

# New Frontiers

A newsletter for ★ educators

THE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION AND PUBLIC PROGRAMS AT THE JOHN F. KENNEDY PRESIDENTIAL LIBRARY AND MUSEUM

## Did John F. Kennedy visit your town during his 1960 presidential campaign?

The John F. Kennedy Presidential Library and Museum collaborated with Historypin to develop and launch “Mapping JFK’s 1960 Campaign.” This interactive digital project geocodes photographs, documents, and stories from throughout the United States.

As the 2016 election season gains momentum, this digital project invites students and teachers, along with family and friends, to follow John F. Kennedy on the campaign trail and make their own connections



A Roadside Crowd in Madison, Illinois Cheers for Senator John F. Kennedy.

With geocoding technology, Historypin can place this historic photograph of a cheering crowd during a 1960 Kennedy campaign stop over the contemporary street view in Madison, Illinois.

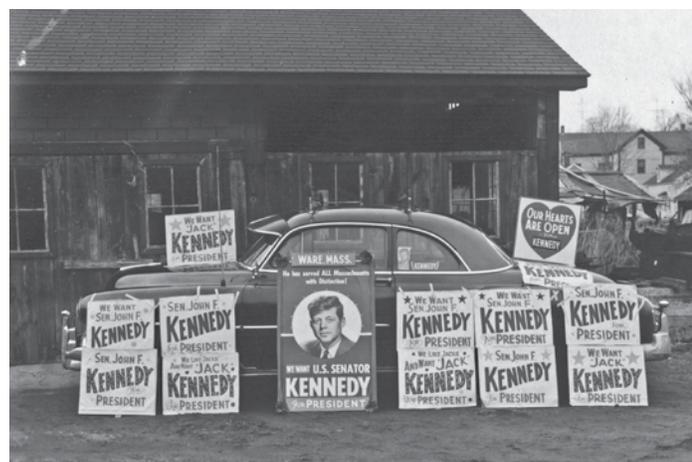
by “pinning” personal memories or materials. With a free Historypin account, you or your students can share videos, photographs, and stories. Each pin requires minimal information: a title, date and location.

The digital project features materials from the Kennedy Library’s 1960 presidential campaign files in the collection of Pre-Presidential Papers. You can make use of this interactive

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## Presidential Auditions, Then and Now: Analyzing Televised Debates with Your Students

Every four years, as Election Day approaches, Americans expect to see the presidential candidates in televised debates. As the respective campaigns prepare their candidates, they can look to history and examine what “worked” or didn’t for past candidates. Students today can also look back to see how political debates have changed over the years, and consider what impact debates have on election results. The first televised debate featured Senator John F. Kennedy and Vice President Richard M. Nixon.



Photograph of banners in support of Senator John F. Kennedy’s 1960 presidential campaign sent in a letter by James F. Kelleher, organizer of the “Kennedy for President” club in Ware, Massachusetts.

In 1960, both the Kennedy and Nixon campaigns realized that the relatively new medium of television would be an excellent opportunity for the country to become more familiar with their candidates. Over 70 million Americans, about 2/3 of the electorate, watched Senator Kennedy and Vice President Nixon in their first televised debate on September 26, 1960. Since then, in all but two elections (1968 and 1972), the major presidential candidates have faced off in the weeks preceding Election Day.

Political debates remain an important part of the election process, whether on the local, state, or national level. However, a lot has changed since 1960. In the first Kennedy-Nixon debate, the candidates were given 8-minute opening statements. Students can compare this format with more recent debates—which have either eliminated or allowed only brief opening statements. They can discuss the ramifications of this change for both the audience and the candidates. The 1960 debates were filmed in a studio with no audience—no applause or vocal reactions

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# Presidential Auditions, Then and Now: Analyzing Televised Debates with Your Students *continued*

to candidates' remarks. Furthermore, in 1960, the public watched the debates live—without the possibility of viewing them later on the internet. The medium of television changed the way voters engaged with politics in 1960. How are new technology and the growth of social media shaping the way the public responds to political debates today?

The Kennedy Library's online lesson plans provide a good introduction to the Kennedy-Nixon debates and can be used as a springboard for students to evaluate current political debates.



The following activities, adapted from the full online lesson plans, can help students critically engage with the 2016 presidential debates.

