



Student Handout 1

Presidential and Vice Presidential Debates

You have been asked to view the 2012 Election Debates sponsored by the Commission on Presidential Debates. A series of questions have been provided to facilitate your viewing and evaluating the debates. Please note that some of the questions need to be answered prior to debate while the rest can be answered after. It will be helpful to take notes during the debate.

Before the Debate

- What format will the debate take?
- Who will moderate?
- What rules for proceeding are in place?
- What issues are scheduled to be covered in the debate?

After the Debate

- What issues were the questions about?
- Did both candidates respond to the questions asked?
- Did the candidates deviate from the pre-chosen topics into other areas?
- What have you learned about where the candidates stand on issues?
- Were the issues that are important to you dealt with in this debate (From Lesson 2)?
- Does the candidate seem to reflect the position of his party's platform?
- Were any of the questions your class developed asked?
- Did you agree with either of the candidates?
- In what areas do you think the candidates fell short?
- Describe the demeanor of the two candidates at the beginning and throughout the debate.
- Did either candidate disappoint in any way? How?

Rate the Debate

In class you were part of a group of students who either

- a. designed a debate format
- b. set up criteria for evaluating a debate structure
- c. set up criteria for evaluating candidates during a debate.

Rate the debate you just watched based on your group's task. If your group designed a debate format, how did the one you watched compare? Could your design have improved the debate? Did the television debate include an element that would have improved your design? Share all your responses with your group and then with the class.