

## LESSON CPGE – Nov 5th

Homework – text review

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## AMERICAN ELECTIONS

### US election 2024: A really simple guide to the presidential vote

22 October 2024

**Americans will head to the polls in November to elect the next US president. The vote will be closely watched around the world.**

They will also be voting for members of Congress, who play a key part in passing laws that can have a profound effect on American life.

### When is the US presidential election?

The 2024 election is on Tuesday, 5 November 2024. The winner will serve a term of four years in the White House, starting in January 2025.

The president has the power to pass some laws on their own but mostly he or she must work with Congress to pass legislation.

On the world stage, the US leader has considerable freedom to represent the country abroad and to conduct foreign policy.

### Who are the candidates and how are they nominated?

The two main parties nominate a presidential candidate by holding a series of votes called state primaries and caucuses, where people choose who they want to lead the party in a general election. In the Republican Party, **former president Donald Trump** won his party's support with a massive lead over his rivals. He became the official Republican nominee at a party convention in Milwaukee, Wisconsin. Trump chose **Ohio senator JD Vance** to be his vice-presidential running mate. For the Democrats, **Vice-President Kamala Harris** joined the race after President Joe Biden dropped out and no other Democrats stood against her. Her running mate is **Minnesota Governor Tim Walz**.

There are also some independent candidates running for president.

One of the most prominent was Robert F Kennedy Jr, nephew to former president John F Kennedy, but he suspended his campaign in late August and has endorsed Trump.

# What do Democrats and Republicans stand for?

The Democrats are the liberal political party, with an agenda defined largely by its push for civil rights, a broad social safety net and measures to address climate change.

The Republicans are the conservative political party in the US. Also known as the GOP, or the Grand Old Party, it has stood for lower taxes, shrinking the size of the government, gun rights and tighter restrictions on immigration and abortion.

## How does the US presidential election work?

The winner is not the person who gets the most votes across the country. Instead, both candidates compete to win contests held across the 50 states.

Each state has a certain number of so-called electoral college votes partly based on population.

There are a total of 538 up for grabs, and the winner is the candidate that wins 270 or more.

All but two states have a winner-takes-all rule, so whichever candidate wins the highest number of votes is awarded all of the state's electoral college votes.

Most states lean heavily towards one party or the other, so the focus is usually on a dozen or so states where either of them could win. These are known as **the battleground or swing states**.

It is possible for a candidate to win the most votes nationally - like Hillary Clinton did in 2016 - but still be defeated by the electoral college.

## Who can vote in the US presidential election?

Most US citizens who are aged 18 or over are eligible to vote in the presidential election.

Every state except North Dakota requires people to register before they can vote.

Each state has its own voter registration process and deadline.

US citizens who live abroad can register to vote and request an absentee postal ballot by completing the **Federal Post Card Application (FPCA)**.

Early voting in some states - including crucial swing states Georgia and North Carolina - is already under way.

## Who else is being elected in November?

All of the attention will be on who wins the presidency, but voters will also be choosing new members of Congress - where laws are passed - when they fill in their ballots.

Congress consists of the House of Representatives, where all 435 seats are up for election, and the Senate, where 34 seats are being contested.

Republicans currently control the House, which initiates spending plans. Democrats are in charge of the Senate, which votes on key appointments in government.

These two chambers pass laws and can act as a check on White House plans if the controlling party in either chamber disagrees with the president.

## When will we know who has won the election?

Usually the winner is declared on the night of the election, but in 2020 it took a few days to count all the votes.

The period after the election is known as the transition, if there is a change of president.

This gives the new administration time to appoint cabinet ministers and make plans for the new term. The president is officially sworn into office in January in a ceremony known as the inauguration, held on the steps of the Capitol building in Washington DC.

## Where Kamala Harris stands on 10 key issues, from immigration to guns

23 oct 2024 BBC

Vice-President Kamala Harris became the Democratic Party's nominee for president relatively late in the 2024 contest - having replaced Joe Biden - and she then selected Minnesota Governor Tim Walz as her running mate.

She released a detailed policy guide in early September offering voters a sense of what a Harris-Walz administration might look like.

This focuses on her economic and foreign policy agenda, and highlights her most urgent priority to tackle the cost of living.

### Economy

As vice-president, Ms Harris worked with President Biden to pass major economic legislation - regularly labelled "Bidenomics" - which included major investments in infrastructure and green energy.

Growth and jobs creation have been strong but inflation and high interest rates continue to hit American wallets.