## Historical Background

In September 1960, a relatively new medium helped reinvent the traditional campaign. Just ten years earlier, in 1950, approximately 10% of American families owned



Senator Kennedy at the first televised presidential debate, September 26, 1960.

a television set. By 1960, the figure had skyrocketed to about 90%. Voters were able to watch presidential candidates side by side for the first time in history. Senator Kennedy, the Democratic candidate, and Vice President Nixon, the Republican candidate, had agreed to discuss their opinions on important issues in a series of four nationally televised debates. The first debate captured the attention of the nation.

On September 26, 1960, voters had an unprecedented close-up

of the candidates and witnessed two very different politicians through the first televised debate. Well-rested and confident, Kennedy looked directly into the cameras, speaking to the audience at home. His tanned face and dark suit contrasted well against the gray background of the studio. Nixon, recovering from a knee injury, appeared pale and sweated under the studio lights. His quick glances at Kennedy made him look nervous and uncertain. His lighter-colored suit blended into the gray background.

Did the debates help either candidate win over voters? Although three debates followed, the first encounter is thought by some historians to have changed the course of the election. Many voters evaluated the candidates based on their television appearance that night. Before the first debate, a Gallup poll showed Nixon only slightly ahead, 47% to 46%. After the first debate, polls showed Kennedy with a lead over Nixon, 49% to 46%. After the four debates, a survey revealed that of an estimated four million voters who were previously undecided before the debates, three million became JFK supporters.



Senator Kennedy campaigning in Dayton, Ohio, October 17, 1960.



### "DID YOU KNOW?"

The Commission on Presidential Debates provides resources for teachers and students on American political debates going back to Lincoln-Douglas in 1858. Information about the 2016 presidential debates as well as transcripts, videos, and formats of previous presidential debates can be found at [debates.org](http://debates.org). ★

## Elementary School Lesson

# Televised Debates: Candidates Take a Stand

**H**ow can educators use the 2016 presidential election to help young students learn about civic responsibility? In this activity, students “take a stand” on a variety of issues and use a photograph from 1960 to help them understand the importance of televised debates in a political campaign.

### Objectives

Students will be able to:

- Demonstrate how a debate works by taking a stand on an issue
- Describe the importance of the 1960 debates

### Materials

- An “Agree” poster and a “Disagree” poster
- Photograph of the last Kennedy and Nixon debate

### Procedure

1. Ask students how people decide which candidate to support in an election. (*Possible responses include considering the candidates’ knowledge and experience, their leadership qualities, and where they stand on the issues.*) Explain that knowing candidates’ views on the issues helps voters make an informed choice on Election Day. *What does it mean to take a stand?*
2. Place the “Agree” and “Disagree” posters on the wall, leaving enough space for students to gather at each poster. Read one or more of the following statements (or create your own) and ask students to stand next to the sign that represents their response to the statement.
  - *(5th) graders should be allowed to vote for president.*
  - *Students should be able to use cell phones during school.*
  - *School lunches should only include healthy food.*
  - *Every child in the United States should be able to go to pre-school.*
  - *The United States government should spend more money on helping veterans (people who served in the military).*
3. Ask two or more students from each side to give a reason why they “agree” or “disagree” with the statement. Invite students to change sides if they have changed their opinion after listening to their classmates’ responses.
4. Explain that televised debates can help voters learn where candidates stand on issues of concern such as education, the environment, or gun control from the comfort of their own homes. *What issues are of concern to you? What are some important issues in the coming election?*



PHOTO COURTESY OF ABC NEWS

Presidential candidates Vice President Richard M. Nixon and Senator John F. Kennedy at the last of four televised debates, October 21, 1960.

5. Show students the 1960 debate photograph. *What do you see in this photograph?*
  - What people do you see? What objects do you see?
  - What do you think the candidates are talking about? (*Explaining their beliefs, what they would do as president.*)
  - Why is it important to have both candidates in the same place? (*To hear what each candidate thinks is important, what they plan to do, and compare their ideas, knowledge, and beliefs.*)
6. Explain that the photograph was taken on October 21, 1960 at the last of four televised debates between presidential candidates Senator John F. Kennedy and Vice President Richard M. Nixon. Share background information about the first televised debates. Have students discuss what voters can learn about candidates by watching presidential debates on television and how they can best use that information in their voting decisions.

