

Lesson 3 *Learning About the Candidates and the Issues*

Teacher preparation: Bring to class any kind of information that is related to candidates in the upcoming election, such as articles in the newspaper, voters' guides, campaign literature, party platforms, etc. Make sure you have materials on all the major candidates running for the same office.

Make copies of story and questions for all students

Warm up: Introduce the lesson by asking students if they have ever voted, either in the U.S. or their country of origin. Ask how they decided upon a candidate. Explain there are many ways in the U.S. to learn about the candidates and the issues. Show the materials you have brought to class as an example of ways to learn about the candidates.

Review of previous lesson: Write vocabulary words you learned in the previous lesson on the board for review. Ask students to reconstruct the story of the previous lesson, and then ask for questions or thoughts about this lesson.

Story and Questions: See instructions for Lesson 1.

Closure: Show again the materials you brought to class about candidates. Review the vocabulary words you learned, and repeat the main themes of the lesson. Ask students to talk about one thing they learned today. Ask students to bring campaign literature or articles to the next class.

Lesson Extension: Compare and contrast the positions of the two major presidential candidates on immigration. Information for "On the Issues" is from *National Journal: The Weekly on Politics and Government*, July 24, 2004

For more information on the political parties, go to their individual websites or the websites of their party:

www.dfl.org Democratic Farmer Labor Party

www.mngreens.org Green Party

www.mnip.org Independence Party

www.mngop.com Republican Party

Story Carlos Studies the Issues

On September 18, Carlos became a citizen of the United States. He is 25 years old and now he can vote. The election is the first Tuesday in November.

Carlos is excited to be a voter. He will help choose the next president of the United States. He also can vote for a representative to the U.S. Congress. There are other candidates for the state government and city governments. Before he votes, he needs to learn about the candidates.

Some candidates have many ads on TV and the radio. Carlos sees the most signs and billboards for one candidate everyday. He knows this advertising doesn't mean this candidate is better than the other candidates. This candidate just has more money.

On his way to class, Carlos sees a picture of a candidate for school board named Pedro Benavides. "I think I will vote for Pedro Benavides," Carlos tells his ESL teacher, Sue. "He looks Latino, like me."

Sue says, "Just because a candidate is the same ethnicity as you, it doesn't mean that they have the same values or opinions you have. It is better to make a decision based on what a candidate's positions on issues which are important to you."

Then Sue asks, "What are the most important issues for you, Carlos?"

Carlos thinks a minute, and he asks, "What is the meaning of the word 'issues'?"

"Issues are topics. In politics, issues are the problems that politicians can help solve," Sue says. "Important political issues for many immigrants are laws about visas, citizenship and family reunification."

Carlos says, "An important issue for me is getting a driver's license. Before I was a citizen, I couldn't get a driver's license because I didn't have proper identification. Now I have identification, but my brother does not, and he drives without a license."

Sue says, "State politicians decide issues, like who can get a driver's license or a Minnesota identification card. You can find out the candidate's position on this issue if you go to their web site. Some candidates meet with immigrant groups. Or you can go to a town meeting with candidates and you can ask their opinion about this issue."

Carlos thinks that is a good idea. He will ask his brother to go to the town meeting with him, but Carlos will drive the car.

Questions *Carlos Studies the Issues*

1. Can Carlos vote? Why?
2. What does Carlos know about the candidate who has the most ads and billboards?
3. Just because a candidate is the same sex or ethnicity as you, does that mean they have the same values or opinions you have?
4. What is an important issue for Carlos?
5. What is an important issue for you?
6. Why will Carlos drive the car to the town meeting instead of his brother?