Lesson Goals

SECTION 1
Students will . . .
• discuss the concept of public opinion and its place in a democracy.
• explain how key factors influence public opinion by completing a chart.
• identify and explain their opinions on five public issues.
• explore the roots of their opinions by ranking their sources of influence on the five public issues.

SECTION 2
Students will . . .
• examine the significance of how polling questions are worded and practice writing good polling questions.
• understand the importance of scientific polling by examining a poll on issues of concern to voters in a recent presidential election.
• evaluate the accuracy and usefulness of polls by examining a famous photograph.

SECTION 3
Students will . . .
• understand the impact of the Internet as a political medium by examining study findings.
• evaluate the use of the Internet for electoral politics by analyzing a candidate’s Web site.
• recognize the strengths of the Internet as a campaign medium by designing a home page for a candidate’s Web site.

Pressed for Time

To cover the chapter quickly, review the Section 1 Reading Comprehension Worksheet. Then have students complete Part 1 of the Section 1 Core Worksheet, in which they explain various influences on public opinion. Discuss which influences students consider most important and ask them to explain the reasons behind their choices. Then discuss any polls that students have seen in the media and explain that polls, when conducted properly, are the best way to measure public opinion. Have students examine “Questions to Ask About Polls” in Section 2 and ask them to explain why these questions are important in evaluating a poll’s accuracy. List the various types of media on the board (newspapers, television, the Internet, radio, and magazines) and discuss their role in students’ lives. Then use the cartoons in text Section 3 to discuss the influence of the media on politics and public opinion.

DIFFERENTIATED INSTRUCTION KEY

Look for these symbols to help you adjust steps in each lesson to meet your students’ needs.

L1 Special Needs
L2 Basic
ELL English Language Learners
LPR Less Proficient Readers
L3 All Students
L4 Advanced Students
Get Started

LESSON GOALS
Students will . . .
• discuss the concept of public opinion and its place in a democracy
• explain how key factors influence public opinion by completing a chart.
• identify and explain their opinions on five public issues.
• explore the roots of their opinions by ranking their sources of influence on the five public issues.

BEFORE CLASS
Assign the section, the graphic organizer in the text, and the Reading Comprehension Worksheet (Unit 2 All-in-One, p. 172) before class.

DIFFERENTIATE Reading Comprehension Worksheet (Unit 2 All-in-One, p. 173)

SKILLS DEVELOPMENT

COMPARE VIEWPOINTS
Before your classroom discussion of students’ opinions about the topics in this section’s Core Worksheet, you may want to review information on comparing viewpoints in the Skills Handbook, p. S15.

Focus on the Basics

FACTS: • Public opinion refers to the attitudes of a significant number of people on matters of government and politics. • Family and education are two important factors in shaping people’s political opinions. • Additional factors that shape public opinion include peer groups, opinion leaders, historic events, and mass media.

CONCEPTS: representative democracy, rights and responsibilities of citizens

ENDURING UNDERSTANDINGS: • Public opinion is not a single opinion, but a complex collection of opinions of many different publics. • Public opinion includes only views that relate to public affairs and that are expressed publicly.
almost certainly only a very few belong to all four of them.

Notice this important point: Not many issues capture the attention of all—or even nearly all—Americans. In fact, those that do are few and far between. Instead, most public issues attract the interest of some people (and sometimes millions of them), but those same issues are of little or no interest to many (and sometimes millions of) other people.

This point is crucial, too: In its proper sense, public opinion includes only those views that relate to public affairs. Public affairs include politics, public issues, and the making of public policies—those events and issues that concern the people at large. To be a public opinion, a view must involve something of general concern and of interest to a significant portion of the people as a whole.

Of course, the American people as a whole are interested in many things—rock groups and symphony orchestras, the New York Yankees and the Dallas Cowboys, candy bars and green vegetables, and a great deal more. Many people have opinions on each of these things, views that are sometimes loosely called “public opinion.” But, again, in its proper sense, public opinion involves only those views that people hold on such things as political parties and candidates, taxes, unemployment, welfare programs, national defense, foreign policy, and so on.

**Definition** Clearly, public opinion is so complex that it cannot be readily defined. From what has been said about it to this point, however, public opinion may be described this way: those attitudes held by a significant number of people on matters of government and politics.

As we have suggested, you can better understand the term in the plural—that is, as public opinions, the opinions of different publics. Look at it this way: public opinion is made up of expressed group attitudes.

A view must be expressed in order to be an opinion in the public sense. Otherwise, it cannot be identified with any public. That expression need not be oral (spoken). It can take any number of other forms, as well: a protest demonstration, a film, a billboard, a vote for or against a candidate, and so on. The point is that a person's private thoughts on an issue enter the stream of public opinion only when those thoughts are expressed publicly.

**Family and School**

No one is born with a set of attitudes about government and politics. Instead, each of us learns our political opinions, and we do so in a lifelong “classroom” and from many different “teachers.” In other words, public opinion is formed out of a very complex process. The factors involved in it are almost infinite.

**Checkpoint**
What do public affairs include?

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**DIFFERENTIATED RESOURCES**

The following resources are located in the All-in-One, Unit 2, Chapter 8, Section 1:

- L2 Prereading and Vocabulary Worksheet (p. 169)
- L3 Reading Comprehension Worksheet (p. 172)
- L2 Reading Comprehension Worksheet (p. 173)
- L3 Core Worksheet (p. 174)
- L2 Quiz A (p. 177)
- L2 Quiz B (p. 178)

**Answers**

**Checkpoint** politics, public issues, and the making of public policies

**Top Issues for 2008 Presidential Election** Possible response: The economy could improve, making it less of an issue, or a terrorist attack could lift terrorism to the top of the list.
You have already considered that point. Recall the detailed look at why people vote as they do in Chapter 6. Those pages amounted to an extensive look at how public opinion is formed. Also in that chapter, you considered the process by which each person acquires his or her political opinions—the process of political socialization. That complex process begins in early childhood, and it continues on through one’s lifetime. It involves all of the many experiences and relationships that lead each of us to see the political world and to act in it as we do.¹

There are many different agents of political socialization at work in the opinion-shaping process. Again, you looked at these agents in Chapter 6: age, race, income, occupation, residence, group affiliations, and many others. Here, look again at two of them, the family and school. They have so large an impact that they deserve another and slightly different discussion here.

Family Most parents do not think of themselves as agents of political socialization, nor do other members of most families. Parents and other family members do nonetheless play an important part in this process.

Children first see the political world from within the family and through the family’s eyes. They begin to learn about politics much as they begin to learn about most other things in life. They learn from what their parents have to say, from the stories that their older brothers and sisters bring home from school, from watching television with the family, and so on.

Most of what smaller children learn in the family setting cannot really be described as political opinions. Clearly, toddlers are not concerned with the wisdom of spending billions of dollars on an antimissile defense system, with the causes of global warming, or the pros and cons of the monetary policies of the Federal Reserve Board.

School The start of formal schooling marks the initial break in the influence of the family. For the first time, children become regularly involved in activities outside the home.

From the first day, schools teach children the values of the American political system. They work to indoctrinate the young, to instill in them loyalty to a particular cause or idea. In fact, preparing students to become good citizens is an important part of our educational system.

Students may salute the flag, recite the Pledge of Allegiance, and sing patriotic songs. They learn about George Washington, Abraham Lincoln, Susan B. Anthony, Martin Luther King, Jr., and other great Americans. From the early grades on, they pick up growing amounts of specific political knowledge, and they begin to form political opinions. In high school, they are often required to take a course in American government and even to read books such as this one.

School involves much more than books and classes, of course. It is a complex bundle of experiences and a place where a good deal of informal learning occurs—about the similarities and differences among individuals

¹ The concept of socialization comes from the fields of sociology and psychology. There, it is used to describe all of the ways in which a society transforms individuals into members of that society. To put this another way, Socialization is the multivariate, lifelong process in which people come to know, accept and follow the beliefs and practices of their society. Political socialization is a part of that much broader process.

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**Political Cartoon Mini-Lesson**

Display Transparencies 8B and 8C when you discuss the meaning of public opinion and its influences. Point out that political cartoonists seek to influence public opinion.

Ask: **How does a political cartoon influence public opinion?** (by expressing a view in a clever, interesting manner and by appearing in mass media) Display each transparency first without comment, allowing students time to think about each one. Then ask: **What public issue is the subject of both cartoons?** (gun ownership) If students need help answering this question, show Transparency 8C and ask: **What is missing?** (2nd Amendment) **What is the subject of this amendment?** (the right to bear arms) After students identify the issue, ask: **To what “public” does Cartoonist 8B appeal to belong?** (people who support gun control) **To what “public” does Cartoonist 8C appeal to belong?** (people who support the right to bear arms)
and groups, about the various ways in which decisions can be made, and about the process of compromise that must often occur in order for ideas to move forward.

Once again, the family and school are not the only forces at work in the process by which opinions are formed. A number of other influences are part of the mix. These two factors are singled out here to highlight their leading roles in that process.

Other Factors

No factor, by itself, shapes a person’s opinion on any single issue. Some factors do play a larger role than others, however. Thus, in addition to family and school, occupation and race are usually much more significant than, say, gender or place of residence.