In her convention acceptance speech, the vice-president promised mortgage assistance for first-time homebuyers, a tax credit for parents of newborns and bans on price gouging at the grocery store to help target inflation.

She added that her plans would create "an opportunity economy where everyone has a chance to compete and a chance to succeed".

In her first interview as the Democratic nominee with CNN, Ms Harris said that one of her highest priorities was "to support and strengthen the middle class", a theme she has repeated on the campaign trail.

### Taxes

In 2017, while a senator, Ms Harris supported a number of progressive tax programmes. She co-sponsored a bill with former presidential hopeful Bernie Sanders to expand social security for the elderly by increasing the tax rate on investments.

As a presidential candidate in 2019, she supported a corporate tax rate of 35%, up from 21%. This was more aggressive than President Biden's proposal, which she also backed, to increase the rate to 28%.

During her acceptance speech after being confirmed as the Democratic candidate, she said she would "pass a middle class tax cut that will benefit more than 100 million Americans".

This refers to the restoration of the Child Tax Credit and the Earned Income Tax Credit. Restoring the expanded Child Tax Credit would give families with newborn children a \$6,000 (£4,630) tax cut.

A campaign official also told the BBC that the vice-president would continue to back President Biden's proposal to not raise taxes on Americans earning less than \$400,000 (£310,000).

## Abortion

Ms Harris has long supported abortion rights.

She was the first vice-president to visit an abortion clinic, and toured the country after the US Supreme Court overturned Roe v Wade in 2022 to address **state abortion bans** - often framing the issue as a matter of personal freedom.

She has made abortion central to her campaign, and continues to advocate for legislation that would safeguard reproductive rights nationwide.

"When Congress passes a law to restore reproductive freedoms, as president of the United States, I will sign it into law," she said at a campaign rally in Atlanta, Georgia.

She has reiterated that commitment several times, including during the ABC News debate with D Trump

## Immigration

Ms Harris's position on the border has become more moderate over time.

On the campaign trail, she has reiterated her continued support for **the cross-party border security bill** that would have included hundreds of millions of dollars for border wall construction.

It was torpedoed by congressional Republicans in February 2024 at Trump's urging.

It would have fast-tracked decisions on asylum cases, limited humanitarian parole, and expanded the authority to deport migrants.

The vice-president says she would revive the bill and sign it into law.

She has also said there "should be consequences" for people who cross the US border unlawfully, though she previously supported a more lenient approach.

As vice-president, she was tasked with tackling the root causes of the record numbers of Central American migrants crossing the southern border. Those numbers spiked during the Biden administration, but have declined in recent months.

She helped raise \$3bn - largely from private companies - to fund regional investments designed to encourage residents to remain in their home countries.

## Nato and Ukraine aid

Ms Harris's early career focused largely on domestic issues and those affecting the state of California, but she has become more involved in foreign policy since being elected to the US Senate. As vice-president, she has met 150 world leaders and visited 21 countries.

She attended the Munich Security Conference in February 2024, where she spoke in support of western security alliance Nato and denounced Russia's invasion of Ukraine.

Ms Harris has vowed to support Ukraine “for as long as it takes”, and represented the US at Kyiv's “peace conference” in Switzerland in June 2024.

In her speech at the Democratic convention, she said she warned Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky about Russian aggression five days before the invasion, and had “helped mobilise a global response” after the war began.

The vice-president has also pledged, if elected, to reject isolationism and ensure that “America - not China - wins the competition for the 21st Century”.

## Israel-Gaza War

Ms Harris has been a long-time advocate for **a two-state solution** in the region, and has called for an end to the war in Gaza.

In her convention acceptance speech, she pledged as president to ensure “that Israel is secure, the hostages are released, the suffering in Gaza ends, and the Palestinian people can realize their right to dignity, security, freedom, and self-determination”.

As vice-president, she was one of the first people in the Biden administration to call for an “immediate ceasefire”, raise concerns over the “humanitarian catastrophe for Palestinians” and charge Israel with ending the conflict.

She raised these issues in what she called “frank and constructive” talks with Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu when he visited Washington in July.

However, she has not supported the arms embargo on Israel which some on the US left want.

At the party convention, she said she would “always stand up for Israel's right to defend itself”.

She reiterated her support for the country during the debate with Trump, saying “I have my entire career and life supported Israel and the Israeli people”.

In her CNN interview, Ms Harris indicated that she would focus on securing a ceasefire deal, which was President Biden's approach.