### Extensions

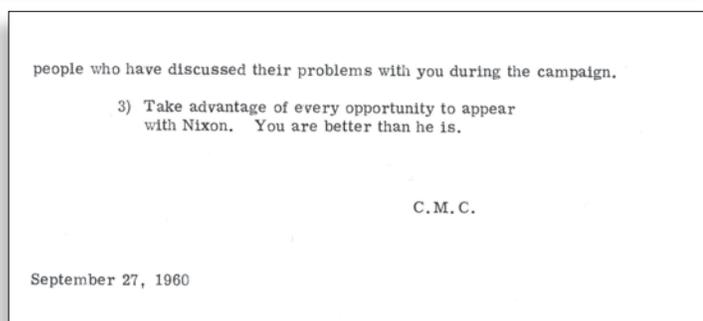
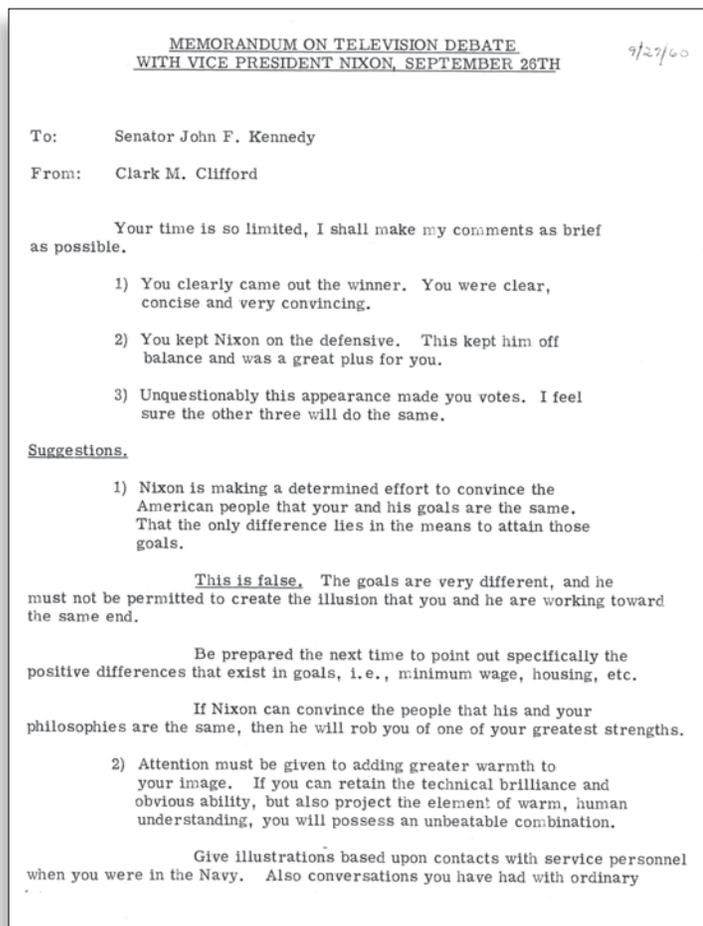
- Brainstorm important issues in the upcoming election. Select an issue and have students research the topic. Hold a debate with selected students stating their reasons why they agree or disagree with an idea or policy.
- Have students watch excerpts of your choosing from the 2016 debates (September 26, October 4, October 9, or October 19). Ask them to record a topic the candidates addressed and where they each stood on the issue.

For the complete lesson plan including related standards, additional activities, and a reading for students, visit [jfklibrary.org/ElementarySchool](http://jfklibrary.org/ElementarySchool).

## Middle and High School Lesson

# Political Debates: Advising a Candidate

In what ways can televised political debates persuade voters to support a particular candidate? In this activity, students use excerpts from the first Kennedy-Nixon debate and a memo assessing Kennedy's performance to help them evaluate current political debates.



## Objectives

Students will be able to:

- Analyze a primary source
- Consider what makes a candidate a “winner” or “loser” in a debate
- Determine what issues are important to the student in an upcoming election
- Select a candidate they think most aligns with their views on the issues
- Watch a debate and evaluate the performance of the candidates
- Write a memo to their chosen candidate giving him or her advice on how to improve his/her performance in a future debate

## Materials

- *JFK in History: Campaign of 1960* ([jfklibrary.org/Campaignof1960](http://jfklibrary.org/Campaignof1960))
- Excerpts from September 26, 1960 debate
- Memo to Senator Kennedy from Clark Clifford, September 27, 1960
- Debate Score Sheet

## Procedure

1. Have students read *JFK in History: Campaign of 1960* for historical background on the debates at [jfklibrary.org/Campaignof1960](http://jfklibrary.org/Campaignof1960).
2. Have students read excerpts from the September 26, 1960 debate. (The entire debate transcript and video footage is available at [jfklibrary.org/FirstDebate](http://jfklibrary.org/FirstDebate).)
3. Provide students with the September 27, 1960 memo and introduce Clark Clifford, an attorney and presidential campaign advisor.
4. Discuss the following:
  - What points does Clifford make indicating that Kennedy was “the winner”? (*JFK was concise, convincing, and kept Nixon on the defensive.*)
  - Brainstorm how a candidate can be convincing and how he/she may keep the other candidate on the defensive.
  - What are Clifford's main concerns? (*Kennedy should make sure voters know that his political goals are different from Nixon's; he needs to differentiate himself; and he needs to show more personal warmth.*)

The full Clark Clifford Memo can be downloaded with the lesson plan at [jfklibrary.org/PoliticalDebates](http://jfklibrary.org/PoliticalDebates).

