

the ARTICLE (for instructors)

Character Most Important in Politics

In politics, American voters care more about a candidate's character than about the issues. The simple fact, which many have suspected for a long time, has now been confirmed in a recent poll. In the survey, 55% of the voters agreed that honesty and other similar character traits are more important when deciding on a presidential candidate. Only one-third of voters first look at a candidate's opinions on hot issues. Even fewer voters think qualities of leadership, experience, or intelligence are of primary importance.

Take President Bush, for example. In the election of 2004, he easily won the popular vote. The U.S. army hadn't captured Osama bin Laden. The war in Iraq had become unpopular. Yet Bush portrayed himself as a strong and decisive leader. Since then, voters have begun to question his honesty and his ability to do the job. This comes after setbacks and failures in Iraq, and the devastation of Hurricane Katrina. Only 44% now believe Bush is honest. His approval ratings are low, too, because only 33% of the American people think he is doing an effective job.

The collapse in Bush's ratings and views on his character should serve as a red flag to the 2008 candidates. Voters are saying that character matters.

The next election is still two years away. The field of possible candidates is already shaping up, though. Of course, anything can happen between now and November, 2008. Hillary Rodham Clinton leads Barak Obama, but the gap between the two has shortened in recent months. Former New York mayor Rudy Guliani is actually ahead of John McCain. But neither Obama nor Guliani have the experience of Clinton and McCain. Obama has been a U.S. Senator for two years only, and Guliani has never been elected to Washington D.C. But their rise in the polls demonstrates just how important character can be.

Teacher's Notes:

* Underlined words in red typeface are the answers.

the ARTICLE (for students)

portrayed	because	collapse	primary	recent
demonstrates	presidential	devastation	effective	leads
red flag	suspected	between	setbacks	captured

Character Most Important in Politics

In politics, American voters care more about a candidate's character than about the issues. The simple fact, which many have (a. _____) for a long time, has now been confirmed in a (b. _____) poll. In the survey, 55% of the voters agreed that honesty and other similar character traits are more important when deciding on a (c. _____) candidate. Only one-third of voters first look at a candidate's opinions on hot issues. Even fewer voters think qualities of leadership, experience, or intelligence are of (d. _____) importance.

Take President Bush, for example. In the election of 2004, he easily won the popular vote. The U.S. army hadn't (e. _____) Osama bin Laden. The war in Iraq had become unpopular. Yet Bush (f. _____) himself as a strong and decisive leader. Since then, voters have begun to question his honesty and his ability to do the job. This comes after (g. _____) and failures in Iraq, and the (h. _____) of Hurricane Katrina. Only 44% now believe Bush is honest. His approval ratings are low, too, (i. _____) only 33% of the American people think he is doing an (j. _____) job.

The (k. _____) in Bush's ratings and views on his character should serve as a (l. _____) to the 2008 candidates. Voters are saying that character matters.

The next election is still two years away. The field of possible candidates is already shaping up, though. Of course, anything can happen between now and November, 2008. Hillary Rodham Clinton (m. _____) Barak Obama, but the gap (n. _____) the two has shortened in recent months. Former New York mayor Rudy Guliani is actually ahead of John McCain. But neither Obama nor Guliani have the experience of Clinton and McCain. Obama has been a U.S. Senator for two years only, and Guliani has never been elected to Washington D.C. But their rise in the polls (o. _____) just how important character can be.

Character Most Important in Politics – March 11, 2007

Upper-Intermediate - Vocabulary

STEP ONE

Define: What does "politics" mean? Can you use it in a sentence? Can you give examples?

STEP TWO

Target Word Pool: Find the target words (in bold) with their exact match. How long did it take to find all the words?

effective	leads	demonstrates	red flag	captured
primary	portrayed	collapse	suspected	setbacks
set up	collapsed	captain		setbacks
leader	red eye	effectively	red flag	demonstrate
portrayed	primarily	suspected	mislead	suspicious
readiness	portray	demonstrator	leads	capturing
	effectiveness	collapse	portraying	collapsible
suspecting	leading	set ahead	red menace	settle
	demonstrating	capture	efficient	proprietary
	collapsing		primary	leadership
primaries	red brick	portrayal	captured	demonstrates
	effective	suspects	porter	ineffective
collect	captivate	prime	demonstrative	
		setback	suspicion	

STEP THREE

Fill in the Blanks: Fill in the blank with the correct word. Use a dictionary for any words you don't know, but be sure to check your English-English dictionary, too.

effective	leads	demonstrates	red flag	captured
primary	portrayed	collapse	suspected	setbacks
a.	The simple fact, which many have () for a long time, has now been confirmed in a recent poll.			
b.	Even fewer voters think qualities of leadership, experience, or intelligence are of () importance.			
c.	The U.S. army hadn't () Osama bin Laden.			
d.	Yet Bush () himself as a strong and decisive leader.			
e.	This comes after () and failures in Iraq, and the devastation of Hurricane Katrina.			
f.	Only 33% of the American people think he is doing an () job.			
g.	There has been a () in Bush's ratings and views on his character.			
h.	This should serve as a () to the 2008 candidates.			
i.	Hillary Rodham Clinton () Barak Obama, but the gap between the two has shortened.			
j.	But their rise in the polls () just how important character can be.			

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Upper-Intermediate - Vocabulary

STEP FOUR

The Article: 1) Read the article, but don't worry about the missing words. 2) Fill in the blanks with today's vocabulary, followed by all the other words. 3) Read the article again, and circle any unknown words/phrases. In pairs/groups, use your dictionaries to understand the words or phrases your circled. 4) Answer the questions to check your comprehension.

a.	What have people interested in politics suspected for a long time?
b.	What do people look for in a candidate most often? How about 33% of the people?
c.	According to the article, why did Bush win the popular vote?
d.	What has happened to Bush's rating since the election? Why?
e.	What does this mean?: Anything can happen before November, 2008. How does it relate to the article?

STEP FIVE

Discuss: Write down five vocabulary words from today's article that you want to use.

a.	
b.	
c.	
d.	
e.	

Imagine you are a reporter preparing questions to ask U.S. political candidates. Think of three questions to ask, and then discuss as a pair or group. Every time you use a vocabulary word, place a check next to it.

Question 1:
Question 2:
Question 3:

Score yourself:

10 or more times: Fantastic! Be sure to review the words at home.

6-9 times: Pretty good! You're on your way to acquiring today's vocabulary. Try writing your own sentences at home.

5 or less times: Try harder next time! To acquire new vocabulary, you need to use the new words as much as possible.