For example, on the question of national health insurance, the particular job a person has—how well-paying it is, whether its benefits include coverage by a private health-insurance plan, and so on—will almost certainly have a greater impact on that person’s views than his or her gender or place of residence.

On the other hand, the relative weight of each factor that influences public opinion also depends on the issue in question. If the issue involves, say, equal pay for women or the restoration of Lake Michigan, then gender or where one lives will almost certainly loom larger in the opinion-making mix.

Besides family, school, and such factors as occupation and race, four other factors have a major place in the opinion-making process. They are the mass media, peer groups, opinion leaders, and historic events.

Mass Media The mass media include those means of communication that reach large, widely dispersed audiences (masses of people) simultaneously. No one needs to be told that the mass media, including newspapers, magazines, radio, and in particular, television and the Internet, have a huge effect on the formation of public opinion.

Debate

Form teams to debate the issues in the Core Worksheet, Part 2. Omit any issues that are too sensitive for your class. Allow students to choose the issue they want to debate and the position they want to take—either “Agree” or “Disagree.” Allow teams time to prepare. Advise them to prepare rebuttals for points they expect the opposing team to make. After teams debate each issue, ask if anyone’s opinion changed based on the points the teams made. Use the Debate strategy (p. T25) to organize the debate.

REFLECT ON WORKSHEET RESPONSES

While students respond to the remaining questions on the worksheet, you may wish, depending on classroom sensitivities, to have them submit their answers from Part 1 to you anonymously. On the board, keep a tally of the different answers to the questions. Ask: Are you surprised to see the range of opinions—or to see that the opinions on some topics are the same among all class members? Next, you may wish to have students present their top influences from Part 2—again, anonymously. Write the results on the board. Ask: Are you surprised to see the range of influences on public opinions? Lead a discussion on how the range, or lack of range, of opinions would influence public policy on these issues.

EXTEND THE LESSON

L4 Ask students to recall their answer to Reflection Question 13 from the Core Worksheet. Have students write an essay that explores the ways in which this particular influence has affected their lives and opinions.

L5 Differentiate Have students describe verbally the ways in which their most important influences have affected their lives.

L6 Differentiate For each issue listed in Part 1 of the Core Worksheet, have students describe different backgrounds and experiences that might lead other people to form opinions different from their own. For example, a victim of gun-related crime would be less likely to support gun ownership than would a hunting enthusiast.

L7 Differentiate Divide the class into four groups. Assign each group one of the following factors that shape public opinion: peer groups, opinion leaders, historic events, and mass media. Have groups discuss people, events, and experiences within their category that have had a significant influence on their political opinions. Each group should elect a spokesperson to share the highlights of their discussion, including which factor the group felt was the most influential and why.

Answers

Who Influences Our Opinions? possible response: occupation, race, mass media, peer groups, opinion leaders, historic events
Assess and Remediate

- Collect the Core Worksheet and assess students' work.
- Assign the Section 1 Assessment questions.
- Section Quiz A (Unit 2 All-in-One, p. 177)
- Section Quiz B (Unit 2 All-in-One, p. 178)

Have students complete the review activities in the digital lesson presentation and continue their work in the Essential Questions Journal.

Answers

Checkpoint Most people trust the views of their friends and want to be liked by their friends and associates, so they seldom stray too far from the opinions of the peer groups.

Analyzing Cartoons The cartoonist is implying that the mass media generally presents biased information—it tells people what to think.

Take this as but one indication: There is at least one television set in more than 98 percent of the nation's 115 million households. There are two or more sets in more than 80 million homes and millions more in many other places. Most of those sets are turned on for at least eight hours a day, for a mind-boggling total of more than a billion hours a day. You will take a longer look at the influence of the mass media later in this chapter.

Peer Groups People with whom one regularly associates, including friends, classmates, neighbors, co-workers, and the like, make up one's peer group. When a child enters school, friends and classmates become important agents in shaping his or her attitudes and behavior. The influence of peers continues on through adulthood.

Belonging to a peer group usually reinforces what a person has already come to believe. One obvious reason for this is that most people trust the views of their friends. Another is that the members of a peer group have shared many of the same socializing experiences, and so tend to think along the same or similar lines.

To put this observation another way, contradictory or other unsettling opinions are not often heard within a peer group. Most people want to be liked by their friends and associates. As a result, they are usually reluctant to stray too far from what their peers think and how they behave.

Opinion Leaders The views expressed by opinion leaders also bear heavily on the formation of public opinion. An opinion leader is any person who, for any reason, has an unusually strong influence on the views of others. These opinion shapers are a distinct minority in the total population, of course, but they are found everywhere.

Many opinion leaders hold public office. Some write for newspapers or magazines, or express their opinions on radio or television or the Internet. Others are prominent in business, labor, agriculture, and civic organizations. Many are professionals—doctors, lawyers, teachers, ministers, and rabbis—and have regular contact with large numbers of people. Many others are active members of their neighborhood or church, or have leadership roles in their local communities.

Whoever they may be—the President of the United States, a network television commentator, the governor, the head of a local citizens committee, or even a local talk-show host—these opinion leaders are people to whom others listen and from whom others draw ideas and convictions. Whatever their political, economic, or social standing or outlook may be, opinion leaders play a significant role in the formation of public opinion.

Background

Celebrity Endorsements Before every election, celebrities of various stripes endorse candidates. Polls by the Pew Research Center, however, suggest that celebrity endorsements do little to sway voter opinion—at least not directly. “[Endorsements] generate free media attention, fundraising, and get people talking about the endorsements to their friends,” said Professor Kelli Lammie, of SUNY-Albany, in a US News article from October 24, 2008. A Pew poll in 2007 found that the most influential endorsements come from local religious leaders and State governors. In the 2008 Democratic primaries, however, Oprah Winfrey’s endorsement of Barack Obama may have played a key role. Winfrey’s television show, magazine, and radio show reach 49 million people a week. A University of Maryland study found that Winfrey’s endorsement brought Obama over a million votes in the primaries.
poverty became massive national problems. Hunger and despair stalked the land. In 1929, some two million people were unemployed in the United States. By just four years later, that number had climbed to 13.5 million. In 1935, some 18 million men, women, and children were wholly dependent on public emergency relief programs. Some 10 million workers had no employment other than that provided by temporary public projects.

All of this changed people’s view of the proper place of government in the United States. The Depression persuaded a large majority of Americans to support an expanded role for government—in particular, for the National Government—in the nation’s economic and social life.

The Great Depression also prompted a majority of Americans to shift their loyalties from the Republicans to the Democrats. The Republicans had dominated the national political scene from Lincoln’s election in 1860 to the onset of the Depression. That situation changed abruptly when Franklin D. Roosevelt’s landslide victory in 1932 began nearly 40 years of Democratic domination.

The turbulent politics of the 1960s and early 1970s furnish another example of the way in which significant occurrences can impact and shape opinions. The American people had emerged from World War II and the prosperity of the 1950s with a largely optimistic view of the future and of the United States’ place in the world. That rose-colored outlook was reflected in a generally favorable, even respectful, attitude toward government in this country.

The 1960s and early 1970s changed all that. Those years were highlighted by a number of traumatic events. Of special note were the assassinations of President John Kennedy in 1963 and of the Reverend Martin Luther King, Jr., and Senator Robert Kennedy in 1968. This period also included the civil rights movement and the Vietnam War, with all of the protests, violence, and strong emotions that accompanied both of those chapters in this nation’s life. The era ended with the Watergate scandal and the near-impeachment and subsequent resignation of President Richard Nixon in 1974.

Those years of turmoil and divisiveness produced a dramatic decline in the American people’s estimate of their government—and most especially in their evaluation of its trustworthiness.

**Assessment Answers**

1. Public opinion includes those attitudes held by significant numbers of people on matters of public concern. It is shaped by family, school, occupation, race, mass media, peer groups, opinion leaders, and historical events.

2. Each public is made up of all individuals who hold the same view on a particular public issue. Each group holding a differing view on that issue is a separate public. Public opinion is composed of the attitudes held by all of these separate publics on any matter of government and politics.

3. Public opinion is limited to matters of public concern, including politics, public issues, and the making of public policies.

4. Family and school

5. The mass media communicate to large, widely dispersed audiences simultaneously. Peer groups help solidify existing opinions because people trust the views of their friends and want to be liked by their friends. Opinion leaders are people to whom others listen and from whom others draw ideas and convictions.

6. Peer groups tend to encourage conformity and discourage dissent. People want to be liked by their friends and associates, so members tend not to challenge the views of their peer groups.

7. Possible answer: The September 11 attacks raised issues of national security and foreign policy, as well as issues of individual rights and freedoms and religious tolerance.

**Quick Write** Make sure students find a suitable topic of public interest and identify at least two opinions about it.
GUIDING QUESTION

How is public opinion measured and used?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Measuring Public Opinion</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Elections</td>
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<tr>
<td>Interest Groups</td>
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<tr>
<td>Media</td>
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<tr>
<td>Personal Contacts</td>
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<tr>
<td>Public Opinion Polls</td>
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<tr>
<td>Straw Vote</td>
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<tr>
<td>Scientific Polling</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Get Started

LESSON GOALS

Students will . . .

