

Growing Voters and Election 2016

Activity Title: **White House Correspondents: Create Online Newspaper for Coverage of the New President**

Elementary grades*

There is a White House press corps that occupies a full press room in the West Wing of the White House. In this activity, students role-play some of the 250 people “White House correspondents” keeping a daily watch on the administration, relying heavily on their proximity to the president and his (or her) staff inside the walls of the historic building. (whca.org)



Photos/WHCASM and the National Archives

Overview

On November 8, 2016 Americans voters will elect a new President. In this activity students create materials to explore the significance of turning points in current American history. Students will become news correspondents from the White House. They will do internet research and compose their own coverage on the subject of the new President, Mr. Trump or Sec. Clinton, taking office in the White House.

Working in groups they will create newspaper coverage to explore what happens when the new President gets to the White House.

Tools could be a simple Word doc, a PowerPoint set of slide, a Canva presentation, a Blog site (i.e. Blogger.com) or a Padlet to put words and pictures online. (See tools link on GrowingVoters.org website.)

Through brainstorming the class can make decisions about what articles are needed and make the story assignments that go with them. The class can be divided into **groups of correspondents and writers/ editors / artists / publishers**. (All can serve as distributors of the finished paper.)

Students can illustrate the newspaper with their own original artwork. Pictures can be digitally scanned and uploaded to the document or produced on paper and added to the printed newspaper. Or downloaded images (in keeping with Educational Fair Use guidelines below.**)

Students working as White House correspondents can also excerpt from interviews to support their reports. And where possible, students may be able to interview members of the public on their reactions to the new president, the inauguration, the new Cabinet officials, policy priorities,

Teach the Presidential Election: A range of technology-infused classroom activities, resources, and tools are **available for free** at GrowingVoters.org, a non-partisan educational effort to enliven and motivate student engagement in the political process. Professor Jo-Anne Hart is the project creator with support from *Lesley University* Graduate School of Education, Cambridge, MA: Hart@Lesley.edu

etc. Interview questions can include, for example: how extensively the person is following the transition in the White House; will they / did they watch the inauguration; what do they expect the new president will do first in the White House?

Check with the school to see if the newspaper can go on the school's website. Students can also use an online blog or social media to publish their work.

An additional activity is to use audio to have students record their news articles so that non-readers can have access to the class newspaper.

Options here are for on-going news coverage by the class or to publish a single Special Issue edition.

Teachers can assign, or the class can collaborate to design, what should be covered on the incoming President. Suggestions for the newspaper include the following list:

Life Before the Presidency • Summary of Key Points of the Campaign • Election Results
• Policy Priorities of the New President • Selecting Advisors and Forming the Cabinet •
Impact and Legacy of the President Departing the White House • Coverage of First
Spouse • Inauguration Speech • Inauguration Events and Gala Photos • Fun Facts

Students can download photos, speeches, music, and cut and paste from other news reports. Student-generated text (or audio) coverage should simulate newspaper or magazine coverage of these historic events. The class may need to look together online at examples of newspaper and magazine coverage of the White House to see how correspondents report.

There is a White House Correspondents' Association now over 100 years old to advocate for reporters on the president's "beat." <http://www.whca.net/> Background and photos can be seen on their website.

Teachable moments include:

1. What makes history?
2. How old does history have to be to be considered history?
3. What in the current transitions in the White House strikes you as historic and why?

Select Assignment Scope:

The teacher should also decide whether this can be an **ongoing assignment** over the semester, to follow the transition, the inauguration, the new President starting in the White House, the beginning of the new administration choices and his/her policies, etc. Or if this is to be a one-time Special Issue newspaper or magazine.

***easily adaptable to upper grades** by making the newspaper coverage more extensive.

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Looking out at reporters and photographers from the podium where the President gives speeches:

