

Growing Voters and Election 2012

Activity Title: **Produce Campaign Ads**

Grades: high school grades

Overview

Students working in groups design and produce campaign commercials for each candidate (or focus on a particular issue). Student created projects can be in the form of print ads or TV commercials or audio versions (radio-like podcast or shared audio online). Ads can be viewed on a number of safe and reliable websites, like the independent or non-partisan sites. See the GrowingVoters.org tools list for resources.

Activity:

1. Begin with students watching commercials from other elections. - **The Living Room Candidate contains more than 300 commercials, from every presidential election since 1952** <http://www.livingroomcandidate.org/>
2. Discuss as a class the key features of a political advertisement or have the students write up what they notice about political ads (current and past).
3. Working in teams, students design a commercial. Decide who will work on candidates and who will work on campaign issues. (Or on electoral processes, see below.)
4. Gathering materials: Students can download video clips which can be used to construct new commercials or they can put together still photos into a montage, using for example photostory.com.
5. Students can also video their own original production and edit it together into their own campaign commercial. Using even a digital camera with short "video capture" or loading short clips from the internet, free online software at ontruemedia.com allows students to easily storyboard and edit together a short video with text.

At WeVideo.com or Videolicious.com or Vimeo.com videos can be stored online where they are easy to view, show, and share.

Audio with Print version:

Use the free online tool Padlet.com to add student voices to images, graphics or photos from students. Students can create their print advertisement and then either annotate the ad with their verbal or text commentary; or they can record a voiceover commercial to go with their print ad.

Have the students upload a .jpg format image or photo of their work onto whatever online platform you select to roundup the class project. This image file can be created in PowerPoint and then use “save as” to convert it into a .jpg file.

Once the (student-created advertisement) file is in place, i.e. on Vimeo, Padlet, (or on Voicethread for a fee), students can either press the button to record themselves or upload audio clips to make a commercial.

Making a podcast of the commercial is another audio option.

Sharing Commercials:

When students have completed their political ads, they can post them on GrowingVoters.org Facebook or share the url with other students. It would be fun to make a contest or otherwise share with another class or school.

Alternatives and Extensions Ideas:

Have the students design a commercial to explain the electoral college; or the idea of "battleground" or contested states.

History: this activity is easily applied to a history lesson: have the students make a commercial about a past election. This would mean researching a past president to figure out how to “market” the candidate. This approach could also explore the political context of an election year in the past, i.e. Civil Rights, or the Vietnam War, or the Progressive Era, or Women getting the vote, etc.