



COVER STORIES: Election 2008 (pp. 3, 5-17, 22-23)

► **NCSS STANDARD**
Power, authority, and governance

After nearly two years of relentless campaigning and speculation, the day of reckoning is just a few weeks away. These articles can be used often between now and Inauguration Day.

■ Election 2008 Basics

- **Election Day:** Tuesday, November 4, 2008.
- **Number of electoral votes needed to win the presidency:** at least 270.
- **Number of House seats up for election:** all 435.
- **Number of Senate seats up for election:** 35 (out of 100).
- **Number of governorships up for election:** 11 states (plus American Samoa and Puerto Rico).
- **The Electoral College vote:** December 15, 2008.
- **Inauguration Day:** January 20, 2009.

■ Vocabulary

- **red state/blue state:** so-called for the colors typically used to represent the parties on election-result maps. Red states are those whose majority tends to vote Republican; blue states are those whose majority tends to vote Democratic.

■ Content-Area Questions

CULTURE/SOCIAL STUDIES

1. Read the candidate profiles (pp. 6-7). Do you see any connection between who each was as a youth and the person he is today? Explain.
2. Consider the issues at stake (pp. 8-11). Which are most likely to have a direct effect on your future? Explain.

GEOGRAPHY

1. Study the map of congressional races (p. 17). What seats are up for election in your state? Can you name the candidates?
2. If you enter our electoral-vote contest (p. 22), make a copy of your entry so you can compare it with actual election results.

LANGUAGE ARTS

1. Read the Eyewitness section on p. 24. Restate Paine's premise in your own words.
2. *Homographs* are words with different derivations, meanings, or pronunciations, but that have the same spelling. *Example:* When the word *vice* is

used as a prefix, it is from the Latin word *vice* (*WIH-kay*), meaning "one who takes the place of," as in *Vice President*. As a noun, it is from the Latin word *vitium* (*WIH-tyum*), meaning "fault." Look up the noun form, then use it in a sentence.

MATH

1. Keep a news watch on the categories in "Numbers in the News" (p. 5). How do the figures change as Election Day approaches?
2. After the election, add 2008 figures to the voter-turnout graph (p. 10, *Government & Election Skills Manual*). Do you get upticks, downturns, or flat lines?

SCIENCE/TECHNOLOGY

1. This November, some states will use ATM-like voting devices in a presidential election for the first time. Watch the news for references to the new technology. What are its advantages and disadvantages?

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World History: The Dangerous Truth (pp. 18-21)

► **NCSS STANDARD**
Individuals, groups, and institutions

The concept of democracy has become so identified with the United States that it is helpful to remember—or to learn—that it wasn't invented by Americans. This play takes readers to democracy's birthplace—ancient Greece.

■ Backstory

- The form of democracy practiced in ancient Greece was closer to the roots of the word (*see p. 18*). Legislative and judicial decisions were made directly by the people—groups of gathered citizens. The Framers of the U.S. Constitution distrusted that form, so they crafted a *republic*, or *representative democracy*: Instead of making legislative decisions as individuals, we elect representatives to do that for us.
- Socrates did not write anything. Much of what we know about him comes to us through the writings of Plato, the philosopher's most famous disciple. Socrates' cross-examination of his students through questions, as re-created by Plato, is often called the Socratic Method.
- The two antidemocratic rebellions against Athens occurred in 411 B.C. and 404 B.C. Both times, associates of Socrates were involved. Critias was part of the so-called Thirty Tyrants, who with Sparta's aid seized power from September 404 B.C. to May 403 B.C. Socrates neither took part in these rebellions nor did he speak out against them—much to the criticism of scholars ever since. “The most talkative man in Athens fell silent when

his voice was most needed,” wrote I. F. Stone in his book *The Trial of Socrates*.

■ Vocabulary

- **citizens:** Here, the word refers to men only. Women had few legal rights in the first democracy.
- **city-state:** an independent city that functioned like a modern nation; the term is most often associated with ancient Greece and ancient and medieval Italy.

■ Food for Thought

Give students time to ponder these questions, then discuss them as a class. Emphasize that there is no single correct answer.

- How would you answer what Plato asked Socrates: “Where does virtue come from? Do you think it can be learned, or is a person born with it?” Give examples to support your answers.
- What do you suppose Socrates meant by “The unexamined life is not worth living”? Do you agree or disagree? Explain.
- In your opinion, did Socrates' punishment fit the crime? Why or why not?

■ Content-Area Questions

CULTURE/SOCIAL STUDIES

1. After reading the play, answer the following: Who was Socrates? Why is he remembered?
2. Have you heard of Alexander the Great? (*See the play's epilogue.*) If so, what do you know about him? If not, look him up. Why is he such an important historical figure?

GEOGRAPHY

1. Find Greece on a map of the world, then find Athens.
2. Sparta, Athens' opponent in the Peloponnesian War, no longer exists, but you can consult a historic map to find its location.

LANGUAGE ARTS

1. Look up the word *philosopher*. What language does it come from? What are its root words? (Greek; from *philos-*, “loving” or “being fond of,” and *sophia*, “wisdom”)
2. The Peloponnesian War was named for Peloponnesus (also called Peloponnese). Look it up. What is it? (large peninsula of southern Greece)

MATH

1. Socrates lived from about 470 B.C. to 399 B.C. How long after his death did Philip II conquer Athens, in 338 B.C.? (61 years)
2. Socrates was born approximately how many centuries ago? How many millennia? (4,486 years is nearly 45 centuries; about 4.5 millennia)

WEB LINKS

- The Kids Philosophy Slam: Socrates. A kid-level summary of Socrates' ideas, including some of the ideas he explored. philosophyslam.org/socrates.html
- The Greeks Interactive: Click on the first button in the horizontal icons. pbs.org/empires/thegreeks