- examine the significance of how polling questions are worded and practice writing good polling questions.
- understand the importance of scientific polling by examining a poll on issues of concern to voters in a recent presidential election.
- evaluate the accuracy and usefulness of polls by examining a famous photograph.

Focus on the Basics

FACTS: • Elections, interest groups, the media, and personal contacts reflect public opinion but do not provide accurate measurements of it. • The most reliable measure of public opinion is scientifically conducted opinion polls. • Scientific polls define the universe, construct a sample, prepare valid questions, select and control how the poll will be taken, and analyze and report findings.

CONCEPTS: democratic values/principles

ENDURING UNDERSTANDINGS: • To achieve reliable results, pollsters must use a random sample from the target population and avoid bias in the wording of their questions. • Democracy is more about thoughtful participation than mere measurement of public opinion.

Image Above: NBC News pollster conducts an election exit poll.
In reality, however, election results are seldom an accurate measure of public opinion. Voters make choices in elections for any of several reasons, as you have seen. Very often, those choices have little or nothing to do with the candidates’ stands on public questions. Then, too, candidates often disagree with some of the planks of their party's platform. And, as you know, candidates and parties often express their positions in broad, generalized terms.

In short, much of what you have read about voting behavior, and about the nature of parties, adds up to this: Elections are, at best, only useful indicators of public opinion. To call the typical election a mandate for much of anything other than a general direction in public policy is to be on very shaky ground.

**Interest Groups** Private organizations whose members share certain views and objectives, and who work to shape the making and the content of public policy are called **interest groups**. These organizations are also very aptly known as pressure groups and special-interest groups.

Interest groups are a chief means by which public opinion is made known. They present their views (exert their pressures) through their lobbyists, by letters, telephone calls, and e-mails, in political campaigns, and by other methods. In dealing with them, however, public officials often have difficulty determining two things: How many people does an interest group really represent? How strongly do those people hold the views that an organization says they hold?

**The Media** Earlier, you read some impressive numbers about television that help describe the place of the media in the opinion process; you will read more of those numbers later. Here, recognize this point: The media are also a gauge for assessing public opinion. The media are frequently said to be “mirrors” as well as “molders” of opinion. It is often claimed that the views expressed in newspaper editorials, syndicated columns, news magazines, television documentaries, and blogs are fairly good indicators of public opinion. In fact, however, the media are not very accurate mirrors of public opinion, often reflecting only the views of a vocal minority.

**Personal Contacts** Most public officials have frequent and wide-ranging contacts in many different forms with large numbers of people. In each of these contacts, they try to read the public’s mind. Indeed, their jobs demand that they do so.

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**Before Class**
Assign the section, the graphic organizer in the text, and the Reading Comprehension Worksheet (Unit 2 All-in-One, p. 179) before class.

**Differentiate** Reading Comprehension Worksheet (Unit 2 All-in-One, p. 181)

**Bellringer**
Display Transparency 8D, which shows the effects of wording on poll questions. Have students answer the question in their notebook.

**Teach**
To present this topic using online resources, use the lesson presentations at PearsonSuccessNet.com.

**Review Bellringer**
Have students share their reactions to the Bellringer. Point out that the only difference in the wording of the last two questions is the order in which the options are presented. The results, however, are vastly different. This suggests that the order significantly influenced the responses. The first question requiring a simple “agree” or “disagree” response will likely bring most accurate results. Ask: What do these examples tell you about polls and polling? (How questions are worded can change the results of a poll, so polls may not always be an accurate measure of public opinion.)

Then write the following topic on the board:
*Protecting the Environment.* Ask students to work in pairs to write a poll question two different ways—one designed to elicit a particular response and another designed to be neutral and unbiased. Have volunteers share their questions, and write them on the board. Discuss how the wording of particular questions could influence the answers, and point out which questions would be most appropriate to use in a poll.

**Differentiate** Start by underlining the parts that differ among the questions on the board and choose questions with the clearest differences in wording to discuss first. Provide help with any difficult vocabulary words.

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**Differentiated Resources**
The following resources are located in the All-in-One, Unit 2, Chapter 8, Section 2:
- L Reading Comprehension Worksheet (p. 179)
- L Reading Comprehension Worksheet (p. 181)
- L Core Worksheet (p. 183)
- L Extend Activity (p. 184)
- L Quiz A (p. 185)
- L Quiz B (p. 186)

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**Answers**
**Checkpoint** Interest groups present their views using lobbyists, letters, telephone calls, e-mails, and in political campaigns.

**Using Public Opinion** to shape public policy and to win elections.
INTRODUCE THE TOPIC

Explain that measuring public opinion is a complicated task that is of great interest to public officials. Ask: Why would officials be interested in public opinion? (Knowing public opinion is key to being elected, and it can also help guide officials to form public policy that the people want.) Why is this information important to the American political system? (The system is based on public officials carrying out the people’s wishes.) Then write the following headings on the board: Elections, Interest Groups, Media, and Personal Contacts. Ask students to explain how each reflects public opinion and discuss the limitations of each as a measurement tool. Tell students that scientific opinion polls provide the most reliable measure of public opinion.

Members of Congress receive bags of mail and hundreds of phone calls and e-mails every day. Many of them make frequent trips “to keep in touch with the folks back home.” Top administration figures are often on the road, too, selling the President’s programs and gauging the people’s reactions. Even the President does some of this, with speaking trips to different parts of the country.

Governors, State legislators, mayors, and other officials also have any number of contacts with the public. These officials encounter the public in their offices, in public meetings, at social gatherings, community events, and even at ball games.

Can public officials find “the voice of the people” in all of those contacts? Many can and do, and often with surprising accuracy. But some public officials cannot. They fall into an ever-present trap: They find only what they want to find, only those views that support and agree with their own.

Public Opinion Polls

Public opinion is best measured by public opinion polls, devices that attempt to collect information by asking people questions.3 The more accurate polls are based on scientific polling techniques.

Straw Votes

Public opinion polls have existed in this country for more than a century. Until the 1930s, however, they were far from scientific. Most earlier polling efforts were of the straw vote variety.4 That is, they were polls that sought to read the public’s mind simply by asking the same question of a large number of people. Straw votes are still fairly common. Many radio talk-show hosts pose questions that listeners can respond to by telephone, and television personalities regularly invite responses by e-mail.

The straw-vote technique is highly unreliable, however. It rests on the mistaken assumption that a relatively large number of responses will provide a fairly accurate picture of the public’s views on a given question. The problem is this: The respondents are self-selected. Nothing in the process ensures that those who respond will represent a reasonably accurate cross section of the total population. The straw vote emphasizes the quantity rather than the quality of the sample to which its question is put.

The most famous of all straw-polling mishaps took place in 1936. A widely read periodical, the Literary Digest, mailed postcard ballots to more than 10 million people and received answers from more than 2 million of them. Based on that huge return, the magazine confidently predicted the outcome of the presidential election that year. It said that Governor Alfred Landon, the Republican nominee, would easily defeat incumbent Franklin Roosevelt. Instead, Roosevelt won in a landslide. He captured more than 60 percent of the popular vote and carried every State but Maine and Vermont.

The Digest had drawn its sample on a faulty basis: from automobile registration lists and telephone directories. The Digest had failed to consider that in the mid-Depression year of 1936, millions of people could not afford to own cars or have private telephones.

The Digest poll failed to reach most of the vast pool of the poor and unemployed.

Answers

Analyzing Cartoons  The cartoonist is saying that pollsters do a poor job of predicting future actions or events.

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3 Poll comes from the Old French word poll, meaning “the top or crown of the head,” the part that shows when heads are counted.
4 The odd name comes from the fact that a straw, thrown up in the air, will indicate which way the wind is blowing.

Background

EXIT POLLS On presidential election night, results pour into television and Internet news sources. Their U.S. maps begin lighting up with red and blue as reporters “call,” or project, a winner in each State—even before most votes are counted. News sources project winners based largely on exit polls, which are carried out during the balloting. Interviewers stand outside randomly selected polling places in each State and interview voters as they leave the polls. They select interviewees at set intervals, such as every fourth or eighth voter. The exit poll typically asks voters for whom they voted and why. Pollsters also collect demographic data, such as the gender, race, and age to analyze voting patterns. To avoid influencing voter turnout, the major news sources have agreed not to project the winner in a State until the polls close in that State.
millions of blue-collar workers, and most of the ethnic minorities in the country. Those were the very segments of the population from which Roosevelt and the Democrats drew their greatest support. The magazine had predicted the winner of each of the three previous presidential elections, but, its failure to do so in 1936 was so colossal that it ceased publication not long thereafter.

Scientific Polling Serious efforts to take the public’s pulse on a scientific basis date from the mid-1930s. They began with the work of such early pollsters as George Gallup and Elmo Roper. The techniques that they and others have developed over the decades since then have reached a highly sophisticated level.

There are now more than 1,000 national and regional polling organizations in this country. Many of them do mostly commercial work. That is, they tap the public’s preferences on everything from toothpastes and headache remedies to television shows and thousands of other things. However, at least 200 of these polling organizations also poll the political preferences of the American people.

Among the best known of the national pollsters today are the Gallup Organization (the Gallup Poll) and the Pew Research Center for People and the Press.

