# 2024

## *Donald Trump vs Kamala Harris*

A 75-minute lesson on the 2024 U.S. presidential election. Includes lesson plan, background reading with primary source, student worksheet, answer key, and discussion prompts.

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| ERA<br>Modern Polarization | ELECTORAL VOTES<br>538 total |
| WINNER<br>Donald Trump (Republican) · 312 EV | RUNNER-UP<br>Kamala Harris (Democratic) · 226 EV |
| KEY ISSUE<br>Inflation and cost of living; immigration; democracy concerns; Biden's age and competence | TURNOUT<br>64.1% |

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1. Cover + overview
2. Lesson plan (instructor, 75 min)
3. Background: key terms + primary source
4. Student worksheet (7 questions)
5. Answer key + discussion prompts

# 2024: Donald Trump vs Kamala Harris

## Standards alignment

NCSS · D2.His.4.9-12 (chronological reasoning) · D2.His.14.9-12 (causation in U.S. history). CCSS · CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.9-10.2 (key ideas/details in primary sources).

## Materials

One copy of the student worksheet per student. Optional: the 2024 map at theamericanvote.com/elections/-2024 projected, or printed as a handout.

## Timing

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| **5 min** | **Warm-up** | Identify two structural conditions in 2021-24 America that would produce a Trump 2024 victory. For each identify the specific 2021-24 development most responsible. |
| **15 min** | **Reading + vocab** | 2024 election was 60th U.S. presidential election. Trump 312 EV / Harris 226. Trump 49.8% popular vote / Harris 48.3%. Margin 2,284,872 votes - smallest popular vote margin since 2000. Trump carried all 7 battleground states. Trump first former president since Grover Cleveland 1893 to win non-consecutive terms.<br><br>Biden first term: January 2021 inauguration; March 2021 ARP ($1.9T); November 2021 Infrastructure ($1.2T); August 2021 Afghanistan withdrawal; August 2022 IRA ($369B); June 2022 Dobbs; February 2022 Ukraine; October 2023 Israel-Gaza; inflation peaked 9.1% June 2022.<br><br>Democratic primary 2024: Biden won. Republican primary 2024: Trump emerged with 4 indictments + 91 charges + May 30, 2024 NY hush-money felony conviction. Iowa January 15 Trump 51%. NH January 23 Trump 54%. Trump secured March 12, 2024.<br><br>June 27, 2024 first debate Atlanta CNN. Biden devastating. Democratic panic.<br><br>July 13, 2024 Trump Butler PA assassination attempt. Thomas Crooks (20). Trump's ear grazed. Corey Comperatore killed. Iconic "fight, fight, fight" photo.<br><br>July 15-18, 2024 Republican Convention Milwaukee. Trump nominated. JD Vance VP. Trump July 18 acceptance (92 min - longest in history).<br><br>July 21, 2024 Biden withdrawal + Harris endorsement. First major-party incumbent withdrawal since LBJ 1968.<br><br>July 23, 2024 Harris consolidated support. August 6 selected Tim Walz VP. |

August 19-22, 2024 Democratic Convention Chicago.

September 10, 2024 ABC debate Philadelphia. Trump "eating the pets" claim.

Campaign defined by economy + immigration + abortion + democracy + Trump character + Israel-Gaza + Trump unconventional outreach.

Election Day November 5, 2024: Trump 312 EV / Harris 226. Trump 77.3M (49.8%) / Harris 75.0M (48.3%). Trump won all 7 battleground states.

Demographic: Trump improved among Latino (Harris 52% vs Biden 65% 2020); young (Harris 54% vs Biden 60% 2020); Black (Harris 86% vs Biden 87% 2020). Gender gap: Harris women 53-46; Trump men 55-42. Education gap: Harris college 55-43; Trump non-college 56-42. Trump 46% Latino vote (highest Republican Latino share in modern era).

Geographic: Trump improved in 49 of 50 states. NYC Trump improved 47% Bronx + Hispanic working-class. NJ closest race since 1992.

Trump second term 2025-present: January 20, 2025 inauguration; executive orders + January 6 pardons; Cabinet (Rubio, Hegseth, RFK Jr., Noem, Bondi); February 2025 tariffs; DOGE (Musk) federal workforce reductions; Ukraine peace talks + NATO recalibration.

2024 election structural significance: (1) First president-elect with felony conviction. (2) First non-consecutive term victory since Grover Cleveland 1893. (3) Trump improved in nearly every demographic + geographic category - structural realignment. (4) Latino voter realignment (Republican 46% share). (5) Biden withdrawal demonstrated Democratic adaptive capacity. (6) Trump 2024 ended Democratic-coastal-coalition framework dominating 2008-2020.

