2000

George W. Bush vs Al Gore

A 20-minute lesson on the 2000 U.S. presidential election. Includes lesson plan, student worksheet, answer key, and discussion prompts.

ERA Modern Polarization	ELECTORAL VOTES 538 total
WINNER George W. Bush (Republican) · 271 EV	RUNNER-UP Al Gore (Democratic) · 266 EV
KEY ISSUE Contested Florida recount; Supreme Court intervention; Nader spoiler effect; Clinton fatigue	TURNOUT 54.2%

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2000

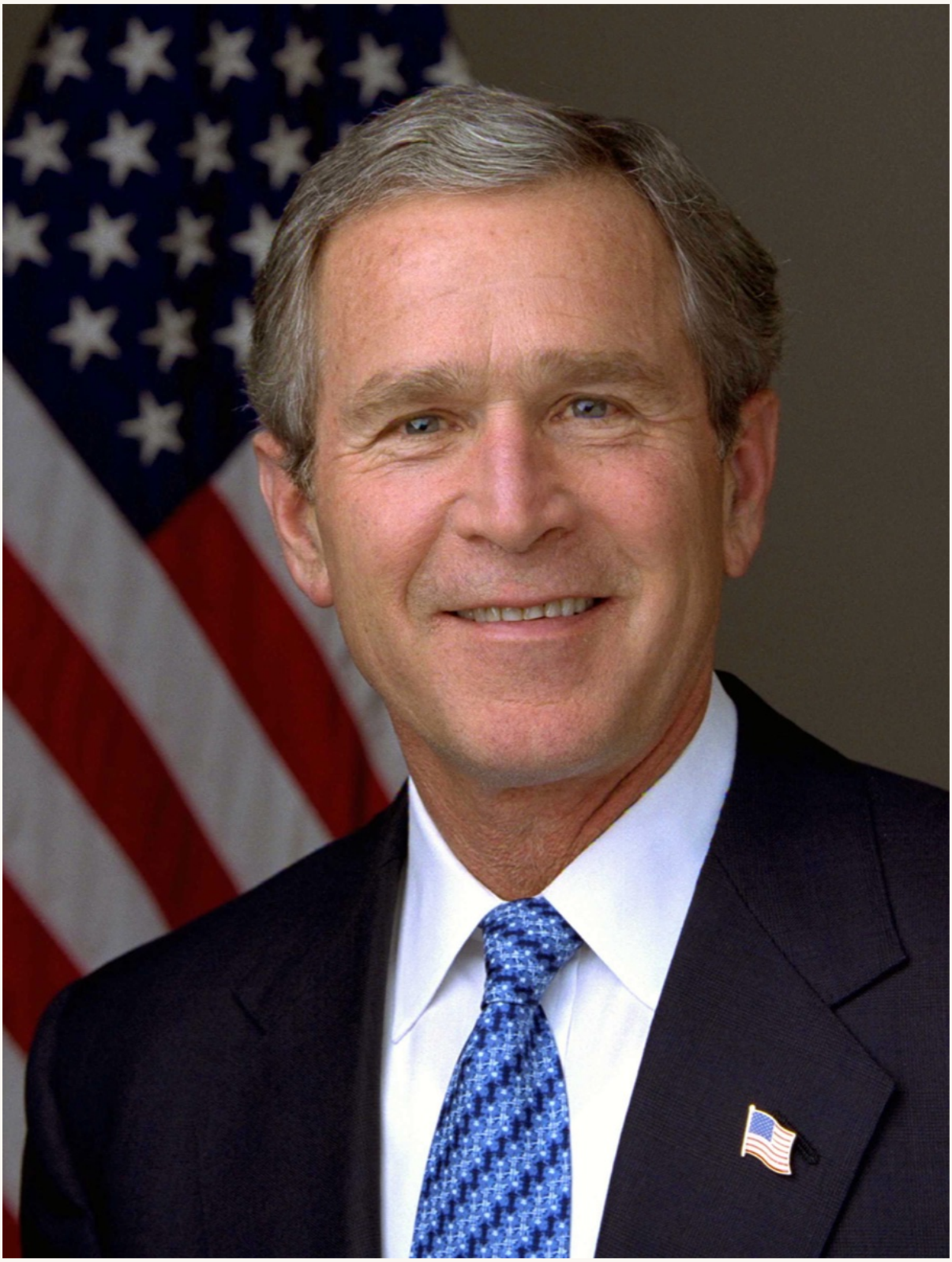
In 2000 it was time to pick a new president. Two men were running. One was Al Gore. He had been the vice president for the past eight years. The other was George W. Bush. Look at his picture. He was the governor of Texas. His father had been the 41st president before him.

On election night, the TV news could not say who had won. The race was too close. The state that decided everything was Florida. Whichever man won Florida would win the whole election.

In Florida, the race was so close that the two sides argued for thirty-six days. They fought about how to count the votes. Some voters had pushed the holes on their paper ballots so lightly that you could not tell who they had voted for. Workers in Florida looked at every single ballot, holding them up to the light, trying to figure out what each voter wanted.

The argument went all the way to the Supreme Court of the United States. In December 2000, the Supreme Court told Florida to stop counting and accept the results as they were. George W. Bush became the 43rd president. He had won Florida by only 537 votes - tiny tiny tiny.

Nine months after Bush became president, something terrible



George W. Bush, the 43rd U.S. president. He took office in January 2001 after one of the closest elections in American history.

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Let's talk about the story

1.

Who became the 43rd president of the United States in 2001?

2.

Which state decided the 2000 election?

3.

What helped end the long argument over the 2000 election?

Warm-up (5 min)

Look at the man in the picture. His name is George W. Bush. He ran for president in 2000. His father had been president before him. That had only happened once before in American history.

Answer key

1.

George W. Bush became the 43rd president. He started his job on January 20, 2001.

Bush defeated Al Gore in a contested election decided by a 537-vote margin in Florida and a Supreme Court decision.

2.

Florida. The race in Florida was so close that the whole election depended on which man won there.

Florida had 25 electoral votes in 2000. Either candidate winning the state would win the presidency. Bush ultimately won Florida by 537 votes out of nearly 6 million cast.

3.

The Supreme Court of the United States. On December 12, 2000, the Supreme Court told Florida to stop counting votes. After that, Al Gore agreed to accept the result, and George W. Bush became president.

Bush v. Gore is the most controversial Supreme Court decision in the 2000-era. The Court's 5-4 ruling effectively decided the election.