A number of the leading national polls are joint efforts of major news-gathering and professional polling organizations. Their polls regularly report public attitudes on matters of current interest—including, for example, the level of public support of the President and/or Congress or, in election seasons, candidates running for such major offices as governor or member of the House or Senate. Those joint ventures that can most frequently be found in print and on television and the Internet include the ABC News/The Washington Post poll, the CBS News/The New York Times poll, the NBC/The Wall Street Journal poll, and the CNN/USA Today/Gallup poll.

The Polling Process Scientific poll-taking is an extremely complex process that can best be described in five basic steps. In their efforts to discover and report public opinion, pollsters must...

DISCUSS TYPES OF POLLS
Ask students if they have ever participated in a poll or if they look at polls online or on television news shows. Point out that, while interesting to a casual viewer, many of these are straw votes that do not accurately measure public opinion. Ask students to explain how scientific polls differ from straw votes. (The sample in a straw vote is self-selected. It consists of people who decide to call in or email a response to the poll question. Such a sample is not random and so does not represent an accurate cross section of the total population. A scientific poll uses a random sample of the universe, questions that are carefully worded to avoid bias, and an interview process designed to avoid influencing replies.) Ask: Why might policymakers care about how a poll is constructed? (They want to know the true nature of public opinion and how accurately the poll measures it.) How might a poll be misused? (A group might intentionally introduce bias into the polling process to create a favorable rating for their candidate or cause.)

Distribute Core Worksheet
Distribute the Chapter 8, Section 2 Core Worksheet (Unit 2 All-in-One, page 183), in which students evaluate a poll about voters’ concerns prior to the 2008 presidential election. Ask students to study the poll on the worksheet and answer the questions that follow.

Background

TRUMAN-DEWEY ELECTION, 1948 When you display the famous photograph of Truman holding up the Chicago Tribune with the headline “Dewey Defeats Truman,” point out that this was not the only leading publication that relied too heavily on pre-election polls. The New York Times had boldly predicted “Thomas E. Dewey’s Election as President Is a Foregone Conclusion.” The Life Magazine cover pictured Dewey with the caption “The Next President of the United States.” Polls had shown Dewey ahead by 5 percent to 15 percent. Post-election analysis suggested that the polls had been taken too early, missing the last-minute swing in voter opinion. The erroneous polls might have helped Truman win by making Republicans overconfident and energizing Democratic efforts to get out the vote. The error proved disastrous for the young opinion polling organization, Gallup, which had to work to regain credibility.

Answers

Checkpoint National polls measure the public’s preferences for a wide variety of products as well as political preferences.

Analyzing Charts Possible answer: the first question, because even though the last two questions are the same, their wording produced vastly different results, suggesting bias
DISCUSS CORE WORKSHEET ANSWERS

**Review students’ answers to the worksheet, using the following questions to guide the discussion:**

**Why is it important to know who took the poll?** (The source is an indicator of the poll’s reliability. We can assume that a reputable source, such as Gallup, used scientific methods, whereas a biased source, such as a special interest group, might have skewed the results toward the candidate it favors.)

**Why is the poll’s date important?** (Circumstances may have changed since the poll was taken, making the data no longer relevant.)

**What is the significance of the number of people who responded to the poll?** (The sample must be large enough to yield results that are statistically accurate within a small margin of error.)

**What information about the respondents is relevant to interpreting poll results?** (It is important to know if this sample was random and large enough to accurately represent the target universe.)

**Does this seem to be a scientific poll?** (Yes, it was taken by reputable organizations, the questions were rotated to avoid influencing results, it includes enough people for an accurate sampling, and the margin of error is the standard ±3.)

**How might a presidential candidate use this poll?** (to craft the campaign message to focus on the issues of most concern to voters)

**DISPLAY TRANSPARENCY**

Display Transparency 8E, Truman-Dewey Election, 1948. Point out that the man in the photograph is Harry S. Truman. Explain that this photograph dramatizes a famous case of a newspaper incorrectly predicting the outcome of a presidential race. Although polls had predicted that Dewey would win, Truman in fact became President. Ask: What does this situation suggest about polls? (While they can attempt to make predictions, they can be wrong.) Discuss whether students themselves are influenced by polls. Then ask: Are polls good for democracy? (Yes, they are useful tools to help candidates and policymakers act based on public opinion; No, they do not reflect thoughtful, nuanced responses and could influence voter turnout at the polls.)

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**Answers**

**Checkpoint** The universe is the whole population that the poll aims to measure.

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**Background**

**SAMPLING** Up to 1948, polls used quota sampling. Interviewers could choose their respondents, as long as they satisfied quotas for certain characteristics, such as male, female, young, and old. However, the interviewers tended to choose people who were most convenient to interview, introducing bias into the sample. The polling disaster in the Truman-Dewey election of 1948 led to the adoption of sampling based on probability—random sampling. Random sampling takes the choice of respondents out of the hands of humans. For example, telephone polls today typically use random-digit dialing, in which a computer generates phone numbers from known area codes and digits selected by chance. Interviewing every fourth voter leaving the polls is another form of random sampling. Random sampling techniques ensure that all members of the target universe have an equal chance of being selected.
Evaluating Polls
Questions to Ask About Polls

Poll results are often published in newspapers, magazines, or online. You should learn to analyze such results carefully. Use the following questions as a starting point: Why is it important to read poll results critically?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>WHO?</th>
<th>WHAT?</th>
<th>HOW?</th>
<th>WHY?</th>
<th>WHEN?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Who is responsible for the poll?</td>
<td>What is the poll’s universe?</td>
<td>How was the sample chosen?</td>
<td>Why is the poll being conducted?</td>
<td>When was the data collected?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Polls sponsored by political campaigns may aim to mislead as much as inform.</td>
<td>The universe is the population the poll aims to measure. This allows you to judge whether the sample is truly representative.</td>
<td>Samples should be selected randomly. How were questions written and asked? The method of creating and asking questions can alter the results.</td>
<td>Polls meant to boost a candidate’s approval ratings are not reliable.</td>
<td>Opinions change quickly during elections—so knowing when the data was collected is important.</td>
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</table>

Responsible pollsters recognize the problem and construct their questions with great care. They try to avoid “loaded,” emotionally charged words and terms that are difficult to understand. They also try to avoid questions that are worded in a way that tends to shape the answers that will be given to them.

**Interviewing** How pollsters communicate with respondents can also affect accuracy. For decades, most polls were conducted door-to-door, face-to-face. That is, the interviewer questioned the respondent in person. Today, however, most pollsters do their work by telephone, with a sample selected by random digit dialing. Calls are placed to randomly chosen numbers within randomly chosen area codes around the country. Telephone surveys are less labor intensive and less expensive than door-to-door polling. Still, most professional pollsters see advantages and drawbacks to each approach. But they all agree that only one technique, not a combination of the two, should be used in any given poll.

The interview itself is a very sensitive point in the process. An interviewer’s tone of voice or the emphasis he or she gives to certain words can influence a respondent’s replies and so affect the validity of a poll. If the questions are not carefully worded, some of the respondent’s replies may be snap judgments or emotional reactions. Others may be answers that the person being interviewed thinks “ought” to be given. Thus, polling organizations try to hire and train their interviewing staffs very carefully.

**Analyzing Findings** Polls, whether scientific or not, try to measure people’s attitudes. To be of any real value, however, someone must analyze and report the results. Scientific polling organizations today collect huge amounts of raw data. In order to handle these data, computers and other electronic hardware have become routine parts of the process. Pollsters use these technologies to tabulate and interpret their data, draw their conclusions, and then publish their findings.

**Evaluating Polls** How good are polls? On balance, the major national polls are fairly reliable. So, too, are most of the regional surveys around the country. Still, they are far from perfect. Fortunately,

Tell students to go to the Audio Tour to learn additional questions to ask about polls.

**EXTEND THE LESSON**

**Differentiate** Have students use the Internet or other sources to research a recent presidential or other major election. Ask them to write a brief report comparing polling results to the actual outcome of the race.

**Differentiate** Distribute the Extend Activity entitled “Study a Political Poll” (Unit 2 All-in-One, p. 184), which asks students to find the results of a political poll, study the information, and answer questions about it.

**Differentiate** Have students find examples of public opinion polls in newspapers, news magazines, or the Internet. Ask them to explain in writing (1) whether the polls are scientific and how they know, (2) what the polls show about public opinion, and (3) who would use these results and for what purpose.

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**How Government Works**

**Using Public Opinion** Franklin Roosevelt was the first President to use polling data. He worked to gain public support for his Lend-Lease program and used private polls to track his progress. John F. Kennedy made polling an essential component of campaign strategy. He worked with Louis Harris (founder of the Harris Poll) in several key areas, including education and religion. When the results of one poll showed that 30 percent of families were sending their children to college while 80 percent hoped to do so, Kennedy incorporated the idea of improved educational opportunities in his campaign speeches. When he found that 30 States strongly opposed his candidacy based on his Roman Catholic upbringing, Kennedy eliminated those States from his campaign schedule, focusing instead on those States where he stood a better chance. Today, nearly all candidates use polls to plan their campaign strategies.

