

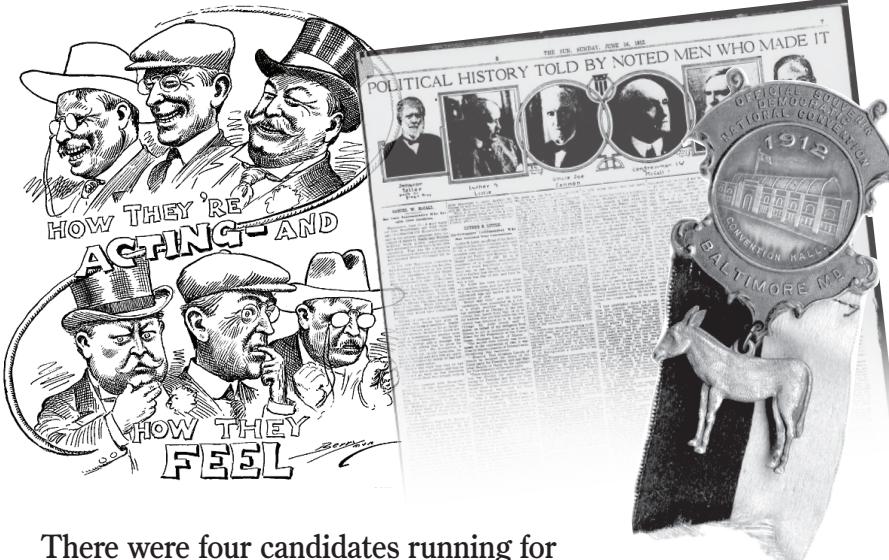
Cover the Election

- Activity: Election of 1912 in the News
- Resource: Explore the 1912 Election
- Teacher Resource: Suggestions for Teachers
- Graphic: What Was the Most Important Election Ever?
- Think Like a Reporter: Avoid Active Involvement in Partisan Causes
- Editorial Cartoons: Tom Toles
- Editorial Cartoons: Read the Editorial Cartoons
- Editorial Cartoons: Suggested Responses: Read the Editorial Cartoons



An Integrated Curriculum For The Washington Post Newspaper In Education Program

The Election of 1912 in the News



There were four candidates running for president in 1912: Eugene Debs, Socialist; Theodore Roosevelt, Progressive; William Howard Taft, Republican; and Woodrow Wilson, Democrat. Three of the four served as president of the United States. Which was the winner in 1912?

You are editors, reporters, editorial cartoonists and columnists on a newspaper staff in 1912. You are to cover the presidential election that gave voters substantive discussion and a significant choice for the future of the United States.

Your newspaper will have

- News stories that relate significant convention, campaign, and Election Day events.
- News briefs from around the country and world
- Two to three editorials
- An editorial cartoon
- Letters to the Editor
- Two to five columns

Include in your newspaper's content an understanding of at least four of the 1912 campaign issues:

- | | |
|---|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conservation • Labor • Regulation of Trusts • Women's Suffrage | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Direct Democracy • Race Relations • Tariffs |
|---|---|

Explore the 1912 Election

<http://ehistory.osu.edu/osu/mmh/1912/>

1912: Competing Visions for America

The campaign, the candidates and the issues

<http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/showelection.php?year=1912>

The American Presidency Project

Vote distribution and percentages

<http://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/>

Chronicling America: Historic American Newspapers

Digitized newspaper pages

<http://library.duke.edu/exhibits/sevenelections/elections/1912/>

Election of 1912

Overview of candidates and issues

<http://www.loc.gov/rr/program/bib/elections/election1912.html>

Presidential Election of 1912

Resources of the Library of Congress include broadsides, photographs and sound recordings

<http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/amex/wilson/filmmore/index.html>

Woodrow Wilson Film & More

Timeline, portrait and film transcript

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THE ELECTION OF 1912 IN THE NEWS

Suggestions for Teachers

“The Election of 1912 in the News” is an interdisciplinary activity. One of the first decisions for teachers is the type of newspapers students are to produce. Do you want to emphasize what and how partisan publications would cover the candidates and issues? Or do you want students to focus on the progress of the 1912 elections from the party conventions through the campaigning and the Electoral College? After this decision, teachers need to decide if students will produce print newspapers which could be posted around the classroom or in a school display case or if they will produce an online news source.

Students should be expected to research the issues, understanding the positions each of the four candidates held. Students should write the news articles, editorials and commentary for their newspapers. News briefs might contain local, national and international events, economic news and social situations that influenced voters at the time. Teachers might ask each student to compile an annotated bibliography of sources read to gain this information.

Depending on the course and maturity of your students, you can decide if students are to draw the editorial cartoons or if they are to select one from 1912 that best presents the point of view they want expressed. If the latter assignment is given, be sure the group provides the source of the cartoon and why it was selected.

