

## Lesson 4 The Media

**Objective:** Students will observe media coverage of the election and assess information provided by campaign literature and advertisements.

**Handouts:** Video - teachers tape their own commercials of candidates' ads ; (14) Campaign Advertising; (15) Analyzing Political Advertising; (16) FactCheck.org; (17) Cartoons for the Classroom; (18) Savvy Voter.

### A. Warm-up

What should an informed voter know today? Or, since we last met, what have you heard (read or seen) about the election?

After watching a debate, do you think they help voters become more well-informed? Why or why not?

### B. Explore Political Advertising

Explore and analyze political advertising. Distribute *Campaign Advertising* handout and identify the four main types of ads. Then watch video, look at printed literature. Looking again at the handout, identify what kinds of ads you just saw. Answer the questions posed.

Using *Analyzing Political Advertising* with videos of candidates' ads, identify techniques used in ads that enhance or detract from a candidate.

Use FactCheck.org to assess candidates' stump speeches and ads. Handout 15 explains -- by providing examples -- where both sides present distortions in their speeches. FactCheck, a project of the Annenberg Public Policy Center of the University of Pennsylvania, is a valuable resource and worth checking out.

### C. Political Cartoons

Collect political cartoons about the candidates; white-out the words and ask the students to make their own captions. *Cartoons for the Classrooms* can get you started. (Jack Ohman's political cartoons: <http://cagle.slate.msn.com/politicalcartoons/PCcartoons/ohman.asp>.)

### D. Journalism - Print, TV, Radio

Look for reporting reflecting a point o view. Select an article about the candidates from a newspaper. Can you find examples of bias or prejudice; does the writer use "loaded" words? Example: compare "the candidate was met by a group of supporters" with "looking like a leader, the candidate was eagerly greeted by throngs of enthusiastic supporters." Observe for the same on TV and radio.

Most people get political information from television news. Now through the election, the news will be dominated by data from polls. For an excellent discussion on how to interpret polls see Savvy Voter, Handout 17; it will also bridge this lesson with the next one on polling.

### D. Extended Activities

#### Homework / Journal Entry

What surprised you about a specific advertisement or about political advertising techniques in general?

Make your own ad. Create campaign buttons, bumper stickers, or posters for a candidate, or for being an informed voter.

Look for trends of biased reporting by one reporter, one newspaper, or one station.