**Answers**

**Questions to Ask About Polls** Possible response: A poll can contain bias if the pollsters did not follow proper scientific techniques or if the poll was sponsored by a campaign that is trying to boost its candidate’s approval rating.
Assess and Remediate

L3 Collect the Core Worksheet and assess students’ work.
L3 Assign the Section 2 Assessment questions.
L3 Section Quiz A (Unit 2 All-in-One, p. 185)
L2 Section Quiz B (Unit 2 All-in-One, p. 186)

Have students complete the review activities in the digital lesson presentation and continue their work in the Essential Questions Journal.

REMEDIATION

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>If Your Students Have Trouble With</th>
<th>Strategies For Remediation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The different expressions of public opinion (Questions 1, 2, 3, 7)</td>
<td>Have students work in groups of four, and have each student study and give a lesson to the others in his or her group about one of the sections under the heading “Measuring Public Opinion” (elections, interest groups, media, and personal contacts).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The role of polls in measuring public opinion (Questions 4, 6)</td>
<td>Have students create a Venn diagram that compares and contrasts the straw vote technique and scientific polling.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The process of opinion polling (Question 5)</td>
<td>Have students create an illustrated diagram of the different steps in scientific polling.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Answers

Checkpoint the intensity, stability, and relevance of the opinions they report

Assessment Answers

1. Public opinion can be measured through elections and through the opinions put forth by interest groups, the media, and personal contacts, but the most accurate way of measuring public opinion is through polls.
2. Candidates claim a mandate when they see their election as a clear statement of public approval of their stands on issues or those of their party.
3. It is not always clear how many people are represented by an interest group and how strongly those people hold particular views.
4. Straw votes do not use scientifically drawn random samples of the population being studied.
5. (1) define the universe, (2) construct a sample, (3) prepare valid questions, (4) select and control how the poll will be taken, (5) analyze and report results
6. Possible benefits: encourage voter turnout if the race is tight; focus attention on public questions and stimulate discussion of them. Possible drawbacks: may shape opinions they intend to measure; can create a bandwagon effect that brings more votes to the candidate who is ahead in the polls; can discourage turnout if people believe the election already has a clear winner
7. Possible examples: The First Amendment guarantee of freedom of speech and assembly enable minority views to be heard. Also, many government positions are appointed, not elected.

Quick Write Students should collect information from reliable sources on their chosen topic.

SECTION 2 ASSESSMENT

1. Guiding Question Use your completed table to answer the question: What are the ways in which public opinion is most effectively measured?

Key Terms and Comprehension

2. Why do victorious candidates sometimes claim a mandate?
3. Why is it difficult to determine much about public opinion based on the actions of interest groups?
4. Why are straw votes a generally unreliable form of measuring public opinion?

Critical Thinking

5. Identify the five steps in the polling process.
6. Analyze Information What are the benefits and drawbacks of releasing to the public the results of public opinion polls on upcoming elections?
7. Recognize Ideologies Give an example of how our system of government works to minimize the influence of public opinion on certain types of decisions.

To continue to build a response to the chapter Essential Question, go to your Essential Questions Journal.

Essential Questions Journal

Quick Write

Cause-and-Effect Essay: Research the Topic Use the Internet and other resources to collect information about the history of the topic you chose in Section 1. Find out when the topic first gained prominence in American social life and what events, trends, or factors have had a significant impact on public opinion about that topic.
Conducting a Poll

We live in a representative democracy in which the voters elect representatives to act on their behalf. Your school's student government may operate the same way. One way representatives can gain insight into the thoughts and feelings of their constituents—that is, understand public opinion—is to conduct a poll. A well-constructed poll can help provide solid information about what a group of people thinks. Yet putting together a good poll requires knowledge and skill.

Follow these simple steps to conduct an effective poll.

1. **Define the universe.** In polling, the universe is the group of people whose opinion you are interested in learning about. For a presidential candidate, it may be all the voters in the country. For a candidate for student council, it may be all the students in a school, and so on.

2. **Construct your sample.** In some cases, you may be able to poll every person in the universe. If that is not possible, you must identify whom you will poll—your *sample*. Your sample should be a number of people chosen randomly from the universe. The goal is to poll a group that represents the whole universe in its views and attitudes.

Note: The people who volunteer to be polled or who walk by a specific corner of your school or community are not a random sample.

3. **Prepare valid questions.** Good poll questions do not lead people to an answer or convey a strong attitude about an issue. They provide enough information to frame the question properly, but not so much that they promote one response or another. Before you conduct your poll, invite friends or colleagues to review your questions to help ensure their reliability and objectivity.

4. **Conduct interviews carefully.** Just as a pollster must prepare questions carefully, he or she must ask questions carefully. Remember, the goal is to get answers that truly reflect people's attitudes at the time. An interviewer must be careful not to seem to lead respondents to a particular answer.

5. **Interpret the results.** Polls are not perfect. If you have used a random sample, your results will contain a margin of error. When you interpret your results, remember to analyze the intensity, the stability, and the relevance of the opinions you collect.

**What do you think?**

1. Why do you think that selecting your sample from volunteers or from a group that passes by a specific hallway or corner might not be a valid random sample?
2. Explain how an interviewer's behavior affects the way people respond to a poll question.
3. **You Try It!** Follow the steps laid out here, and design a public opinion poll about an issue in your school or community with detailed descriptions of the universe, how you will construct your sample, and what questions you will ask.

**LESSON GOAL**

- Students will analyze the process for constructing and conducting an opinion poll.

**TEACH**

**READ**

Have students read the introduction aloud. If students have computer access, you may have them search for more about scientific polling.

**DISCUSS**

Have students discuss ways to create a random sample. (*Methods might include interviewing every fourth student entering the school or scrambling a list of all students and choosing every tenth name.*) Ask students how the wording of questions might lead people to respond in a particular way. (*Questions might not provide proper context or might include “loaded” language that creates an emotional response. For example, people tend to react more negatively to “bureaucrat” than to “public servant.”*)

**IDENTIFY LIMITS OF POLLS**

Ask: **What is margin of error?** (*It is the mathematical range within which a poll result might vary from the actual result. For example, a poll with a margin of error of plus or minus 3 is expected to be no more than 3 percent higher or lower than the actual opinion of the universe.*) Have students describe the proper way to use polls. (*Polls are estimates, not perfect measures. They can focus attention on public questions and help politicians plan campaign strategy and craft public policy.*)

**Assess and Remediate**

Collect and assess student plans for a public opinion poll. Have students answer the What Do You Think questions.

**Answers**

1. In both of these cases, not all members of the universe have an equal chance of being interviewed. People who ask to be interviewed are self-selecting. A specific location excludes people who do not routinely use that hallway.

2. An interviewer's tone of voice or the emphasis given to certain words can influence replies.

3. A strong plan will include an accurate definition of the universe, a means of obtaining a random sample, and well-crafted questions.

**Citizenship Activity Pack**

If your students need extra support, use the Citizenship Activity Pack lesson *How to Conduct a Poll*. It includes a lesson plan, assessment rubrics, a student survey, and a poster with examples of forced-choice, scaled, and ranked questions. Students may also access the Citizenship Activity Pack online for activities on How to Conduct a Poll at PearsonSuccessNet.com.

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How has the development of different media helped inform the public about politics?

**Newspapers**
- America’s first regular newspaper 1704
- first daily newspaper 1783
- today more than 10,000
- daily newspapers declining for decades
- most now local

**Magazines**
- into early 1900s, mostly literature and social graces
- first political magazines mid-1800s
- muckraking early 1900s
- only national medium before radio and television
- most today trade or personal interest

**Radio**
- began 1920
- by 1930s major entertainment medium
- convenient availability helped it survive arrival of television
- satellite radio receives signals nationwide
- most local
- some all-news stations
- talk radio—political comment

**Television**
- boomed in 1950s
- early 1960s replaced newspapers as main source of political information
- now main news source for 80 percent of population
- independent broadcasting, cable, PBS

The Internet
- roots in Department Cold War research
- by early 2000s mass medium
- now second to television as source of political news
- almost all government and political organizations have sites
- weblogs usually devoted to specific subject
- podcasts—downloadable digital recordings

**Political Dictionary**
- medium
- blog
- public agenda
- sound bite

**Objectives**
1. Examine the role of the mass media in providing the public with political information.
2. Explain how the mass media influence politics.
3. Understand the factors that limit the influence of the media.

Image Above: People get their news from various media outlets, such as the Internet.

**Focus on the Basics**

**FACTS:**
- The public gets information on issues of public interest through the mass media—television, newspapers, radio, magazines, and the Internet.
- The media influence the public agenda by focusing attention on certain issues and helping candidates appeal directly to voters.
- The media influence is limited because of limited coverage of public affairs.

**CONCEPTS:**
- democratic values, rights and responsibilities of citizenship

**ENDURING UNDERSTANDINGS:**
- Mass media influence the public agenda and electoral politics.
- To be informed, citizens must seek out in-depth coverage of public affairs.
Television  Politics and television have gone hand in hand since the technology first appeared. The first public demonstration of television occurred at the New York World’s Fair in 1939. President Franklin Roosevelt opened the fair on camera, and a comparative handful of local viewers watched him do so on tiny five- and seven-inch screens. World War II interrupted the development of the new medium, but it began to become generally available in the late 1940s. Television boomed in the 1950s. The first transcontinental broadcast came in 1951, when President Harry Truman, speaking in Washington, D.C., addressed the delegates attending the Japanese Peace Treaty Conference in San Francisco.