- What are Clifford’s suggestions for dealing with these concerns? (*JFK should be specific in bringing up the differences in their goals; he should bring up his discussions with ordinary people and his contacts with Navy servicemen to show he understands the concerns of average Americans.*)
  - Why would it be important for Kennedy, as the challenger, to differentiate his goals from those of the incumbent administration?
5. Use Clifford’s concerns and suggestions as you discuss with your students the criteria to determine which candidate is the “winner” of a debate. (Consider specific attributes and strategies.)
  6. Brainstorm the issues in the upcoming election. Write them on the board. Have students discuss where they stand on the issues.
  7. Have students research where the candidates stand on these issues, and have them write a one-page paper describing which candidate’s views are most compatible with their own and why.
  8. Use the lesson plan “score sheet” handout or develop one with your students. (There are a few suggested attributes on the handout. Add others based on the previous brainstorming with students.)

### Assessment

For homework, have students watch a political debate, filling in a score sheet handout to help them evaluate the debaters. Have them use their score sheet to write a memo to their chosen candidate in the style of Clark Clifford, noting:

- Who they think “won” the debate
- What worked or didn’t work for their candidate
- How their candidate can help to improve his/her image
- What their candidate can do to better persuade voters that he/she is the right choice for them

Encourage students to use their memo as a way to give specific advice to their candidate, not as an opportunity to denigrate the other candidate.

For the complete lesson plan including related standards, additional activities, and a reading for students, visit [jfklibrary.org/HighSchool](http://jfklibrary.org/HighSchool)

## Classroom Resources about Campaigns, Elections, and the Office of the President

The fast approaching 2016 presidential election presents a unique opportunity for civic engagement. Explore how political campaigns have evolved since 1960.

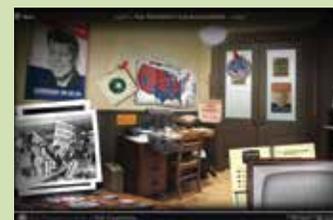
### ★ Classroom Resources [jfklibrary.org/CampaignResources](http://jfklibrary.org/CampaignResources)

Background information packets, primary sources, and lesson plans help bring the energy of the 1960 campaign into your classroom. There are resources specifically for elementary, middle, and high school students.



### ★ The President’s Desk [microsites.jfklibrary.org/PresidentsDesk](http://microsites.jfklibrary.org/PresidentsDesk)

Sit at *The President’s Desk* in the Oval office and explore President Kennedy’s treasured mementos and important historical records. Click on the campaign button on the Oval Office desk to explore the interactive 1960 Kennedy Campaign Office. More than 1,000 primary sources are featured in this digital resource to provide an engaging and fascinating look into JFK’s life and presidency.



### ★ 2016 National Student/Parent Mock Election [jfklibrary.org/MockElection](http://jfklibrary.org/MockElection)

It is not too late to register your students to participate in the 2016 election! This voter education program actively engages K-12 students in state and national campaigns. The program emphasizes the importance of voting and the power of their ballots. Register your school to participate and receive curriculum packets featuring candidates’ biographies, their positions on the issues, and classroom activities.

The Kennedy Library will once again serve as state coordinator. Massachusetts educators may register by emailing [educationjfk@nara.gov](mailto:educationjfk@nara.gov). Educators outside of Massachusetts may sign up at [www.NationalMockElection.com](http://www.NationalMockElection.com).



### ★ #ElectionCollection

Get out your historic buttons, bumper stickers, hats, and banners! Together with the Presidential Libraries of the National Archives and *American Experience*, the JFK Library is taking part in the #ElectionCollection—a weekly challenge featuring presidential campaign memorabilia. Every Tuesday until the presidential election on November 8, follow us on Instagram and Twitter @JFKLibrary as we share items from our collections on the campaign of 1960.