## Healthcare

Earlier in her career, Ms Harris supported expanding publicly-funded healthcare programmes that cover the elderly, youth with disabilities and poor.

This included backing Medicare-for-All, a progressive policy that would make all healthcare publicly funded. She later softened her support for this.

Her campaign told the BBC that she would not push for a single-payer system if elected to the White House.

During her vice-presidency, the White House has had health care successes. It reduced prescription drug costs, capped insulin prices at \$35, allowed Medicare to negotiate drug prices and capped out-of-pocket expenses for Medicare drug coverage.

On the campaign trail, she has said that she wants to erase billions of dollars in medical debt for Americans and would work with states on the issue.

Details remain thin, but when she was the California attorney general, Ms Harris regularly used anti-trust laws to put pressure on insurers, hospitals and drug companies to address costs.

## Crime

Ms Harris started her legal career prosecuting child abusers and sex traffickers before being elected district attorney of San Francisco, and then serving as California's attorney general.

She was criticised by the progressive left for increasing conviction rates - particularly of violent criminals - and was at times labelled "a cop" - though the right has also accused her of being soft on crime.

Ms Harris has also used her past as a prosecutor to serve as a major contrast with her opponent, who was convicted on 34 charges in a hush-money scheme to illegally influence the 2016 election. She mentioned Mr Trump's conviction - and that he had been found liable for committing sexual abuse - in her Democratic party conference acceptance speech.

## Gun laws

Ms Harris has a history of backing gun safety regulations throughout her political career. While California's attorney general, she successfully defended the state's gun laws when they faced legal challenges.

As vice-president, she has overseen the White House Office of Gun Violence Prevention. Earlier this year, she announced resources to support the implementation of red-flag laws, which are designed to deny firearms to those who may harm themselves and others.

She also encouraged states to tap into \$750m in federal funds that the Biden-Harris administration made available for crisis intervention programmes.

Her policy platform includes a ban on assault weapons and high-capacity magazines as well as a requirement for universal background checks.

During the debate she noted that **both she and her vice-presidential nominee Tim Walz are gun owners.**

## Climate and fracking

As a prosecutor, Ms Harris defended California's climate laws and sued oil companies for environmental damage. She also called for climate change policies via a "Green New Deal" during her 2020 presidential campaign - some of which came to fruition under the current administration. During a CNN town hall in 2019, she said that "there is no question I'm in favour of banning fracking", **which is a technique for recovering gas and oil from shale rock that can be damaging to the environment.**

But she has since changed her stance. During the presidential debate, she said she cast the tie-breaking vote to pass the Inflation Reduction Act - which opened up new leases for fracking companies - in addition to funnelling hundreds of billions of dollars to renewable energy and electric vehicle tax credit and rebate programs.

"My position is that we have got to invest in diverse sources of energy so we reduce our reliance on foreign oil," she said.

Ms Harris said she will protect public lands and public health, lower household energy costs and hold polluters accountable to secure clear air and water if elected in November, according to her policy document.

# Where Donald Trump stands on 10 key issues, from tax to Israel

23 October 2024

Donald Trump is the Republican nominee for president for the third consecutive election.

When he was defeated by Joe Biden after his first term in office, the country was in the midst of Covid, lockdowns and social unrest.

It followed a campaign in which restoring both economic health and law and order were his central messages.

Here are his policy pledges this time.

## Economy

This is the biggest issue for voters and it's the pinch of high food and housing costs that seems to be shaping their sentiment rather than the robust growth and low unemployment.

Inflation has fallen steeply from a 40-year high in 2022, but the former New York businessman has retained a persistent polling advantage on the economy over his Democratic opponents.

One of the **20 core promises on his campaign website** is to "end inflation and make America affordable again".

A president's power to lower prices directly is very limited. Trump has pledged to expand US energy production, opening areas such as the Arctic wilderness to oil drilling, which he argues would lower energy costs, though analysts are sceptical.

He says he can reduce housing costs by preventing some undocumented immigrants from getting mortgages and deporting others, and by launching a home building programme on federal land.

## Taxes

Trump has a raft of tax cuts planned.

Firstly, he wants to extend the cuts he enacted in 2017, which are due to expire next year. That was the biggest tax overhaul in decades, aimed at simplifying the tax code and promoting growth and investment.

The largest cuts went to businesses and the wealthy, which Democrats have called to reverse.

The Republican also wants to shave a further percentage point off corporation tax - and has floated an even bigger cut to 15%.

He has proposed making tipped income tax free, a proposal that his opponent Kamala Harris subsequently backed, too.