Today, television is all-pervasive. As you read earlier, there is at least one television set in 98 percent of the nation’s 115 million households. Just a few years ago, there were more homes in this country with television sets than with indoor plumbing facilities. Television replaced newspapers as the principal source of political information for a majority of Americans in the early 1960s. Now, television is the principal source of news for an estimated 80 percent of the population.

The more than 1,700 television stations in this country include more than 1,400 commercial outlets and some 350 public broadcasters. Three major national networks have dominated television from its infancy: the Columbia Broadcasting System (CBS), the American Broadcasting Company (ABC), and the National Broadcasting Company (NBC). Those three giants furnish most of the programming for more than 500 local stations, and that programming accounts for nearly half of all television viewing time today.

The major networks’ audience share has been declining in recent years, however. The main challenges to them have come from three sources: (1) several independent broadcasting groups—for example, the Fox Network; (2) cable broadcasters, such as Turner Broadcasting, and especially its Cable News Network (CNN); and (3) the Public Broadcasting System (PBS) and its more than 350 local stations.*

Newspapers  The first regularly published newspaper in America, the Boston News-Letter, appeared in 1704. Other papers soon followed, in Boston and then in Philadelphia, New York, Annapolis, and elsewhere. By 1775, 37 newspapers were being published.

### Get Started

**LESSON GOALS**

- understand the impact of the Internet as a political medium by examining study findings.
- evaluate the use of the Internet for electoral politics by analyzing a candidate’s Web site.
- recognize the strengths of the Internet as a campaign medium by designing a home page for a candidate Web site.

### BEFORE CLASS

Assign the section, the graphic organizer in the text, and the Reading Comprehension Worksheet (Unit 2 All-in-One, p. 187) before class.

**Differentiate** Reading Comprehension Worksheet (Unit 2 All-in-One, p. 189)

### BELLRINGER

Display Transparency 8F, The Internet and the 2008 Election at a Glance. Explain that this table lists key findings in a research study. Have students examine the findings and answer the question in their notebook.

**Differentiate** Have students do research to find out how online donations affected the 2008 presidential campaign, and write a brief report.

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**Differentiated Resources**

The following resources are located in the All-in-One, Unit 2, Chapter 8, Section 3:

- **L3** Reading Comprehension Worksheet (p. 187)
- **L2** Reading Comprehension Worksheet (p. 189)
- **L3** Core Worksheets (pp. 191, 192)
- **L3** Skills Worksheet (p. 194)
- **L2** Skill Activity (p. 195)
- **L3** Extend Worksheet (p. 196)
- **L3** Quiz A (p. 198)  **L2** Quiz B (p. 199)
- **L3** Chapter Test A (p. 200)  **L2** Chapter Test B (p. 203)

### Answers

**Checkpoint** television

**Where do we get our campaign news?** Local and network television have both declined as a source for campaign news since 2000 but still exceed the Internet.
Teach

To present this topic using online resources, use the lesson presentations at PearsonSuccessNet.com.

REVIEW BELLRINGER RESPONSES

Invite students to offer their response to the Bellringer question: If you were a candidate for President, how would you apply the results of this study to your campaign? (possible responses: create a very attractive Web site; include lots of opportunities for citizens to interact with the site and express their opinions; include videos of television appearances and audio clips of speeches; include an easy way to donate online; collect e-mail addresses of visitors and send them regular e-mail updates; encourage site visitors to volunteer to work for the campaign; constantly update the site with campaign news and documents supporting the candidate’s positions; sponsor conversations about issues on social networking sites)

Point out that the Internet has drawbacks for campaigns as well. If a candidate makes a political mistake, the news will spread widely and quickly over the Internet. Also, rumors spread quickly online, so campaigns must closely monitor online chatter and respond to negative posts quickly.

Background

CAMPAIGN MISINFORMATION The strategic use of rumors, half-truths, and outright falsehoods have long been part of political campaigns. Political organizations unleash barrages of “attack ads”—strongly negative comments about an opponent placed in the media. Often such ads turn out to be less than truthful. Yet multiple repetitions of the accusations, accompanied by powerful images, influence many voters. In the 2008 campaign, a new trend emerged. The media increasingly reported on the truthfulness of political statements made in debates, speeches, interviews, and ads, based on evaluations by nonpartisan organizations. Many sites devoted to debunking campaign assertions appeared on the Web. In some cases, politicians backed down when their statements proved false. Still, powerful attack ads can overshadow the corrections.

in the colonies. All of them were weekly papers, and they were printed on one sheet that was usually folded to make four pages. The nation’s first daily newspaper, the Pennsylvania Evening Post and Daily Advertiser, began publication in 1783.

Those first papers regularly carried political news. Several spurred the colonists to revolution, carrying the news of independence and the text of the Declaration of Independence to people throughout the colonies. Thomas Jefferson marked the vital role of the press in the earliest years of the nation when, in 1787, he wrote to a friend:

“...were it left to me to decide whether we should have a government without newspapers or newspapers without a government, I should not hesitate a moment to prefer the latter.”

—Thomas Jefferson, Letter to Colonel Edward Carrington, January 16, 1787

The 1st Amendment, added to the Constitution in 1791, made the same point regarding the importance of newspapers with its guarantee of the freedom of the press.

Today, more than 10,000 newspapers are published in the United States, including some 1,430 dailies, more than 7,200 weeklies, some 550 semaweeklies, and several hundred foreign-language papers. Those publications have a combined circulation of about 150 million copies per issue. About 45 percent of the nation’s adult population read a newspaper every day, and they spend, on average, a half hour doing so.

The number of daily newspapers has been declining for decades, however, from more than 2,000 in 1920 to 1,745 in 1980 and to about 1,430 today. Radio and television, and more recently the Internet, have been major factors in that downward trend.

Nevertheless, newspapers are still an important source of information about government and politics. Most papers cover stories in greater depth than television does, and many try to present various points of view.

Answers

The Power of the Press Possible response: Yes. Tabloids use dramatic headlines and sensational stories with only a loose connection to facts.
Many thought that the arrival of television would bring the end of radio as a major medium. Radio has survived, however, in large part because it is so conveniently available. People can hear music, news, sports, and other radio programs in a great many places where they cannot watch television—in their cars, at work, in remote areas, and in any number of other places and situations. The arrival of satellite radio has added to radio’s popularity. With this new technology, digital radio signals are beamed from a communications satellite, allowing subscribers to tune into their favorite station anywhere in the country, and often with no commercial interruptions.

Radio remains a major source of news and other political information. The average person hears some 15 hours of radio each week. No one knows how many millions of radios there are in this country—in homes, offices, cars, backpacks, and a great many other places. Those radios can pick up some 14,000 stations on the AM and FM dials.

Many AM stations are affiliated with one or another of the national networks. Unlike television, however, most radio programming is local. There are also some 700 public radio stations, most of them on the FM dial. These noncommercial outlets are part of National Public Radio (NPR), which is radio’s counter-part of television’s PBS.

Most radio stations spend little time on public affairs today. Many do devote a few minutes every hour to “the news”—really, to a series of headlines. All-news stations are now found in most of the larger and many medium-sized communities. They are usually on the air 24 hours a day, and they do provide somewhat more extensive coverage of the day’s events. A growing number of stations now serve the preferences of Latino Americans, African Americans, and other minority listeners.

Over recent years, talk radio has become an important source of political comment. The opinions and analyses offered by a number of talk show hosts can be found on hundreds of stations across the United States. Among the most prominent talk broadcasters today are conservatives Rush Limbaugh, Sean Hannity, and Bill O’Reilly, and liberals Thom Hartmann and Rachel Maddow. Their

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**PRIMARY SOURCE**

He was the first great American radio voice. For most Americans of that generation, their first memory of politics would be of sitting by a radio and hearing that voice, strong, confident, totally at ease... Most Americans in the previous 160 years had never even seen a President; now almost all of them were hearing him, in their own homes. It was literally and figuratively electrifying.

—David Halberstam, *The Powers That Be*

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**EVALUATING WEB PAGES** Barack Obama’s use of the Internet is being hailed as a key tool in his successful presidential campaign. As students’ use of the Internet continues to grow, the skills to critically evaluate Web pages become more important. Cornell University offers Jim Kapoun’s “Five Criteria for Evaluating Web Pages.” The questions to ask include: What is the purpose of the document and why was it produced? What institution publishes the document? What opinions (if any) are expressed by the author? When was it produced? Is the information presented cited correctly? Who wrote the page, and can you contact him or her? Does the publisher list his or her qualifications? Learning to ask the right questions about Web pages can help students find the best of what the Internet has to offer.
Distribute Core Worksheet

Distribute the Chapter 8 Section 3 Core Worksheet (Unit 2 All-in-One, p. 191), which provides guidelines for students to design a home page for a candidate's Web site, aimed at reaching today's voter. At the same time, distribute the Rubric for Designing a Web Site (Unit 2 All-in-One, p. 259).