As students do their research of election coverage, teachers have a number of topics to cover:

Art and Photography: Examine typography and layout, the development of photography, and the art of the editorial cartoonists of the period. Photographs from the time period may be found on the Library of Congress National Digital Newspaper Program [<http://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov>], Presidential Election of 1912: A Resource Guide [<http://www.loc.gov/rr/program/bib/elections/election1912.html>] and Prints & Photographs Reading Room. [<http://www.loc.rr/print>]

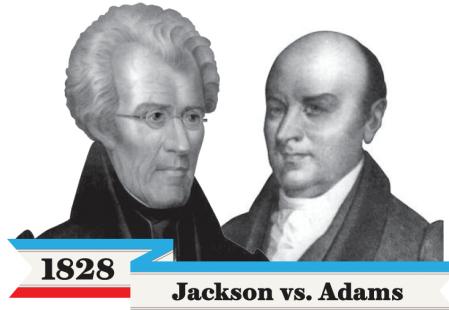
Journalism: Focus on page design, photographs and captions, and balance and fairness of coverage in 1912 and now. Students may also compare and contrast composition styles then and now. In addition to Chronicling America [<http://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov>], Google has many digitized newspapers [<http://news.google.com/newspapers>] as does The New York Times, 1851-Present [<http://www.nytimes.com/ref/membercenter/nytarchive.html>].

Political Science, Social Studies, U.S. Government and U.S. History: Study of this election is rich with the four political parties and their positions on government’s role in a number of important areas. Party platforms, candidates’ personalities, third-party agendas, and many other topics can be examined from the 1912 perspective as well as compared and contrasted with the 2012 election candidates and positions on the same issues.

Technology: Whether students are to prepare print or online newspapers, they will be applying technology skills they have gained.

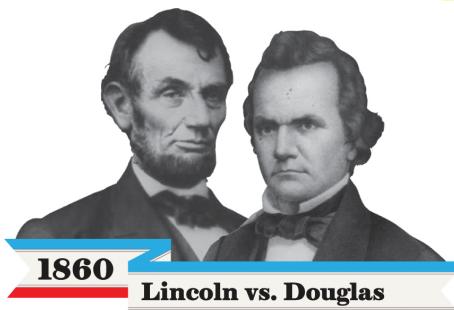
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WHAT WAS THE



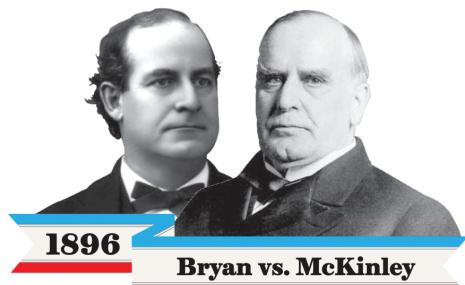
1828

Jackson vs. Adams



1860

Lincoln vs. Douglas



1896

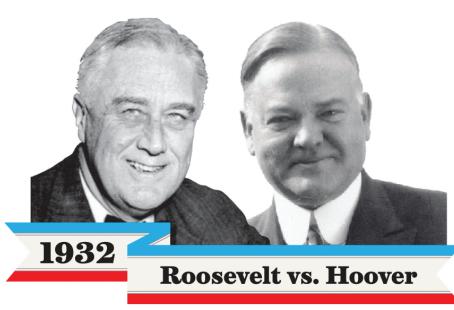
Bryan vs. McKinley

MOST IMPORTANT



1912

Wilson vs. Roosevelt vs. Taft



1932

Roosevelt vs. Hoover



1964

Johnson vs. Goldwater

ELECTION EVER?



1980

Reagan vs. Carter



2000

Bush vs. Gore



2008

McCain vs. Obama

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Avoid Active Involvement in Partisan Causes

The Washington Post Company expects the highest standards of journalism to be observed by its employees. Reporters, photographers, editorial staff members and all behind-the-scenes staff who produce the print and online Washington Post daily have guidelines, ethics and laws that govern how they do their jobs.

As former executive editor Benjamin C. Bradlee wrote in “Standards and Ethics”:

Washington Post reporters and editors are pledged to approach every assignment with the fairness of open minds and without prior judgment. The search for opposing views must be routine. Comment from persons accused or challenged in stories must be included. ...

