

Social Media and Elections

Social media provides politicians with expansive new opportunities to use political language and visuals to influence voters. Activities ask you to evaluate social media campaigns for an upcoming election at the local, state, or national level, and then you will design an online campaign to support your own run for political office.

It is estimated that 72% of U.S. voters actively use social media ([Social Media Could Determine the Outcome of the 2020 Election](#), Forbes, October 26, 2020).

As Pinar Yildirim of the University of Pennsylvania pointed out, social media platforms, like Twitter, Facebook, and Instagram, allow political figures, particularly newcomers and candidates, to reach millions of people at little or no cost ([How Social Media is Shaping Political Campaigns](#), Knowledge@Wharton, August 17, 2020).

The 2020 election saw enormous investments in social media by candidates and political parties. Both Presidential campaigns set new records for spending on political ads on Facebook.



[Watch on YouTube](#)

Activity 1: Evaluate Social Media Campaigns for an Upcoming Election

- Choose a political candidate who is running for office in an upcoming election (within the next 1-2 years). It can be a candidate for President, Senate, House of Representatives, or a state or local office.
- Curate a digital collection (e.g., Wakelet, Padlet, Google Slides) of social media posts by the political candidate.
- Evaluate the political candidate's use of political language, visuals, and propaganda techniques in their social media posts for [how it might influence the partisan brain](#).
- Then, take a deep dive to critically analyze their social media posts within and across social media platforms using the [Teacher and Student Guide to Analyzing Social Media](#).
- **Create an interactive image or screen recording** in which you deconstruct the meaning behind the words and visuals of the social media posts that you analyzed and share your digital media product with the public to inform their thinking.
 - Interactive image:
 - Start a new [Google Drawings canvas](#).
 - Upload screenshots of social media posts to the canvas.
 - Insert text boxes and shapes to call attention to your findings.
 - Add links to additional information (e.g., the original image source).
 - Screenrecording:
 - If you have a Mac computer, [use this shortcut](#).
 - If you have access to Quicktime, here's [how to screenrecord using Quicktime](#).
 - Otherwise, use a web-based screenrecording tool such as [Screencastify](#), [Screencast-o-Matic](#), or [Loom](#).

Designing for Learning: Student-Created Activity Example

[Evaluate Social Media Campaigns for an Upcoming Election](#) by Olivia Ferreira, Jessica Tango, Brian Hasson, & Stephen Shaw

Activity 2: Design a Social Media Campaign to Support Your Run for Political Office

- Explore the use of [propaganda techniques](#) in the [History of Presidential Campaign Posters](#) and [Political Commercials from 1952 to 2016](#).
- Decide which of these propaganda techniques you are going to use to persuade others to vote for you.
- Design a social media campaign to support your run for political office.
 - The social media campaign should include at least 2 videos (e.g., YouTube, Snapchat, TikTok), 5 example posts, and 3 images (e.g., memes, graphics, infographics) designed by you.

Designing for Learning: Student-Created Activity Example

[Design a Social Media Campaign to Support Your Run for Political Office](#) by Jessica Tango

Additional Resources:

- [2020 social media voter scorecard](#)
- [Is breaking news broken on social media lesson plan](#)
- [5 Things to Check Before Sharing News About Politics](#)
- [How to Find Credible Information About the Election \(and Avoid Getting Duped\)](#)

Connecting to the Building Democracy for All eBook

[Building Democracy for All: Persuasion, Propaganda, and Political Language in Elections](#)

Connecting to the Standards

- [Massachusetts Civics & Government Standards](#)
 - Evaluate information related to elections. (Massachusetts Curriculum Framework for History and Social Studies) [8.T4.6]
- [ISTE Standards](#)
 - Digital Citizen
 - 2c: Students demonstrate an understanding of and respect for the rights and obligations of using and sharing intellectual property.
 - Knowledge Constructor
 - 3b: Students evaluate the accuracy, perspective, credibility and relevance of information, media, data or other resources.
 - 3c: Students curate information from digital resources using a variety of tools and methods to create collections of artifacts that demonstrate meaningful connections or conclusions.
 - Creative Communicator
 - 6a: Students choose the appropriate platforms and tools for meeting the desired objectives of their creation or communication.
 - 6b: Students create original works or responsibly repurpose or remix digital resources into new creations.
 - 6d: Students publish or present content that customizes the message and medium for the intended audiences.
- [DLCS Standards](#)
 - Ethics and Laws (CAS.b)
 - Interpersonal and Societal Impact (CAS.c)
 - Digital Tools (DTC.a)
 - Collaboration and Communication (DTC.b)
 - Research (DTC.c)
- [English Language Arts > History/Social Studies Common Core Standards](#)
 - CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.6-8.1
 - CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.6-8.6
 - CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.6-8.7
 - CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.6-8.8
 - CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.9-10.1
 - CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.9-10.5
 - CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.9-10.8
 - CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.11-12.1
 - CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.11-12.7
 - CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.11-12.8



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