The 2024 Trump victory can be analyzed retrospectively as completion of post-2008 working-class realignment + Latino voter realignment that began 2016 + accelerated 2020 + completed 2024. The realignment's structural mechanisms: (1) Economic populism - 2008 financial crisis + 2020-22 inflation + globalization-skepticism + manufacturing-decline + trade-deal opposition + economic insecurity working-class voters. (2) Cultural backlash - immigration concerns + traditional-religious values + opposition to "woke" framework + opposition to LGBTQ+ activism + opposition to critical-race-theory framing. (3) Anti-establishment framework - distrust of media + distrust of academia + distrust of professional class + distrust of Washington political establishment. (4) Identity-disaggregation - working-class identity over racial-ethnic identity + economic-class identity over college-degree identity. (5) Trump charismatic-authoritarian framework - direct candidate-voter communication via social media + rally events + podcast platforms.

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| | | The 2024 election's structural Democratic implications: (1) Coalition realignment. Democratic coalition increasingly college-educated + suburban + female + urban + non-white. Republican coalition increasingly working-class multi-racial + rural + small-town + male + non-college. (2) Industrial Midwest losses. Trump won MI + WI + PA + OH (since 2016) - the structural "Blue Wall" of 2008-12 has been transformed. (3) Sunbelt losses. Trump won AZ + GA + NV + NC in 2024. (4) Demographic decoupling. Latino + young + Black voter shifts to Trump structural - not 2024-only deviation. Subsequent analyses suggest realignment was 8-10 year structural trend + may persist. (5) Strategic adaptation. Subsequent Democratic strategists emphasize need for working-class-multi-racial outreach + economic-populist framework + cultural-moderate framework + anti-establishment framing. Then review the Key Terms on the background page so students share vocabulary before the primary-source work. |
| **15 min** | **Primary source** | Read the excerpt aloud once. Students annotate individually (3 min), then pair-share on worksheet questions 6 and 7 (5 min). |
| **15 min** | **Discussion** | Small groups (3–4). Pick one of the three prompts at the back of this packet (or assign one). Each group reports back two sentences. |
| **20 min** | **Assessment** | Student worksheet. Seven questions, mixed format (5 about the reading, 2 about the primary source). Answer key in the instructor section at the back. |
| **5 min** | **Closure** | One-sentence exit ticket — see Closure section below. |

## Closure

One-sentence exit ticket: "What is one thing the 2024 election tells you about the Modern Polarization era that the textbook didn't?"

# Background

Before the worksheet, review the key terms below and then read the primary source carefully. The two source-analysis questions on the worksheet (questions 6 and 7) ask you to quote from the excerpt.

## Key terms

**Donald Trump**
45th + 47th U.S. president.

**July 13, 2024 Trump assassination attempt**
Butler PA rally.

**Dobbs**
June 24, 2022 Supreme Court ruling overturning Roe v. Wade.

**Tim Walz**
MN Governor. Harris 2024 VP pick.

**Kamala Harris**
2024 Democratic nominee.

**July 21, 2024 Biden withdrawal**
First incumbent withdrawal since LBJ 1968.

**JD Vance**
OH Senator. Trump 2024 VP pick.

## Inaugural Address

**DONALD TRUMP, JANUARY 20, 2025**

*Trump delivered this inaugural address from inside the U.S. Capitol Rotunda on January 20, 2025 - moved indoors due to cold weather. The address marked Trump's return to the presidency after his 2020 loss.*

> *"The golden age of America begins right now. From this day forward, our country will flourish and be respected again all over the world. We will be the envy of every nation, and we will not allow ourselves to be taken advantage of any longer. During every single day of the Trump administration, I will, very simply, put America first. Our sovereignty will be reclaimed. Our safety will be restored. The scales of justice will be rebalanced. The vicious, violent, and unfair weaponization of the Justice Department and our government will end. And our top priority will be to create a nation that is proud, prosperous and free."*

**Trump, "Inaugural Address" (Washington DC, January 20, 2025). Public domain.**

# The 2024 Election

Read the background page (key terms and primary source), then answer the seven questions below. Questions 6 and 7 ask you to quote from the primary source.

**QUESTION 1 · MULTIPLE-CHOICE**

How many electoral votes did Trump win in 2024?

( ) A. 271
( ) B. 301
( ) C. 312
( ) D. 335

**QUESTION 2 · MULTIPLE-CHOICE**

Who was Trump's 2024 VP pick?

