2016

Donald Trump vs Hillary Clinton

A 20-minute lesson on the 2016 U.S. presidential election. Includes lesson plan, student worksheet, answer key, and discussion prompts.

ERA Modern Polarization	ELECTORAL VOTES 538 total
WINNER Donald Trump (Republican) · 304 EV	RUNNER-UP Hillary Clinton (Democratic) · 227 EV
KEY ISSUE Immigration; trade deals; 'Make America Great Again'; Clinton email controversy; globalization backlash	TURNOUT 60.1%

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2016

In 2016 it was time to choose a new president. The race was very surprising. Most people thought Hillary Clinton would win. She had been a senator. She had been the secretary of state. She had run for president once before. If she won, she would be the first woman ever elected president of the United States.

Running against her was Donald Trump. Look at his picture. Donald Trump was a businessman who lived in New York City. He had never been a senator, a governor, or even a mayor. He had a TV show called The Apprentice. He was loud and famous. He promised to build a big wall on the southern border, to bring back jobs, and to make America great again.

Many people did not believe Donald Trump could win. Newspapers and TV news mostly said Hillary Clinton would be the next president. But on election night in November 2016, the surprise came. Donald Trump won. He won states like Michigan, Pennsylvania, and Wisconsin that had voted for the Democrat in every election since 1992.

Something else strange happened. Hillary Clinton got more total votes from all of America - almost three million more votes than Donald Trump. But because of how the Electoral College works,



Donald Trump, the 45th U.S. president. He took office in January 2017. He had been a businessman and TV star before running for president.
SHEALAH CRAIGHEAD, WHITE HOUSE PRESS OFFICE

Let's talk about the story

1.

Who became the 45th president of the United States after the 2016 election?

2.

Why was Hillary Clinton's 2016 campaign historically important?

3.

Even though Hillary Clinton got more total votes, why did Donald Trump still win?

Warm-up (5 min)

Look at the picture. The man is Donald Trump. Before he ran for president, he was a businessman and a TV star. In 2016 he ran for president, even though he had never been in government before.

Answer key

1.

Donald Trump became the 45th president. He started his job on January 20, 2017.

Trump defeated Hillary Clinton in the Electoral College 304 to 227 while losing the popular vote by 2.87 million.

2.

Hillary Clinton was the first woman ever nominated for president by one of the two big parties (Democratic or Republican). If she had won the election, she would have been the first woman president of the United States.

Clinton's nomination was a milestone separately from the election outcome. The first-woman-nominee story is appropriate to mark at K-2.

3.

Because of the Electoral College. The U.S. does not pick the president by total votes from all of America. It picks the president state by state. Donald Trump won the right combination of states - including Michigan, Pennsylvania, and Wisconsin - that gave him 304 electoral votes. Hillary Clinton won 227. The first person to get 270 wins.

The 2016 electoral-vs-popular vote disconnect is structurally similar to 2000 but the gap was much wider (2.87 million votes).