Obama and his political stance in 2008 during the election campaign / Verfasserinterview mit Recherche und Präsentation

M 4a “President Superstar“ / Textarbeit, Vorbereitung und Durchführung einer Diskussion

M 4b Having a discussion / Anleitung und Hinweise, sowie wichtige Vokabeln und Phrasen für das Führen einer Diskussion

5./6. Stunde

Thema: A closer look on the Obama presidency – Obama’s legacy

M 5 The Obama years: Progress for the African-American community during the Obama administration? / Videoanalyse und Recherche in Gruppenarbeit

M 6 Progress you made in class, using the think – pair – share – method / Arbeit an interaktiver Timeline und Diskussion

M 7 After the Obama years... – Obama’s legacy / Auswertung der Diskussion und Analyse und Interpretation eines Cartoons

Lern- und Folgskompetenzen

LEK Wail Quasim on Barack Obama

M 1

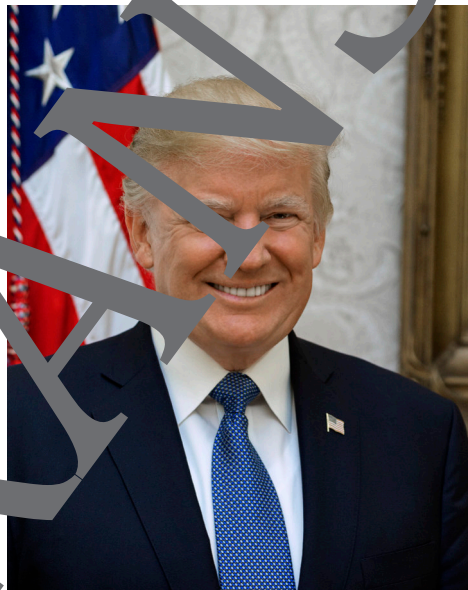
Elections in the USA – What do you know?



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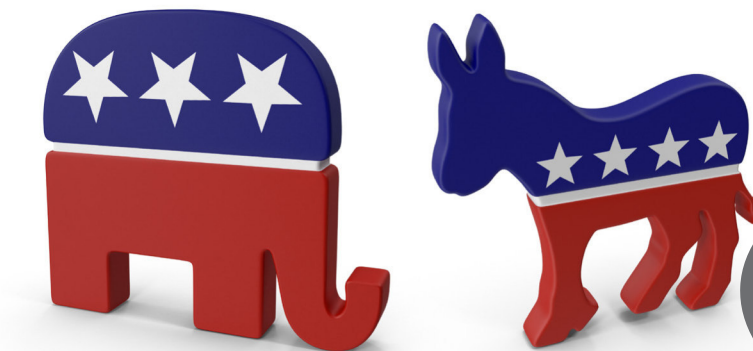
Tasks

1. What do you know about the US-American electoral system?
2. Name the persons above and what do you remember about the election campaign they were involved in?
3. What did the candidates stand for concerning their political background?

Elephant vs Donkey: the major political parties of the USA

M 2

In the US there are only two important political parties, the Republicans and the Democrats.



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The Republicans	The Democrats
<p>The Republican Party is often referred to as the Grand Old Party (GOP). It was founded in 1854 by anti-slavery expansion activists¹. The following famous Republicans became Presidents: Abraham Lincoln, Theodore Roosevelt, Richard Nixon, George W. Bush and Donald Trump. The Republicans are supported by business because they favor a free-market and policies supporting business and economic liberalism. They also favor private rather than government spending and apply this attitude to the welfare system as well grants³ being given to organizations to replace welfare spending and to minimize abuse. Republicans believe that strict environmental standards hurt business. Therefore, they support reductions in environmental regulations. The Republican Party has always advocated a strong national defense and supports unilateralism⁵ in issues of national security. They are of the opinion that only the best-trained and best-equipped army can guarantee and that cuts in funding the military are impossible. Furthermore, they believe in the capability and right of the United States to act without need for international support in its own self-interest. Traditional Republican voters are white, Protestant, married with children, and only</p>	<p>The Democratic Party was founded by Thomas Jefferson and James Madison in 1792. Democratic Presidents were: Harry Truman, John F. Kennedy, Lyndon B. Johnson, Bill Clinton and Barack Obama. Democrats generally call for higher taxes on the rich and on the middle class. They favor reduced government spending that keeps the national debt and budget deficit under control. The Democrats are against reducing or eliminating educational and social programs to control costs, arguing for their necessity in American society. The welfare system should be supported by the government to guarantee that all disadvantaged groups of society are taken care of: since the 1970s, environmentalism has been a major new issue. Democrats have opposed⁶ tax cuts and incentives⁷ to oil companies, favoring the development of domestic renewable energy. In foreign policy, Democrats usually oppose the doctrine of unilateralism, which dictates that the US should use military force without any assistance from other nations whenever it believes there is a threat to its security or welfare. They think that strong alliances⁸ and broad international support are important for the US and they are in favor of reducing the money spent on the military. The Democrats are</p>

