



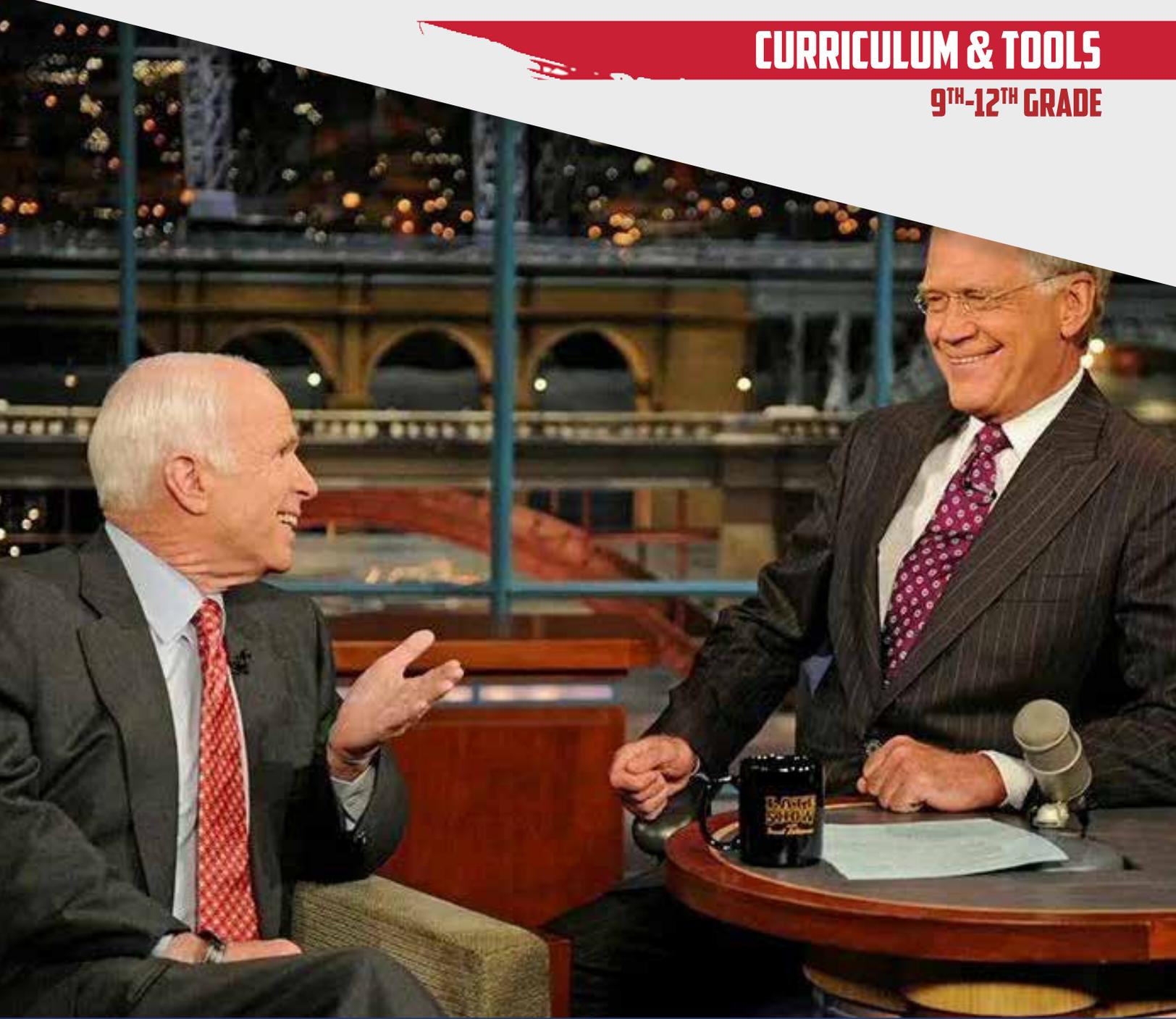
THE

GREAT DEBATES™

POWERED BY THE MUSEUM OF BROADCAST COMMUNICATIONS

CURRICULUM & TOOLS

9TH-12TH GRADE



**PRESIDENTIAL CAMPAIGNS
DEBATES & LATE NIGHT PARODIES**



PRESIDENTIAL CAMPAIGNS: THE INFLUENCE OF MEDIA

This high-school lesson plan has been developed to help students improve media literacy by looking at different aspects of how presidential candidates have been covered over time and how that coverage changes the behavior of candidates during their campaigning.

By examining how late-night comedy shows, commentary and news broadcasts cover and talk about the candidates, students can see the different perspectives these media present. People view candidates and elections differently depending on factors such as gender, race and political affiliation. The presidential debates have been a part of campaigning consistently for the past four decades, but as the media continues its constant evolution, it disrupts the norm, disrupts the campaigns and its new forms become news as well as part of the candidates' story.