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<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Class</th>
<th>Date</th>
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### The Transformation of Mass Media

**As media have changed, so too has the way that people participate. What has been the impact of the Internet on political discussion?**

| Radio spread widely in the 1920s and 1930s, giving a national voice to elected officials and gifted speakers. | The "big three" networks, ABC, CBS, and NBC, dominated the limited channels of early television. Nightly news programs by respected anchors, such as Walter Cronkite (right), commanded large audiences and set the agenda for the nation. |

**THEN... A Few Voices Imparting Information**

### Constitutional Principles

**LIMITED GOVERNMENT AND A FREE PRESS** Freedom of the press—and of all media—is at the very heart of the American system of limited government. Its roots extend back even to colonial times. In 1735, John Peter Zenger was arrested in New York for printing strong political opinions. He was put on trial, but the jury of local New Yorkers found him not guilty. The trial marked a major moment in the development of a free press.

Today, for the first time in history, a single person, with a minimal investment, can put his or her views out, not only before the local populace but before the entire world. Some individuals have formed Internet news services that provide specialized information instantaneously about politics, weather, the stock market, sports, and entertainment. In addition to the print and broadcast media, the world now has a third branch of the press—the online service.
Background

MEDIA INFLUENCE According to a study published by the Annenberg Public Policy Center in late 2008, many Americans were unable to identify the stands that major party candidates took on various issues such as abortion, free trade, the Iraq War, and children’s health insurance. It appeared that not much education about the candidates’ positions had taken place in the election campaign. Interestingly, in 2004 a similar study found that people who watched late-night comedy shows such as those hosted by David Letterman, Jay Leno, and Jon Stewart knew more about the candidates and their positions than those who did not watch such programs. Young viewers of the Daily Show with Jon Stewart scored particularly well on campaign knowledge—even better than young people who watched network news programs, and just as well as those who watched cable news programs or read newspapers.

DESIGN A HOME PAGE

Tell students that they will create a pencil-and-paper version of a home page for an imaginary candidate for President. Point out that a home page is the gateway to the rest of the information on the Website. They will not create the entire site content. Instead, they will decide the kinds of content they would include, so they can provide links to it on their home page. Remind them that Web sites can include a range of media—video clips, sound files, in-depth articles, photos, even campaign-related music and ring tones. Explain that their goal is to attract support—and ultimately votes—for their candidate.

As a first step, have students discuss ideas for Web site content with a partner to help them create their content list on the worksheet. Explain that they should create links on their home page to each piece of site content on their list. Circulate to offer suggestions and refocus student effort as needed. Remind students to consult their Web site home page rubrics for guidance as they move on to designing their home page.

Part 2 of the worksheet asks students to write a memo that explains the thinking behind their home page design. In their memo, students should describe the content visitors would find when they follow each link.

Differentiate Have students choose two links on their home page and create a content page that would appear on visitors’ screens when they follow each of these links.

Tell students to go to the Audio Tour for more information on the transformation of mass media.

Answers

Checkpoint Weblogs are Web site postings usually devoted to some specific subject that may be written by one or many contributors. Many allow visitors to post comments.
REVIEW HOME PAGE DESIGNS AND MEMOS
Have students post their home page designs at their desks or on a bulletin board or wall, along with their memos explaining their design and links to site content. Then have students move through the classroom reviewing each other’s work.

SHARE STUDENT REACTION
After students have had an opportunity to review their classmates’ efforts, have them identify examples that seemed especially impressive and explain why. For example, did the home page include a clear, compelling message about the candidate? Did it link to information presented in a variety of media forms? Did the home page make them want to follow the links to learn more about the candidate?

INTERNET GROWTH
Display Transparency 8H, U.S. IP and Internet Traffic Projection. Point out what the text says about the American people’s online computer use. In addition, point out that a phenomenal growth of use and data traffic is projected to take place in the near future. Analysts predict that by 2015 there will be an “exaflood”—or a tsunami of bytes—of IP (an Internet protocol address of devices participating in computer networks) and Internet traffic. The flood could easily reach one million million billion bytes. (Byte is the lowest familiar size for measuring data, such as one character. Measurements of kilobytes, where one kilobyte equals 1,024 bytes, are probably most familiar.) Look at the scale. Consider that the size of a student’s ten-page research paper e-mailed to school is approximately only 86 kilobytes. Consider then that one photo from a digital camera can equal 3 megabytes of Internet traffic. Have students examine the graph now. Then hypothesize what possible uses could cause the growth. (faster, bigger games; TV shows; videos; digital publishing)

Answers

Media Influence Possible response: The first cartoon suggests that popular talk show hosts have as much political influence as both houses of Congress. The second cartoon suggests that listeners tend to “parrot,” or repeat, the political opinions they hear on the radio.

Media Influence
The mass media have a great impact on the issues that people focus on and how they think about the world around them. What are the cartoonists saying here about media influence?

The Media and Politics
Clearly, the media play a significant role in American politics. Just how significant that role is, and just how much influence the media have, is the subject of a long, still unsettled debate.

Whatever its weight, the media’s influence can be seen in any number of situations. It is most visible in two areas: (1) the public agenda and (2) electoral politics.

The Public Agenda The media play a very large role in shaping the public agenda, the societal problems that the nation’s political leaders and the general public agree need government attention. As they report and comment on events, issues, policies, and personalities, the media determine to a very large extent what public matters the people will think and talk about—and, so, those matters about which public-policy makers will be most concerned.

Political Cartoon Mini-Lesson
Display Transparency 8I, Collateral Damage, as a wrap-up activity on the mass media and electoral politics. Explain that this cartoon appeared just before the 2008 presidential election. Ask: What is a “toss up” State? (a State where the vote is expected to be close and either candidate could win. It is commonly known as a battleground State.) Who do the man and woman represent? (potential votes)

What is happening to them? (They are being bombarded with political messages from a variety of media and information sources.) What does “collateral damage” mean? (unintended harm caused by an action) What is the collateral damage in this cartoon? (voter exasperation)
and The Wall Street Journal; the leading news wire service, the Associated Press (AP); and the three major news weeklies, Time, Newsweek, and U.S. News & World Report. CNN, MSNBC, Fox News, Reuters, and USA Today have since joined that select group.

Top political figures in and out of government pay close attention to these sources. In fact, the President receives a daily digest of the news reports, analyses, and editorial comments that these and other sources broadcast and publish.

**Electoral Politics** You have seen several illustrations of the media’s importance in electoral politics as you have read this book. Recall, for example, the fact that the media, and in particular television, have contributed to a decline in the place of political parties in American politics.

Television has made candidates far less dependent on party organizations than they once were. Before television, the major parties generally dominated the election process. They recruited most candidates who ran for office, and they ran those candidates’ campaigns. The candidates depended on party organizations in order to reach the voters.

Now, both television and the Internet allow candidates to appeal directly to the people, without the help of a party organization. Candidates for office need not be experienced politicians who have worked their way up a party’s political ladder over the course of several elections. It is not unusual for candidates to assemble their own campaign organizations and operate with only loose connections to their political parties.

Remember, too, that how voters see a candidate—the impressions they have of that candidate’s personality, character, abilities, and so on—is one of the major factors that influence voting behavior. Candidates and professional campaign managers are quite aware of this fact. They know that the kind of “image” a candidate projects in the media can have a telling effect on the outcome of an election.

Candidates regularly try to manipulate media coverage to their advantage. Campaign strategists understand that, even with the Internet, most people learn almost everything they know about a candidate from television. They therefore plan campaigns that emphasize television exposure. Such technical considerations as timing, location, lighting, and camera angles loom large, often at the expense of other substantive matters as the issues involved in an election or a candidate’s qualifications for public office.

Good campaign managers also know that most television news programs are built out of stories that (1) take no more than a minute or two of air time, and (2) show people doing something interesting or exciting. Newscasts seldom feature “talking heads,” speakers who drone on and on about some complex issue.

Instead, newscasts featuring candidates are usually short, sharply focused sound bites—snappy reports that can be aired in 30 or 45 seconds or so. Staged and carefully orchestrated visits to historic sites, factory gates, toxic-waste dumps, football games, and the like, have become a standard part of the electoral scene.

**Limits on Media Influence**

Having said all this, it is all too easy to overstate the media’s role in American politics. A number of built-in factors work to limit the media’s impact on the behavior of the American voting public.

For one thing, few people follow international, national, or even local political events very closely. Many studies of voting behavior show that in the typical election, only about 10 percent of those who can vote and only about 15 percent of those who do vote are well informed on the many candidates and issues involved in that election. In short, only a small part of the public actually takes in and understands much of what the media have to say about public affairs.

Moreover, most people who do pay some attention to politics are likely to be selective about it. That is, they most often watch, listen to, and read those sources that generally agree with their own viewpoints. They regularly ignore those sources with which they disagree. Thus, for example, many Democrats do not watch the televised campaign appearances or visit the Web sites of Republican candidates. Nor do many Republicans.

**Extend the Lesson**

**ELL Differentiate** Have students prepare a two-page “Guide for Using the Mass Media to Find Out About Public Issues” that would be useful to a newcomer to the United States. Ask them to include the names of newspapers, magazines, and TV and radio networks available locally. The guide should provide brief descriptions of what each source offers relating to public issues.

**L4 Differentiate** Distribute the Chapter 8 Section 3 Extend Worksheet (Unit 2 All-in-One, p. 196), which includes an excerpt from an article about the impact of the Internet on American politics. Have students read the article and then answer the reflection questions. As a class, discuss the answers. You may also wish to have students collect data and write a brief report on the use of the Internet in the most recent presidential election.

