2020

Joe Biden vs Donald Trump

A 20-minute lesson on the 2020 U.S. presidential election. Includes lesson plan, student worksheet, answer key, and discussion prompts.

ERA Modern Polarization	ELECTORAL VOTES 538 total
WINNER Joe Biden (Democratic) · 306 EV	RUNNER-UP Donald Trump (Republican) · 232 EV
KEY ISSUE COVID-19 pandemic; racial justice (George Floyd protests); democracy and election integrity	TURNOUT 66.6%

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2. Story (with a picture)
3. Three questions
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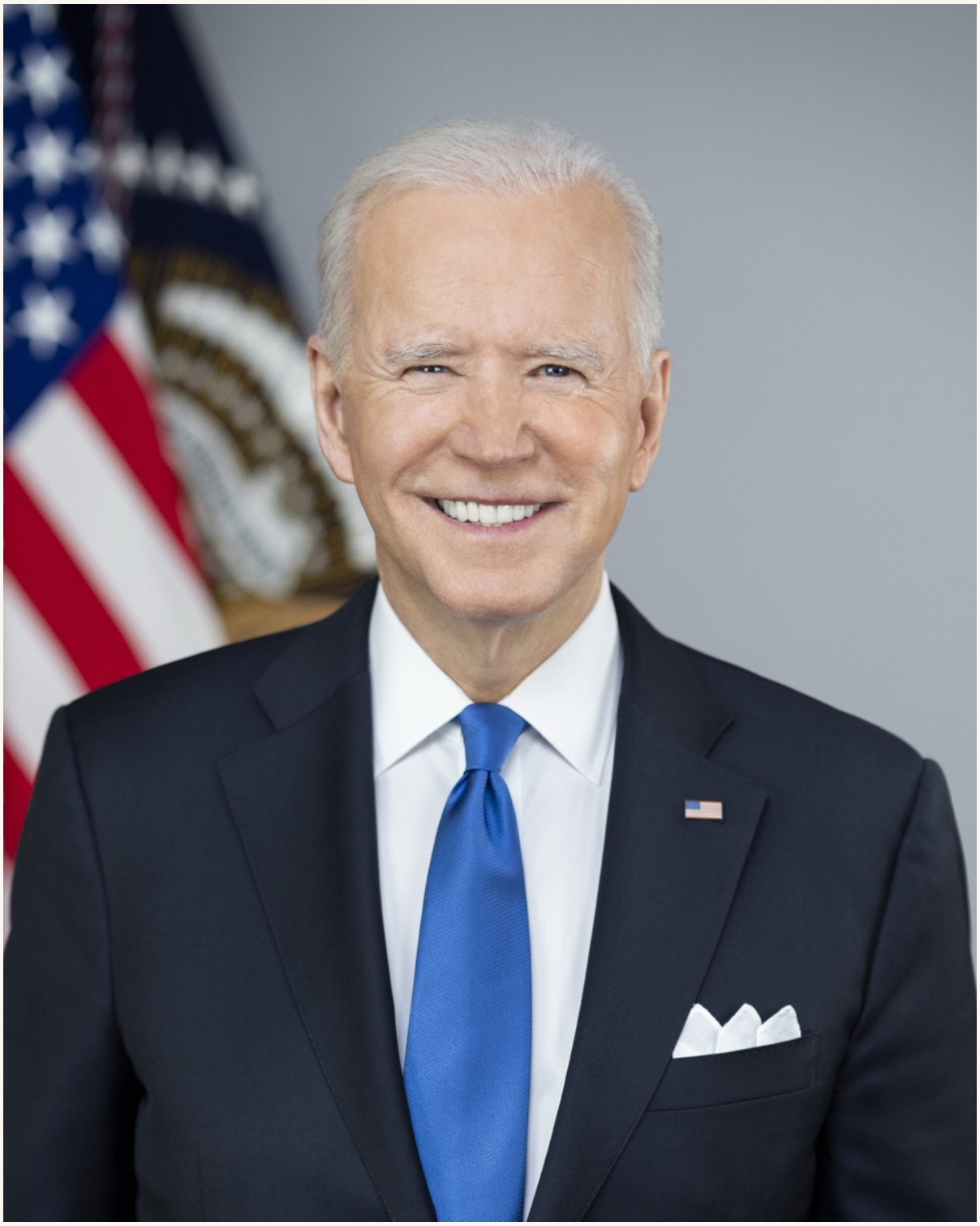
2020

The year 2020 was very hard for the United States. A new sickness called COVID-19 spread all around the world. People stayed home from school and work to keep each other safe. Many people got very sick. Hundreds of thousands of Americans died. Stores and restaurants closed. Children did their school from home, on computers.

In the middle of all of this, it was time to pick a new president. Donald Trump was already the president and wanted to keep the job for four more years. Running against him was Joe Biden. Look at his picture. Joe Biden had been a senator for thirty-six years. He had been vice president to Barack Obama for eight years. He was 77 years old when he ran for president - older than anyone who had ever won the job before.

Because of COVID-19, the campaign looked different. Joe Biden mostly stayed home and talked to voters online. Donald Trump held big rallies even though doctors warned it was risky. Many more Americans voted by mail than ever before, so they would not have to stand in line during the sickness.

When the votes were counted, Joe Biden won. He got 81 million votes, more than any candidate in American history. Kamala Harris, his running mate, became the first woman, first Black



Joe Biden, the 46th U.S. president. He took office in January 2021. He was 78 years old at his inauguration, the oldest person ever to become president.
ADAM SCHULTZ, WHITE HOUSE PRESS OFFICE

Let's talk about the story

1.

Who became the 46th president of the United States after the 2020 election?

2.

What was COVID-19, and why did it change how people voted in 2020?

3.

Why was Kamala Harris's win as vice president historically important?

Warm-up (5 min)

Look at the man in the picture. His name is Joe Biden. He had been in the Senate for a long time and was vice president for eight years under Barack Obama. In 2020, while there was a big illness called COVID-19, he ran for president.

Answer key

1.

Joe Biden became the 46th president. He started his job on January 20, 2021.

Biden defeated Donald Trump in the Electoral College 306 to 232 and won the popular vote by more than 7 million.

2.

COVID-19 was a serious sickness that spread around the world starting in 2020. Many people stayed home from school and work to keep each other safe. Many more Americans voted by mail in 2020 than ever before, so they would not have to stand in line at polling places during the pandemic.

The 2020 mail-ballot share roughly doubled from 2016 (about 25% to 46% nationally). The COVID-driven shift to mail voting is one of the defining structural features of the cycle.

3.

Kamala Harris became the first woman, the first Black American, and the first Asian American ever elected vice president of the United States.

Harris broke three demographic barriers simultaneously. The historical significance is appropriate to mark at K-2 level.