Trump has also called on abolishing the tax on Social Security payments, a move that would be welcomed by retired Americans but would at the same time punch a big hole in the fund.

## Trade

The former president brought the era of US free trade to a juddering halt when he became president, but his tariffs on Chinese imports were largely retained and even expanded by Joe Biden.

This time around he has proposed new 10-20% tariffs on most foreign goods with imports from China bearing the brunt at 60%.



It is part of his attempt to promote homegrown manufacturers and stop outsourcing, but some economists have warned this could push up prices for consumers. During the presidential debate with Harris, Trump pointed out he imposed tariffs on Chinese goods, and that the Biden administration has not removed them.

## **Immigration**

This tops his list of priorities as it did in 2016 when “Build the wall” was his signature slogan. The number of border crossings hit record levels at the end of 2023, but has fallen this election year. Trump has vowed to seal the border by completing the wall and increasing enforcement. He has also promised the biggest mass deportations of undocumented migrants in US history. His vice-president pick, JD Vance, said they would start by removing a million people, but experts told the BBC that deportations on that scale would face huge legal and logistical challenges. There are also claims it could slow economic growth. Children of undocumented residents would no longer be eligible for citizenship under another Trump policy, although this would face significant legal obstacles.

## **Abortion**

This is the first presidential election since the Supreme Court overturned the constitutional right to abortion in 2022, and Trump has struggled to find a consistent message. The three judges he appointed while president were pivotal in the landmark decision, which Democrats have used to rally supporters as abortion restrictions have been introduced in numerous states. Trump himself has regularly said states should be free to decide their own laws on abortion. But in recent weeks he has tried to walk a tightrope, taking a more moderate stance while trying not to alienate his conservative base. He criticised Florida’s six-week ban, provoking an angry backlash, but also said he would oppose a ballot measure in the state establishing the right to an abortion. During the presidential debate he said he would not sign a national abortion ban into law.

## **Ukraine and Nato**

The Republican has an isolationist foreign policy and wants the US to disentangle itself from conflicts elsewhere in the world. He has pledged to end the war in Ukraine “within 24 hours” through a negotiated settlement with Russia, a move that Democrats say would embolden Vladimir Putin. “I know Zelensky very well, and I know Putin very well,” he said during the presidential debate. “I think it’s the US best interest to get this war finished and just get it done, negotiate a deal.” Trump gave no details on what he thinks each side should give up in such a deal, and the Kremlin has said nothing can be done in 24 hours. Trump has also said he would stop the cash flowing to Ukraine. Mr Biden signed off \$61bn in military aid for Ukraine in April.



On Nato, he thinks countries that fall short of the advisory 2% of GDP spent on defence should forego the protection that comes with membership.

## Israel-Gaza war

Trump has positioned himself as a staunch supporter of Israel and condemned pro-Palestinian supporters on US college campuses.

But he has also at times been critical of the way Israel has conducted the war.

He has said the war would not have happened if he had been president but offered no details on how he would end it.

As president he angered Palestinians by moving the embassy to Jerusalem and his administration stopped calling Israeli settlements in the West Bank, which contravene international law, illegal.

## Healthcare

In his top 20 priorities, Trump promises not to cut Medicare, which is federally provided health insurance for older people.

While president he tried unsuccessfully to dismantle the signature legislation of President Barack Obama, the Affordable Care Act, which extended insurance to millions more people.

He still criticises the law, which remains popular, but in March he **said on Truth Social** he would not undermine it.

Recently he called for taxpayer-funded fertility treatment, but it's unclear if such a large expense has the support of Republicans in Congress.

## Crime

He has pledged to demolish drugs cartels, crush gang violence and rebuild Democratic-run cities that he says are overrun with crime.

His Republican policy platform vows to restore safety in neighbourhoods by replenishing police departments and protecting officers from "frivolous lawsuits".

Democrats point to his promise to pardon hundreds of convicted January 6 rioters as contradictory to his law-and-order stance.

They also point to the fact violent crime was down 6% in 2023 and murders down by 13%, according to FBI data.

## Climate

As president, Trump rolled back hundreds of environmental protections, including limits on carbon dioxide emissions from power plants and vehicles, and protections for federal waterways.

This time, he is again vowing to cut regulations, particularly as a way to help the American car industry.

He has constantly attacked electric vehicles, promising to overturn Biden targets encouraging the switch to cleaner cars.

And he has long railed against offshore wind farms, promising to halt this source of renewable energy as soon as he is elected.