## The 2017 Profile in Courage Essay Contest Celebrates JFK★100

Celebrate the JFK Centennial by encouraging your students to write a new profile in courage. The contest challenges US high school students to write an original research-based essay on the political courage of a US elected official. In honor of the JFK Centennial, students have the opportunity to receive increased scholarship awards and may profile the political courage of a US elected official who served during or after 1917, the year John F. Kennedy was born. Essays must be between 700 to 1,000 words (not including citations and bibliography). Students should use at least five varied reliable sources such as books, articles, documents, and personal interviews. Participants are also encouraged to use primary source materials such as letters, speeches, and government documents. Visit [jfklibrary.org/contest](http://jfklibrary.org/contest) for contest guidelines, curriculum materials, and related curriculum standards. The deadline for submission is **January 4, 2017**. ★



John F. Kennedy graduates from Harvard University, June 1940

**JFK•100**  
CENTENNIAL CELEBRATION  
1917 - 2017

**2017 PROFILE IN COURAGE ESSAY CONTEST**

**Challenge your high school students to write a new profile in courage.**

- **JFK Centennial Contest Topic**  
Describe and analyze an act of political courage by a U.S. elected official who served during or after 1917, the year John F. Kennedy was born.
- **Special Centennial Awards**  
First-place prize has been increased to \$20,000. Scholarship awards for top 25 essays.

**Deadline for submission is January 4, 2017.**

For complete contest information, please visit the Profile in Courage Essay Contest at **JFKlibrary.org**.

*Fulfills Common Core State Standards for English Language Arts and Literacy in History/Social Studies*

**JFK•100**  
CENTENNIAL CELEBRATION

*John Hancock*

**JOHN F. KENNEDY**  
LIBRARY FOUNDATION

### Did John F. Kennedy visit your town during his 1960 presidential campaign? *continued*

project by having students browse the Historypin map to see videos, speeches, and photographs of rallies. What connections can be made to their local community or region? Additionally, have them research how their town might have been touched by the 1960 campaign. Students can then upload materials from local libraries, archives, or family members. They can consider how moments of the Kennedy campaign compare with those of current national, state, and local political campaigns. Visit [historypin.org/en/jfk-1960](http://historypin.org/en/jfk-1960) to begin exploring this digital tool. ★



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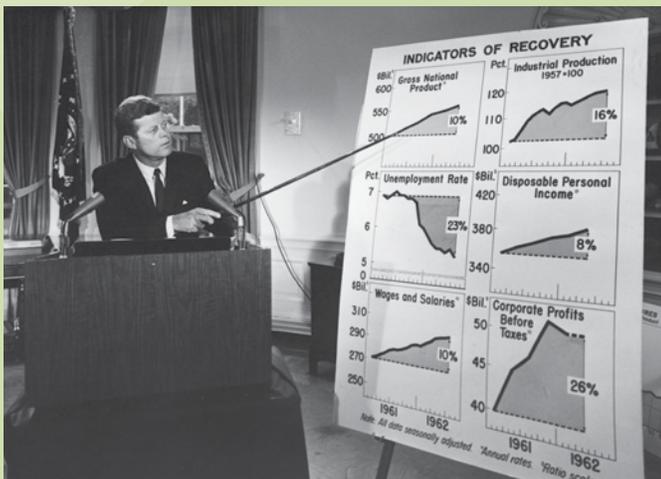
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*The Kennedy Library  
Department of Education and  
Public Programs offers free  
museum passes to teachers  
considering a field trip to the  
Library. Please call 617.514.1600.*

**Museum Hours**

Daily, 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. ♿  
Closed Thanksgiving,  
Christmas, and New Year's Day

**Bring Your Students to the Kennedy Library to Develop the Federal Budget**



President Kennedy addresses the economy in a nationally broadcast address from the Oval Office, August 13, 1962.

The Kennedy Library will present **Setting National Priorities: A Federal Budget Simulation**, a program for high school juniors and seniors. The goal of this program is to bring together students from different communities to consider how our nation's priorities are established through decision-making about the national budget. In this simulation, students are economic advisers to the president. Working in small groups with peers, they examine the discretionary funding categories and negotiate with one another to determine how much to invest in each.

The program will be offered on:

- ★ February 10, 2017
- ★ February 16, 2017
- ★ March 1, 2017
- ★ March 7, 2017
- ★ March 17, 2017

*With generous support from:*



Teachers interested in registering their students should contact Nina Tisch at [nina.tisch@nara.gov](mailto:nina.tisch@nara.gov) by December 2016. To enable more schools to participate, we ask that each school send no more than 45 students. ★

*Additional support for the John F. Kennedy Presidential Library and Museum's history and civic education programs is provided by:*