Evaluating debate coverage focuses the students on specific historical candidates' performances and the subsequent coverage. Students can then look at how the candidates later acted in delivering statements as well as their tone, attitude or behaviors that may contradict the speeches they are giving. Late-night comedies usually focus on that disconnect.

For the assessments, students will select one candidate and review the coverage through the materials available at The Great Debates pages from the Museum of Broadcast Communications website. They will have access to the archives of MBC materials as well, should they want to explore further. The students have the option to present their findings in writing, oral reports or multimedia presentations, depending on interest and access to digital equipment and projections.

SUMMARY

This module presents how comedy and television effect a candidate's debate performance after the fact. Whether it is a critique and or a parody, late-night comedic television is an important influence on the candidates. Students will review highlights of a single debate, the media narratives that followed and subsequent debate performance. Evaluating debate coverage allows students to formulate opinions about whether the media has direct influence on the candidates' behavior or public perception or whether the media is reflecting existing public opinion.

MATERIALS NEEDED

Teacher

- Access to website
- Teacher computer/projector

Student

- Pens/pencils
- Worksheets
- Access to website, student computers or ipads
- Assignment handouts

STANDARDS

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.9-10.6

Compare the point of view of two or more authors for how they treat the same or similar topics, including which details they include and emphasize in their respective accounts.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.9-10.9

Compare and contrast treatments of the same topic in several primary and secondary sources.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.11-12.7

Integrate and evaluate multiple sources of information presented in diverse formats and media (e.g., visually, quantitatively, as well as in words) in order to address a question or solve a problem.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.11-12.9

Integrate information from diverse sources, both primary and secondary, into a coherent understanding of an idea or event, noting discrepancies among sources.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RI.9-10.6

Determine an author's point of view or purpose in a text and analyze how an author uses rhetoric to advance that point of view or purpose.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.CCRA.SL.2

Integrate and evaluate information presented in diverse media and formats, including visually, quantitatively, and orally.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

- Students will be able to evaluate a candidate’s public performance and detect the changes that a candidate adopts as a result of varying media coverage.
- Students will be able to find similarities in interpretations given different media interpretations of the same event.
- Students will be able to answer the essential question, “Can the media change how a candidate behaves in presidential debates?” through evaluation of media reaction, given different media outlets’ coverage of the same event.
- Students will be able to explain how many different media outlets changed the outcome of the debate, and therefore the outcome of the election, aligning that with their own understanding of the election process.

Teacher	Student	Minutes
At school, teacher introduces students to the essential question of the lesson: “Can the media change how a candidate behaves in presidential debates”	Students are listening, offering opinions.	
Briefly present President Gerald Ford’s background and how he became president. Ask the class how they think his not being elected influenced the public’s perception of him?	Students offer their input on the public’s opinion on Gerald Ford.	10 Minutes
Briefly introduce the concept of Saturday Night Live for students who may be unfamiliar with the show. Play clips of Saturday Night Live and Chevy Chase’s Ford portrayal.	Students watching, listening.	10 Minutes

Teacher	Student	Minutes
Discuss how students think the public responded to that debate performance.	Students sharing ideas.	5 Minutes
Review some of the commentary following Ford's second debate.	Students verbally summarize the commentary the teacher presents.	5 Minutes
Give out assignment for student's to pick one of three candidates' performances: George H W Bush, Al Gore, or Ross Perot. If students are working in teams, have them break into teams and assign a candidate.	Students listen, possibly break into small groups, choose a candidate to review.	5 Minutes
Help students during an in-class strategy session for their project: How will they present—written, spoken or multimedia?	Students come up with project decisions for final assessment	10 Minutes
<p>Day 2: Students work alone or in teams to review digital content:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Debate performance 1 2. Saturday Night Live skit 3. Late night comedy routines 4. Political commentary 	Students review media using student laptops or iPads.	15 Minutes
Guide the team work and review of clips.	<p>Students then pause media review and evaluate what they think the influence will be on the candidate.</p> <p>Students devise a thesis and write up rationale for why they think that will be the candidate reaction.</p>	15 Minutes

Teacher	Student	Minutes
Guide students in work groups and evaluation.	Students review debate performance number 2. Students evaluate whether their prediction of the candidate's response was accurate. Why did the candidate behave as he did, following the commentary from debate one? What did they think the result would be in the polls? Did the candidate benefit or decline, based on his resulting behavior?	10 minutes
Guide students in development of their conclusions.	Students work in small groups or alone to develop their conclusions.	10 minutes
Homework assignment: Lay out and discuss homework. See table below for the specifics of the three options.	Students develop presentation, paper, or multimedia project.	At Home
Final Day:	Students present or turn in papers. Students discuss at the end of presentations.	(Class time dependent on how many presentations vs. papers.)