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few have a college degree. Young voters, single-parents and homosexuals don't play a role in their voter base. Since 1980, geographically the Republican "base" is strongest in the South and West, and dominate rural areas and the majority of suburbs.

traditionally supported by African-Americans, Jews, Catholics, Labor Unions, Liberals and the generally disadvantaged and poor. The new group of voters is young and well educated. The party is now strongest in the Northeast, in the Great Lakes region as well as along the Pacific Coast, including Hawaii. The Democrats are also the strongest in major cities.

1 **anti-slavery expansion activists**: movement that was against slavery – 2 **spending**: here: investing – 3 **grant** (noun): money given for a particular purpose – 4 **to advocate**: to publicly recommend or support – 5 **unilateralism**: the process of acting, reaching a decision, or supporting a principle without the agreement of others – 6 **to oppose**: to disapprove of and attempt to prevent – 7 **incentive**: a thing that motivates or encourages one to do something here: benefits of the companies such as tax cuts – 8 **alliance**: an association to further the common interests of its members

Tasks

1. List the main differences between the two parties.
2. Find corresponding parties in Germany and compare the parties' platforms.
3. Choose an issue from the excerpt you are interested in and find out more details on the parties' websites or the summary of issues on the Internet.

“President Superstar“

M 4a

John F. Kennedy can be considered the first “superstar” president. He was young, he had a beautiful wife and cute children and he was a symbol of hope for the young Americans who wanted something new after the conservative 1950s era. Barack Obama was seen the same way by African Americans and the white population.



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New generation – new president?

Even before he was elected Barack Obama was celebrated like a superstar. His personal playlist was published and everybody was excited that songs by Jay-Z and other “modern” artists could be found. Obama was active on Flickr, publishing private and intimate pictures from the campaign and election night to be closer to his voters and the US-American population.

