

4 Private Mistakes, Public Figures

Should US citizens care about their politicians' private lives?

1 An ideal political leader?

- A.** Read the text. Find what the journalist expects from presidential candidates.
- B.** Say why, according to the journalist, the 19-year-old student would not have been a good political candidate.

HELP!

Adjectives

- deceitful = dishonest
- (un)educated = (un)informed
- ethical = upright
- (un)reliable =
- (un)trustworthy /'trʌstwɜːði/

Verbs & expressions

- deceive sb
- (dis)trust sb
- expect sb to + V
- meet sb's expectations

The [presidential] candidates [...] may not respect each other privately, but as candidates for president, they claim to be leaders. If you are going to lead you have to set an example of how to treat those who disagree with you. [...]

- 5 I am not arguing that our presidents should have led decorous private lives. I want leaders who have lived, who have made errors, fought fights, done business, fallen in and out of love. [...] I want the president to have lived a life like I have. In a democracy, the leader ought to be drawn from the people [...].

10 When I was in college, I knew someone who intended to go into politics. He was 19 and systematically avoided anything that might prove "a problem" to his future career. What he avoided was everything that a normal 19-year-old might do.

I couldn't articulate then what I can now: I do not want to be led by someone who has led a life free of trial, error, remorse and forgiveness. [...] I want to be led by someone who has grappled¹ long and hard with life. [...] Abraham Lincoln was clearly manic-depressive. John F. Kennedy was a prodigious womanizer. Thomas Jefferson was in constant financial difficulty. Dwight Eisenhower had a frightening temper. There was more to all these men and having them lose elections because of their vices would have been disastrous. What would we have done without them? Yet, none could be elected today.

1 fight

George Friedman, *The Huffington Post*, 30 September 2016

2 Citizens' opinions

- A.** Read these posts. Recap the main ideas in each one.
- B.** What differences are there between these opinions and the journalist's (in activity 1)?

1

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In many other countries it is expected that politicians will have affairs. The US was formed partly by Puritans, so the expectations are different. I think it is most significant when the people who lay claim to family values display anything but family values.

Kathryn B., Dallas, Texas

2

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If we are a liar in our "private life", why should anyone expect us to behave differently in our public lives? The public needs to be able to trust their elected representatives, and actions do matter. The old saying "actions speak louder than words" does apply here. That is why the public should care about a politician's private life.

Doug C., Atlanta, Georgia

3

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Being a role model is something that all public officials should take as a requirement before they decide to pursue public office.

Hans H., Spring Lake Park, Minnesota

YOUR PROJECT

Read 3 more posts on the subject on [Worksheet n°14](#).

React and post your opinion! 🙌