When he discussed avoiding a conflict of interest, Bradlee reminded reporters that they were not to accept meals, gifts or preferential treatment, especially from those who may be seeking special coverage. Bradley concludes this section with the following:

- We make every reasonable effort to be free of obligation to news sources and to special interests. We must be wary of entanglement with those whose positions render them likely to be subjects of journalistic interest and examination. Our private behavior as well as our professional behavior must not bring discredit to our profession or to The Post.
- We avoid active involvement in any partisan causes — politics, community affairs, social action, demonstrations — that could compromise or seem to compromise our ability to report and edit fairly. Relatives cannot fairly be made subject to Post rules, but it should be recognized that their employment or their involvement in causes can at least appear to compromise our integrity. The business and professional ties of traditional family members or others members of your household must be disclosed to department heads.

What does this mean?

A young reporter on *The Washington Post* staff has been assigned to cover an out-of-town rally for a candidate. A staff member of the candidate is an old college friend. He invites the reporter to lunch before the event. Over the meal, he tells the *Post* employee about the personal side of his boss, the names of big contributors and defamatory information about the opposing candidate. During the rally, the reporter stays in the company of her college friend.

Did the reporter follow the “Standards and Ethics” guidelines?

What advice would you give to the reporter when she returns to the office?

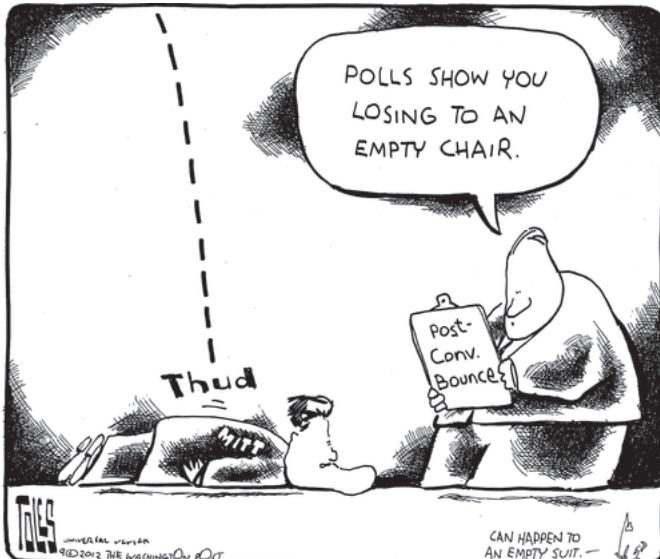
SOURCE: Benjamin C. Bradlee, “Standards and Ethics,” as found in The Washington Post Deskbook on Style, compiled and edited by Thomas W. Lippman

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Tom Toles

Campaigns provide editorial cartoonists many opportunities to comment on the candidates' speeches, actions and off-the-cuff remarks. They also make visual commentary about the political conventions, campaign issues and media. Every detail of an editorial cartoon works to communicate a point of view.

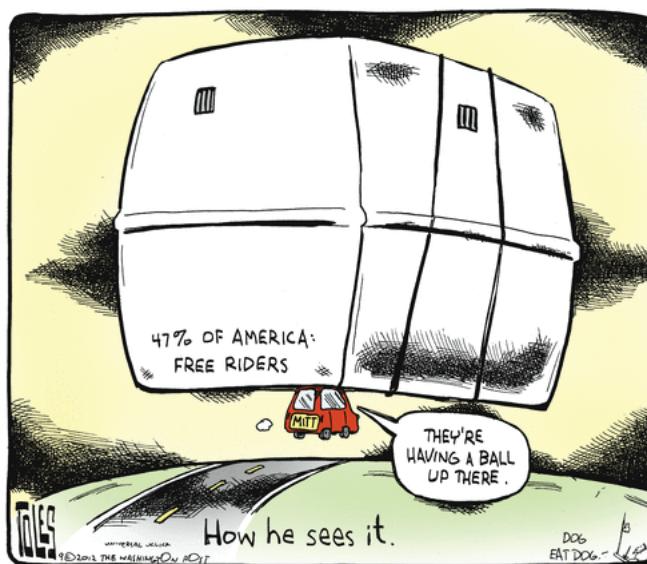
For each cartoon, identify the event, speech or role to which Tom Toles, *The Washington Post's* editorial cartoonist, is referring. Note the comment in the lower right corner. This is Toles' alter ego playing on words, reminding readers of his reference or adding another dimension to his point of view. "Read" each element before answering the questions. »»