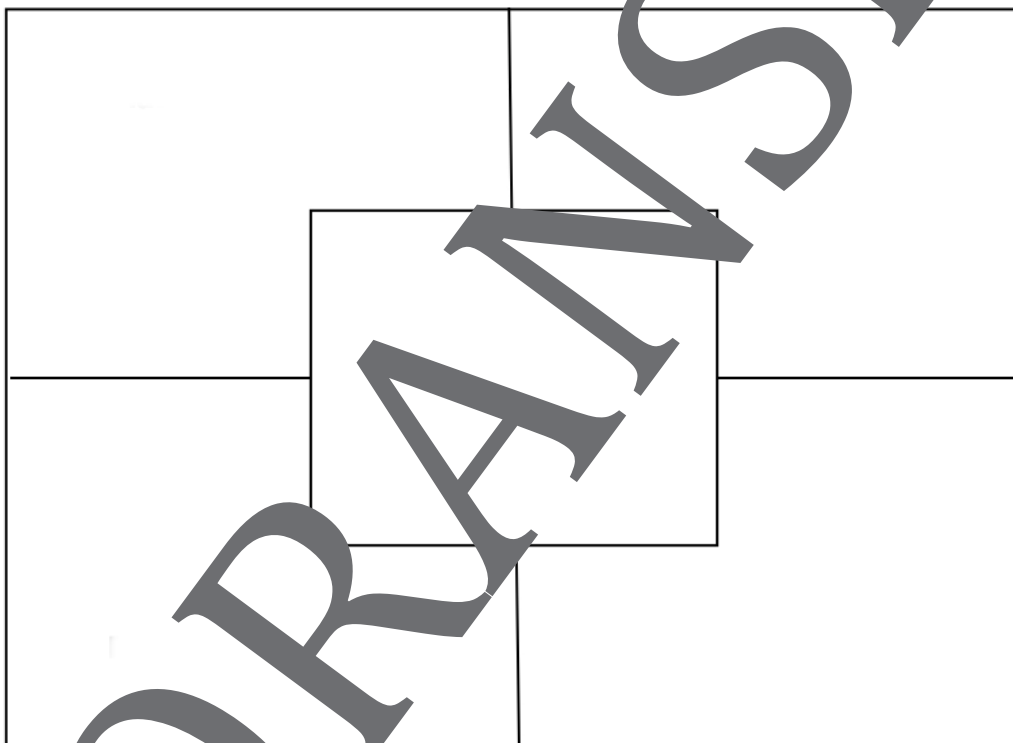
But was that just natural because he was from a different generation than his former opponent John McCain, who admitted to not know anything about computers and to rely on his wife and children to come to the computer? No presidential candidate has made such an excessive use of social media as Obama. Some say that this youthful and fresh attitude enabled him to gain over 2 million voters for his campaign working for him either online, making phone calls or walking door to door to advertise his cause. The majority of these volunteers was younger than 30. People donated for him and even though the majority didn't donate more than 20 \$, Obama's financial backing was nearly twice as much as John McCain's.

Obama could gain young and first-time-voters because he had convinced them they could make a difference. Some of the early-voting queues were 10 hours long, but people brought their own food and beverages and snacks to endure those circumstances in order to cast their vote. This was something completely new! Even the German newspaper Bravo published a poster showing Barack Obama – he was the first politician ever appear in this magazine that solely stands for pop culture.

- 20 Barack Obama and his wife Michelle have two young daughters, Malia, 10, and Sasha, 7. The family is also brought into the public; there was an interview where they shared details about their family life and nice pictures for the press were taken.

Tasks

- 1. Read the text and name at least two reasons for Obama’s popularity.
- 2. Prepare a discussion in a group of four about the pros and cons of “Obamamania” among young people worldwide. First, collect your ideas in a placemat, then prepare your text using the discussion phrases (**M 4b**). Prepare a skill sheet for the member of the group taking an active part in the discussion.



Having a discussion

M 4b

In a (classroom) discussion you exchange ideas and opinions with others. Discussions may be spontaneous or more formal, e.g. in panel discussions or debates. If possible, you should prepare so that you have your arguments and useful words and phrases ready.

Preparing a discussion

1. Form an opinion on the topic and note down arguments.
2. Think of counter arguments and of ways to refute them.
3. Arrange your notes so that you have the relevant facts ready during the discussion.
4. A prepared opening statement on the topic will ease your way into the discussion.

Choosing a chairperson

1. It is advisable to choose a chairperson to lead the discussion. He or she
 - a) moderates the discussion without taking sides.
 - b) steers the flow of the discussion.
 - c) is responsible for getting the discussion going and keeping it going.
 - d) must be well informed about the various aspects of the discussion topic.

Holding the discussion

1. *Stating your point of view on the topic*, e.g. give your prepared statement.
2. *Listening to what others say and referring back to their statements* to say which of the arguments do not convince you and why. You might counter an argument by asking a provocative question. Remember to bring in the facts you collected to support your argument.
3. *Reaching an agreement*. At the end of the discussion, even if you do not fully agree with each other, you need to reach some kind of agreement which you both accept.
4. *Summarizing*. At the end of the discussion, summarize your point of view or your main arguments. If a chairperson has moderated the discussion, he/she may summarize the main line of the discussion and round it off.

Taking part in a discussion

Stating/Expressing your opinion

- In my opinion/view...
- As far as I'm concerned...
- The way I see it, ...
- If you ask me,...
- I (personally) think/feel/reason/believe...
- I'm (absolutely) convinced that.

Involving a partner

- What do you think about...?
- Is there anything you'd like to add?
- We both seem to agree with that?

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