ASSESSMENTS

Students can choose one project from below...

Reflection paper	Students will write a 3-4 page paper on the debate, the commentary, and the candidate's response and whether that aligned with their expectations of the candidate's reaction to the commentary.
Media presentation	Students will create a 3-5 minute multimedia presentation including 30 seconds to 1 minute of highlights, the debate, the commentary, and the candidate's response and whether that aligned with their expectations of the candidate's reaction to the commentary.
Oral report	Students will prepare an oral report on the debate, the commentary, and the candidate's response and whether that aligned with their expectations of the candidate's reaction to the commentary. The report can be with a slideshow presentation or without.

ADAPTATIONS OR ACCOMMODATIONS NEEDED

Learners	Adaptations/Accommodations
Highly Proficient	<p>Students will be able to identify likely influences of media, explain their logic and then discuss how the media influenced a candidate's public performance.</p> <p>Giving students options to work alone or in groups will suit individual skill levels</p>
ELL	<p>Students will be able to explain the candidate's behavior, how the media commentary targeted aspects of that debate behavior and then how the candidate's behavior changed in the second debate.</p> <p>Students can choose to complete the assessment of this lesson in a way that suits their own learning style and language proficiency.</p>
Struggling Learners	Same as ELL

RESOURCES

MSNBC, CNN, and FOX clips

Please use GreatDebates.org as a reference for coverage clips and the full debate.

Additional websites:

“SATURDAY NIGHT LIVE” AND ITS IMPACT

“SNL” and “Debate ‘76”

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xu2vdE0z7ds>

NBC on “How ‘Saturday Night Live’ Has Shaped American Politics”

<https://www.nbcnews.com/pop-culture/tv/how-saturday-night-live-has-shaped-american-politics-n656716>

Purdue University on “Saturday Night Live’s” political popularity

<https://cla.purdue.edu/academic/history/debate/recenthistory/SNL.html>

Fordham University on “All Joking Aside: The SNL Effect”

<http://fordhampoliticalreview.org/all-joking-aside-the-snl-effect/>

THE LATE-NIGHT SHOWS AND DEBATES

Pew Research Center on how news events have become late-night punchlines

<https://www.journalism.org/2004/07/12/the-late-night-shows/>

Science Daily on study findings that “Media Coverage Influences Value of U.S. Presidential Debates for Viewers”

<https://www.sciencedaily.com/releases/2012/09/120924142139.htm>

NBC News on “Do Presidential Debates Impact Election Outcomes?”

<https://www.nbcnews.com/storyline/2016-presidential-debates/do-presidential-debates-impact-election-outcomes-n653801>

THE GREAT DEBATES MEDIA LITERACY WORKSHEET

Name: _____ Class Period: _____

Due Date: _____

DEBATE EVALUATION

The candidate's first debate	Saturday Night Live	The late-night comedy routine	The political commentary

*The candidate's second debate

*Come back and finish the last box after you make your predictions and watch the second debate.

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How do you think your candidate will do in his next debate?	How do you think the media coverage you evaluated above will impact your candidate's performance in debate 2?

After watching the second debate, why do you think the candidate behaved as he did? Did his performance have anything to do with the media coverage following the first debate?

What do you think the results would be in the polls?

Based on his behavior in debate 2, did the candidate benefit from the media commentary, or was he hurt by it?

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Option 1

**WRITE A 3-4 PAGE PAPER ON THE DEBATE, THE COMMENTARY,
AND THE CANDIDATE'S RESPONSE.**

The paper should include a one paragraph summary of each of the following:

- The first debate
- Saturday Night Live
- Late-night comedy
- The political commentary
- The second debate

Be sure to answer the following questions in your paper:

- Did your candidate's performance in his second debate align with what you expected?
- How did the media influence your candidate by his second performance?

Option 2

**OPTION 2: CREATE A 3-5 MINUTE MULTIMEDIA PRESENTATION
ON THE DEBATES AND THE MEDIA COVERAGE. EITHER A VIDEO
OR AUDIO PRESENTATION.**

The paper should include a one paragraph summary of each of the following:

- The first debate
- Saturday Night Live
- Late-night comedy
- The political commentary
- The second debate

Be sure to answer the following questions in your paper:

- Did your candidate's performance in his second debate align with what you expected?
- How did the media influence your candidate by his second performance?

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Option 3

**PREPARE AN ORAL REPORT USING A POWERPOINT,
A PREZI, OR JUST YOUR VOICE TO PRESENT
ON THE DEBATES AND THE MEDIA COVERAGE:**

The oral presentation should include:

- A verbal summary of each form of commentary
- A verbal summary of your candidate's response to the various commentaries in the second debate

Your oral presentation should conclude with:

- Your reaction: Tell us whether the candidate's second debate performance aligned with your expectations (your predictions) of the candidate's reaction to the commentary