( ) A. Mike Pence
( ) B. JD Vance
( ) C. Marco Rubio
( ) D. Tim Scott

**QUESTION 3 · SHORT-ANSWER**

Why was July 21, 2024 a historic Democratic Party event?

**QUESTION 4 · SHORT-ANSWER**

Trump says "The golden age of America begins right now." What is the rhetorical purpose?

**QUESTION 5 · SHORT-ANSWER**

How did the Dobbs ruling affect 2022-24 elections?

## SOURCE ANALYSIS — QUESTIONS 6 AND 7 REFERENCE THE PRIMARY SOURCE ON THE BACKGROUND PAGE.

**QUESTION 6 · SHORT-ANSWER**

Explain how the 2024 Trump victory represented completion of post-2008 working-class realignment.

**QUESTION 7 · MAP-READ**

On the 2024 election map, identify Trump's 31 states and Harris's 19 states + DC. What does the geographic pattern reveal?

# Answer key

**QUESTION 1**

312.

AP students should know the 312-226 split.

**QUESTION 2**

JD Vance.

AP students should know Vance.

**QUESTION 3**

July 21, 2024 Biden withdrew + endorsed Harris. First major-party incumbent withdrawal since LBJ 1968. Operationalized by debate disaster + Democratic pressure + assassination attempt momentum shift. Harris consolidated support + raised $200M+ in 7 days.

AP students should be able to articulate.

**QUESTION 4**

Trump's "golden age" framing articulates redemptive-restoration framework: temporal-rupture; civilizational-decline; national-pride; sovereignty-reclamation; justice-rebalancing. Operationalized through executive-order spree + cabinet appointments + DOGE.

AP students should be able to articulate.

**QUESTION 5**

Dobbs: 2022 midterm Democratic overperformance; 2023 special elections; 2024 ballot measures; Trump April 8, 2024 abortion-to-states framework; Harris freedom framing. Democratic structural recovery + Republican structural difficulty on abortion.

AP students should be able to articulate.

**QUESTION 6**

The 2024 Trump victory represented completion of post-2008 working-class realignment through five structural mechanisms: (1) Economic populism. 2008 financial crisis + globalization-skepticism + manufacturing-decline + 2020-22 inflation operationalized working-class economic insecurity. Trump 2016 + 2024 framework operationalized anti-trade + anti-globalist + tariff-protectionism framework. The framework appealed to non-college working-class multi-racial voters across PA + MI + WI + OH industrial Midwest + Sunbelt working-class Hispanic communities. (2) Cultural backlash. Immigration concerns + opposition to "woke" framework + opposition to LGBTQ+ activism + opposition to critical-race-theory framing operationalized cultural-conservative working-class voters. (3) Anti-establishment framework. Distrust of media + distrust of academia + distrust of professional class + distrust of Washington political establishment operationalized populist anti-elite framework. (4) Identity-disaggregation. Working-class identity over racial-ethnic identity + economic-class identity over college-degree identity. Latino voters in working-class neighborhoods + Black male voters in working-class neighborhoods structurally moved Republican on economic + cultural grounds. (5) Trump charismatic-authoritarian framework. Direct candidate-voter communication via Truth Social + X (post-Musk acquisition October 2022) + rally events + podcast platforms (Joe Rogan, Theo Von, Logan Paul, Lex Fridman) bypassed traditional media gatekeepers. The 2024 victory completed 16-year structural realignment: 2008 Obama victory was post-Reagan demographic coalition's structural high point; 2016 Trump victory operationalized working-class realignment first wave; 2020 Biden victory was anti-Trump rebound but operationalized similar realignment patterns; 2024 Trump victory completed structural realignment. The 2024 realignment's subsequent persistence is structural question for 2026-30 American politics.

AP students should be able to articulate the structural mechanisms.

**QUESTION 7**

Trump won 31 states + 1 ME EV; Harris won 19 states + DC + 1 NE EV. Trump expanded 2020 coalition. Won all 7 battleground states. Pattern reveals: Trump improved in 49 of 50 states. NYC Trump improved 47% Bronx + Hispanic working-class. NJ closest since 1992. Working-class non-white voters + young male voters + Latino voters shifting Republican. The 2024 map confirmed structural realignment.

AP students should be able to articulate.

# Discussion prompts

1. Trump 2024 was first former president since Grover Cleveland 1893 to win non-consecutive terms. Identify three structural reasons non-consecutive presidential terms are rare in U.S. history.

2. Trump 2024 improved among Latino + young + Black voters compared to 2020. Identify three structural reasons working-class non-white voters + young male voters + Latino voters shifted Republican 2020-24.