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**Teacher-to-Teacher Network**

**Alternate Lesson Plan** Students will act in the role of consultants hired by major newspapers to help them improve coverage of government-related news and attract younger readers. In this role, they will choose an article, rewrite it, and then write a memo suggesting ways to improve current events coverage and offering strategies for attracting younger readers.

To see this lesson plan, go to TeacherCenter at PearsonSuccessNet.com

**Answers**

**Checkpoint** Mass media allow candidates to appeal directly to the people, with less help from party organizations. Campaign strategists plan television exposure to project a favorable image.
Assess and Remediate

Have students write a brief essay on what they consider to be the best sources of news and information and why. Their essays should include specific examples to support their points.

Collect the Core Worksheet and assess students’ work.

Assign the Section 3 Assessment questions.

Section Quiz A (Unit 2 All-in-One, p. 198)

Section Quiz B (Unit 2 All-in-One, p. 199)

Have students complete the review activities in the digital lesson presentation and continue their work in the Essential Questions Journal.

REMEDIATION

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>If Your Students Have Trouble With</th>
<th>Strategies For Remediation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The role of the mass media (Questions 1, 2, 3)</td>
<td>Have students create an “infographic” that describes the “American media,” with images and captions that illustrate its different features.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The impact of the media in politics (Question 4)</td>
<td>Have students work in pairs to read through the section “The Media and Politics,” and then create three quiz questions for their partner on one of the subsections (“The Public Agenda” and “Electoral Politics”).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The limits on media influence (Questions 5, 6, 7)</td>
<td>Have students read and create an outline for the last section, “Limits on Media Influence.”</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

SECTION 3 ASSESSMENT

1. Guiding Question Use your completed flowchart to answer this question: How has the development of different media helped inform the public about politics?

2. Cite an example of an influential medium in our society.

3. What is the status of newspapers today compared to 1980, and what are the likely explanations for this change?

4. What is the media’s role in shaping the public agenda?

5. What are sound bites, and what do they suggest about the limits of media influence?

6. Predict Consequences What might happen to the power of the media if the 1st Amendment guarantee of freedom of the press were to be repealed?

7. Recognize Cause and Effect What are some of the effects of the fact that most television viewers want to be entertained rather than informed?

Quick Write


Assessment Answers

1. The development of mass media enabled political news to be spread more widely and more quickly. Early newspapers spurred colonists toward revolution. Magazines communicated news nationally until radio and television arrived. Magazines promoted reforms in the early 1900s, and top news magazines remain an important source today. Radio enabled Franklin Roosevelt to speak directly to the people during the Depression and war years. Today, all-news stations cover politics, and talk radio offers political opinion. The development of television enabled people to see and hear political figures. Today television is our main source of political information. The Internet is a growing source. Most other media also have an online presence. The Internet allows citizens easily to join the political discussion.

2. Examples include television, the Internet, newspapers, radio, and magazines.

3. Newspapers have been declining, due mainly to competition from radio, television, and the Internet.

4. The media focus public attention on particular issues by emphasizing some things and ignoring or downplaying others.

5. Sound bites are snappy reports that can be aired in about 30 or 45 seconds. They suggest that media coverage often stresses style more than substance.

6. Possible answer: Powerful interests or the government might control the information people receive. Dissent could be blunted.

7. Possible answer: Television airs little public affairs programming, and staying informed requires effort.

Quick Write Students should structure their essay around a clear, concise thesis statement.
For More Information

To learn more about the media and public opinion, refer to these sources or assign them to students:

Chapter Assessment

COMPREHENSION AND CRITICAL THINKING

SECTION 1

1. (a) people who hold the same opinion on some particular public issue (b) because public opinion includes only those views that relate to public affairs—politics, public issues, and the making of public policies

2. (a) family and school (b) the mass media, peer groups, opinion leaders, and historic events

3. (a) possible response: being well liked, respected, prominent, trusted; having authority (b) crises, such as an economic downturn or war

SECTION 2

4. (a) The cartoon suggests that pollsters keep asking the same questions. A “second opinion” suggests that if the pollster doesn’t like the first response, he’ll see if he can get a different response the next time. (b) The cartoonist suggests that polls are mainly about producing a particular result rather than finding out true opinion.

5. (a) Politicians want to know public opinion to plan campaign strategy and to craft policies that people want. (b) Possible answer: You can learn about the views of the individuals who wrote these opinions, but you cannot learn how many people share the opinions. (c) Voters can express their opinion in elections by voting for candidates with whom they agree on the issues. However, elections are an inaccurate measure of public opinion because voters often choose candidates based on factors other than the issues.

6. (a) because they use valid scientific techniques in an attempt to identify the true opinion of a particular population (b) It must define the universe, include a representative sample of the chosen universe, include valid questions, be skillfully administered in a way that does not prejudice the results, and be accurately analyzed and reported.

7. (a) Polls have trouble measuring the intensity, stability, and relevance of the opinions they report. (b) that polls shape the opinions they are supposed to measure (c) Polls measure a sample, not the whole universe, and projections based on samples have a margin of error. Also, events might occur between the poll and the election that change voters’ minds.

SECTION 3

8. (a) Possible answer: People are exposed to television more than any other media. (b) The growth of the Internet has caused other media to develop their own presence on the Web.

9. (a) The media play a large role in shaping the public agenda and influencing elections. (b) To gain media exposure, politicians must focus less on delivering comprehensive information and more on crafting interesting sound bites that fit easily into the brief story format of newscasts.

10. (a) Most media content contains little on public affairs, and many media just skim the news rather than provide in-depth coverage. Limited and shallow coverage reduces the media’s influence on public opinion. (b) Most Americans rely on the major media for entertainment more than for information. Advertisers want the media to give people what they want. As a result, the most widely used media provide little information on public affairs, and people who want information must seek it out.
The Impact of Television Media on Political Events

In 1960, most people who listened to the Nixon-Kennedy debates on the radio thought the candidates performed equally well, but for those who watched the debates on television, people thought Kennedy looked vibrant while Nixon looked pale and listless. The power of the media to influence public opinion—and shape history—is well demonstrated in United States history, as shown in the documents below.

1. Which statement best summarizes Document 1?
   A. The use of television in the Nixon-Kennedy debates led to new campaign concepts.
   B. The significance of the Nixon-Kennedy debates was great.
   C. Presidential campaigns as they were known changed dramatically when television broadcasted the debates.
   D. The phrase “catchy sound bites” came out of the debates.

2. What is the cartoonist’s point of view regarding television news in Document 2?

3. What does Document 3 suggest about the influence of television?

4. Pull It Together How do you think the impact of television, and the media in general, will change over time? Consider audience, users, and technology.

GOVERNMENT ONLINE
Documents
To find additional primary sources on the impact of the media, visit PearsonSuccessNet.com

Go Online to PearsonSuccessNet.com for a student rubric and extra documents.

WRITING ABOUT GOVERNMENT
11. Students’ essays should show cause-and-effect relationships for their selected issue.

APPLY WHAT YOU’VE LEARNED
12. Students should keep a thorough record of their media usage.

13. A good student editorial will use findings and information from the chapter to answer the question, “What is the place of the media and public opinion in a democracy?”
Introduce the Chapter

Essential Questions:

UNIT 2
In what ways should people participate in public affairs?

CHAPTER 9
To what extent do interest groups advance or harm democracy?

ACTIVATE PRIOR KNOWLEDGE
Have students examine the image and quotation on these pages. Ask: To what kind of organization do the people in the image belong? (labor union) What do you think they are doing? (demonstrating to pressure authorities to get something they want) Think about an organization to which you belong. Why did you choose to join? (Students should recognize that they join organizations because they share interests or goals with the group’s members.) In this chapter, students will learn about interest groups. Tell students to begin to explore interest groups by completing the Chapter 9 Essential Question Warmup Activity in the Essential Questions Journal. Discuss their responses as a class.

BEFORE READING
ELL Differentiate Chapter 9 Prereading and Vocabulary Worksheet (Unit 2 All-in-One, p. 213)

SUCCESSNET STUDENT AND TEACHER CENTER
Visit PearsonSuccessNet.com for downloadable resources that allow students and teachers to connect with government "on the go."

DIGITAL LESSON PRESENTATION
The digital lesson presentation supports the print lesson with activities and summaries of key concepts.

SKILLS DEVELOPMENT

COMPARE VIEWPOINTS
You may wish to teach comparing viewpoints as a distinct skill within Section 2 of this chapter. Use the Chapter 9 Skills Worksheet (Unit 2 All-in-One, p. 231) to help students learn the steps in comparing viewpoints. The worksheet presents the viewpoints of two different interest groups. Students must read the excerpts and then answer questions. For L2 and L1 students, assign the adapted Skill Activity (Unit 2 All-in-One, p. 232).

The chapter WebQuest challenges students to answer the chapter Essential Question about interest groups and their effect on democracy.

Block Scheduling

BLOCK 1: Teach the Section 1 lesson and the Section 2 lesson in their entirety. Include the Extend activity for Section 2.

BLOCK 2: Teach the Section 3 lesson in its entirety. Assign the Extend activities.