3-5 EDITION · CLASSROOM

1932

Franklin D. Roosevelt vs Herbert Hoover

A 35-minute lesson on the 1932 U.S. presidential election. Includes lesson plan, student worksheet, answer key, and discussion prompts.

ERA New Deal Coalition	ELECTORAL VOTES 531 total
WINNER Franklin D. Roosevelt (Democratic) · 472 EV	RUNNER-UP Herbert Hoover (Republican) · 59 EV
KEY ISSUE Great Depression; unemployment; New Deal relief, recovery, and reform	TURNOUT 56.9%

CONTENTS

1. Cover
2. Lesson plan (35 min)
3. Reading + key words
4. Worksheet (4 questions)
5. Answer key

1932: Franklin D. Roosevelt vs Herbert Hoover

Timing

5 min	**Warm-up**	Imagine your school decided to try something completely new this year. What might make grown-ups nervous about a brand-new plan? What might make them willing to try it anyway?
15 min	**Reading**	The 1932 election was held during the worst economic crisis in U.S. history - the Great Depression. The Depression had started in October 1929 when the stock market crashed. By 1932, almost one out of every four American workers could not find a job. Banks were failing across the country. Many people had lost their homes and their savings. Some families lived in shacks made of cardboard and tin. The president during this crisis was Herbert Hoover, a Republican. Hoover believed the government should not give direct help to individuals. He thought the economy would fix itself if the government stayed out of the way. By 1932 most Americans disagreed. They wanted action. The Democratic Party nominated Franklin D. Roosevelt, the governor of New York. Roosevelt had survived polio in 1921 and could not walk without help, but he hid this from most voters. Reporters at the time agreed not to photograph him in his wheelchair. He campaigned with energy and optimism. He promised what he called a New Deal for the American people. Roosevelt did not give Americans many specific plans during the campaign. What he promised instead was action: experimentation, federal jobs programs, and direct federal help to ordinary citizens. He said in his nomination speech, "This is no time for fear, for reaction, or for timidity." When the votes were counted, Roosevelt won 472 electoral votes to Hoover's 59 - one of the most lopsided victories in American history. He carried every region of the country. Democrats also took huge majorities in the House and Senate. The American people had asked for change, and the political system had delivered. In the first hundred days after his inauguration, Roosevelt and Congress passed an extraordinary number of new laws. The Emergency Banking Act stabilized the banks. The Civilian Conservation Corps put 250,000 young men to work building parks and planting trees. The Agricultural Adjustment Act paid farmers to grow less food (which sounds strange but raised farm prices). The Tennessee Valley Authority built dams and brought electricity to rural areas. The Social Security Act, passed in

		1935, created retirement payments for older Americans. These programs and many more reshaped the relationship between Americans and their federal government for the next eighty years.
10 min	**Worksheet**	Four questions: one matches key words, three are short answers.
5 min	**Closure**	One sentence: what surprised you about this election?

The 1932 Election

The 1932 election was held during the worst economic crisis in U.S. history - the Great Depression. The Depression had started in October 1929 when the stock market crashed. By 1932, almost one out of every four American workers could not find a job. Banks were failing across the country. Many people had lost their homes and their savings. Some families lived in shacks made of cardboard and tin.

The president during this crisis was Herbert Hoover, a Republican. Hoover believed the government should not give direct help to individuals. He thought the economy would fix itself if the government stayed out of the way. By 1932 most Americans disagreed. They wanted action.

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extraordinary number of new laws. The Emergency Banking Act stabilized the banks. The Civilian Conservation Corps put 250,000 young men to work building parks and planting trees. The Agricultural Adjustment Act paid farmers to grow less food (which sounds strange but raised farm prices). The Tennessee Valley Authority built dams and brought electricity to rural areas. The Social Security Act, passed in 1935, created retirement payments for older Americans. These programs and many more reshaped the relationship between Americans and their federal government for the next eighty years.

Key words

Great Depression	The worst economic crisis in U.S. history, lasting from October 1929 to about 1939. At its peak, one out of four American workers had no job.
New Deal	The name Franklin Roosevelt gave to his plans to fight the Depression. Includes jobs programs, banking reform, farm aid, and Social Security.
Electoral landslide	An election where one candidate wins by a huge margin. Roosevelt won 472 electoral votes to Hoover's 59 in 1932 - a landslide.
Hundred days	The first hundred days of Roosevelt's presidency (March-June 1933), when Congress passed an unusually large number of new laws.
Civilian Conservation Corps	A New Deal program that put young men to work building parks, planting trees, and fighting forest fires. By 1942 it had employed over three million Americans.

Four questions

QUESTION 1 · MULTIPLE-CHOICE

How many electoral votes did Franklin Roosevelt win in 1932?

( ) A. 247
( ) B. 321
( ) C. 472
( ) D. 531

QUESTION 2 · SHORT-ANSWER

Why did so many Americans want to replace Herbert Hoover in 1932?

QUESTION 3 · SHORT-ANSWER

What was the Hundred Days, and why was it important?

QUESTION 4 · SHORT-ANSWER

Name two specific New Deal programs and what each one did.

Answer key

QUESTION 1

472. Roosevelt won 472 electoral votes; Hoover won 59. This was one of the most lopsided victories in American history.

Roosevelt carried every region. Hoover carried only six Northeastern states (Maine, New Hampshire, Vermont, Connecticut, Pennsylvania, Delaware).

QUESTION 2

The Great Depression had caused mass unemployment and bank failures. Hoover believed the federal government should not give direct help to individuals; Americans wanted action. By 1932 about one in four workers had no job.

The 1932 election was almost entirely a referendum on the Depression and Hoover's response to it.

QUESTION 3

The Hundred Days was the first three months of Roosevelt's presidency (March-June 1933). Congress passed an unusually large number of new laws during this period, including the Emergency Banking Act, the Civilian Conservation Corps, the Agricultural Adjustment Act, and the Tennessee Valley Authority. It established the New Deal's emergency-response approach.

The phrase Hundred Days is now used to describe the first three months of any new presidency. The original 1933 version set the standard against which all later presidencies have been measured.

QUESTION 4

Accept any two of: (1) Civilian Conservation Corps - put young men to work building parks and planting trees. (2) Works Progress Administration - built roads, schools, bridges. (3) Social Security Act - created retirement payments for older people. (4) Tennessee Valley Authority - built dams and brought electricity to rural areas. (5) Agricultural Adjustment Act - paid farmers to grow less food to raise prices. (6) Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation - protected savings in banks.

The New Deal's scale is the point. Naming even two specific programs shows the student grasped the breadth of the federal intervention.