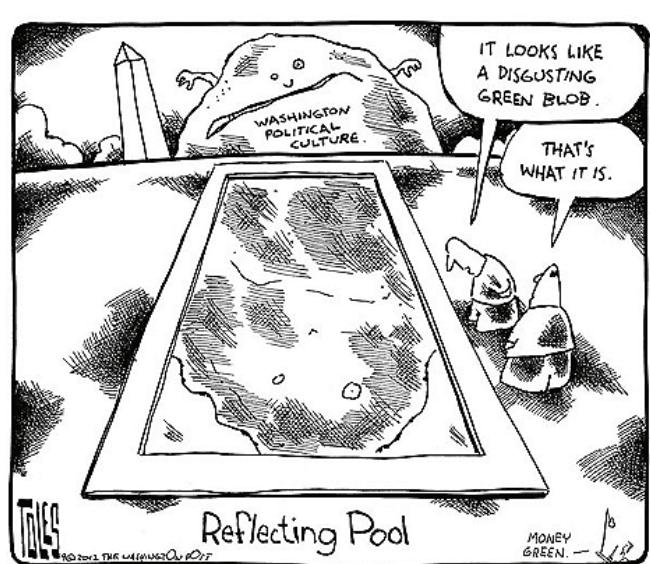
September 5, 2012



September 12, 2012



September 24, 2012



September 30, 2012

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TOM TOLES

Read the Editorial Cartoons



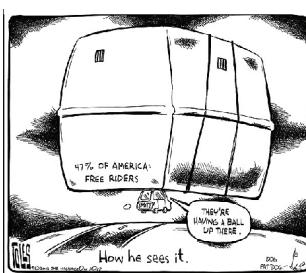
September 5, 2012

1. What is a post-convention bounce?
2. What features of the caricatures identify the two figures?
3. To what does “empty chair” refer?



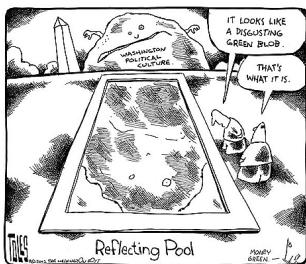
September 12, 2012

1. What iconic symbols are used to identify the two figures?
2. What play on words are found in the title and words of the alter ego?
3. Why is the “press” all eyes?



September 24, 2012

1. To what early Romney family trip is Toles referring?
2. Toles labeled the carrier. Why is this essential to understanding his perspective?
3. Many editorial cartoonists and late night show hosts used the Romney family trip anecdote for commentary. Draw a cartoon in which you use an original story or event to comment on a current issue.



September 30, 2012

1. This editorial cartoon plays off of several storylines. Name two of them.
2. Although editorial cartoons are primarily visual commentary, the labels and dialogue are also important elements of communication. Discuss the denotation and connotations of these terms: “culture,” “green blob,” and “reflecting.”
3. Toles’ alter ego defines the color of the “disgusting green blob” to be “money green.” Explain how this fits into Toles’ comment on the political culture in Washington, D.C.

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SUGGESTED RESPONSES *Read the Editorial Cartoons*

September 5, 2012

1. “Post-convention bounce” is the usual increase in poll standing after party conventions and the increased television exposure.
2. Romney is caricatured by his dark hair, elongated face and prominent chin. The pollster carries a clipboard and wears a suit.
3. “Empty chair” is an allusion to Clint Eastwood’s talk at the Republican convention. It may also be a metonym for President Obama.

September 12, 2012

1. The elephant is the iconic symbol for the Republican party. The press is traditionally represented by the fedora hat; the press pass in the brim leaves no doubt.
2. Fact “checkers” allows Toles to picture a fast moving checkers game (sleight of hand, perhaps, as well as many moves) and his alter ego to comment on the media’s “chess” rather than chest pains.
3. If the press is to perform its watch dog role, it must have many eyes or be “all eyes” on the actions. To be “all eyes” is to be giving full attention. Teacher’s Note: This cartoon might have had a donkey playing an elephant with the press looking on “all eyes.” How would that have changed the commentary? Without a donkey being present, is the press neglecting its responsibility to watch all?

September 24, 2012

1. The Romney family trip [http://www.washingtonpost.com/mitt-romneys-dog-on-the-car-roof-story-still-proves-to-be-his-critics-best-friend/2012/03/14/gIQAp2LxCS_story.html] in which their family dog was placed in a modified pet carrier on the car roof.
2. It is essential to Toles’ commentary that readers know his specific reference. Not the original family pet, a story that has grown.
3. Student work should be shared.

September 30, 2012

1. This editorial cartoon plays off of several storylines: the appearance of algae in the recently renovated Reflecting Pool, the inability of members of Congress to work together, and the influence of money.
2. “Culture” refers both to attitudes and practices as well as the growing of microorganisms. The “green blob,” especially modified by “disgusting” indicates there is no enlightenment in this culture and refers to the algae that has colored the Lincoln Memorial Reflecting Pool after a \$34 million reengineering project there. “Reflecting” not only confirms that the problem at the Reflecting Pool is an intended connection, but also suggests the need to look at the issue that is reflected. Perhaps some reflection is needed.
3. Responses might include: money has had too great an influence; no matter how money has been spent, the problems continue; donors, lobbyists and other moneyed influences contribute to the “disgusting” conditions.