

Truman was an unlikely victor in the 1948 election. Assess this statement

Likely:

1. Whistle stop tours, Dewey was unconcerned
2. Anti Communist

Unlikely:

1. Democratic Party Split
2. Republican disapproval

Truman was a likely victor in the 1948 election because of the effort he put forth in his presidential campaign that his opponent Thomas E. Dewey lacked. Truman went on “whistle stop tours” where he would span across the US reaching over 320 stops total, whereas Dewey only had a total of 40 campaign stops. On his tour, Truman gave over 300 campaign speeches, highly exceeding the 16 speeches made by Dewey. Demonstrating that Truman put forth a greater effort in his campaign than Dewey. When gauging the effect of this effort, it is clear Truman left Dewey in the dust. Truman appealed to audiences of all sorts. His whistle stop tours reached anywhere from 10-25 people in rural areas, to a total of 500,000 voters on his 6 stops in Michigan. Dewey’s few campaign efforts were primarily targeted at people who would already vote for him: wealthy republicans. Though Truman had only 32% of public approval in 1946, he knew he needed to “see the people.” Illustrating how Truman became a man of the people while Dewey faded into news stories. In the final assessment, the facts make it evident that Dewey was over confident, and severely underestimated Truman as an opponent, making it clear that Truman was a likely victor in the 1948 election to everyone except Thomas Dewey’s campaign staff.

Truman was an unlikely victor because of the controversy between his armed forces and civil rights decisions. After signing an executive order to desegregate the armed forces, 300 attendees of the DNC walked out and created the “Dixiecrats.” The Dixiecrats nominated Thurmond, a South Carolinian segregationist who would run against Truman in the 1948 election and with Henry Wallace, would take 3% of the popular vote. Thurmond’s segregationist views appealed to classic southern democrats who were anti-integration. Illustrating how Truman’s civil rights and executive actions hammered a wedge between his own political party. An appraisal of the information presented shows that Truman’s pro civil rights stance did not help his campaign with conservative members of his own party. Truman also received a heavy amount of backlash for his actions as commander in chief. Shortly following WWII, Truman would send service men and women back out after just coming home. After sending troops to Manila (Philippines) to fight labor and agrarian measures, Congress would receive thousands of protest letters. The “Bring the Boys Home,” movement was also born. Upon hearing this, Truman immediately backed tracked, begging the War Department to “Bring the Boys Home,” and they would. Demonstrating how vital military decisions are for public approval as president. In the final assessment, Truman’s wishy-washy decisions as commander in chief made him appear as a hypocrite and damaged his reputation. For these reasons, it is not only clear why Truman’s approval ratings were so low in 1946, but also why Truman can be considered an unlikely victor of the 1948 election.

Truman could be considered a likely victor because of opposition to communism. With the creation of the Truman Doctrine in 1947, Truman makes it clear that the US would fight against the spread of communism. Truman would also join have the US join NATO, which united against the Warsaw Pact. NATO's goal was to "keep the Soviet's out, keep America up, and keep Germany down." Illustrating that Truman would do whatever it took to stop the spread of communism. When assessing, it is clear that Truman's fierce attitude against communism helped him in the 1948 election. Though controversial, Truman would fire Henry Wallace, Roosevelt's former VP and Truman's Secretary of Commerce because he felt he was "a tool for communists." Truman would also get Congress to send \$400 million dollars to West German and Turkish armies to fight communism. With the Marshall Plan, around \$13 billion were sent to France, Great Britain, and West Germany, to aid these nations from their destroyed economies after WWII. The goal was to promote capitalism and prevent the spread of communism across Europe. Illustrating how Truman prioritized the fight against communism both domestically and internationally. When gauging the importance, it is clear that Truman appealed to the fear of the US as they were experiencing a "Soviet Scare" leading up to the 1948 election. Truman's strong opposition to communism appealed to a nation experiencing a Red Scare; therefore, making him a likely winner of the 1948 election.

Truman was an unlikely victor of the 1948 election because of the Republican party's hatred towards him. For the first time since 1931, the republicans had won the majority of Congress and published a paper with the headline similar to "Republicans Have Had Enough." In the house of representatives, there were 245 Republicans and 187 Democrats. They became known as the "Do Nothing Congress" because they would frequently block and veto Truman's legislation. The Republican majority in congress mirrors the disapproval felt party wide by the GOP. Under an assessment, it is evident that Truman was limited in what he could accomplish as President due to his do nothing Congress. Leading up to the election, Truman vetoed the Taft-Hartley Act of 1947. To show how grave of a mistake this was, Congress overrode his veto. After it was legalized, Truman actually used the Taft-Hartley Act against union strikers which caused members of his own party like Fulbright to suggest that he resign. Illustrating how Truman's reputation was damaged with this veto. When assessing another example of Truman's hypocrisy, it is evident that this veto would make it difficult to gain trust back from either party. Making it clear that Truman's hypocrisy and disapproval from the Republican party would make it difficult for him to win the 1948 election.

After an assessment of various perspectives, one can conclude that Truman was an unlikely winner of the 1948 election. This was due to more than just his poor popularity, but rather the strong disapproval that was present from both sides of the political party road. His campaign efforts drove it home for him in the end though, making him victorious, remaining President of the United States of America.