

# A Kid's Guide to *Becoming President*

## Lesson Two: **Running for President**





So, you want to run for president someday. It's great that you are getting an early start! Most presidents started their political careers at a young age by getting involved in their communities. They volunteered in community organizations and programs, voiced their opinions at local meetings, or ran for local offices such as school board, council or mayor. Many went on to state offices like state representatives or even governor. Others moved on to become members of the Senate or the House of Representatives in Washington. In addition, many of the candidates for the presidency worked for years to become top leaders in their party. As top leaders, they had the support of their party when they were considering their run for the presidency.

In what ways would you like to start developing your leadership skills?

## ★ Announcement

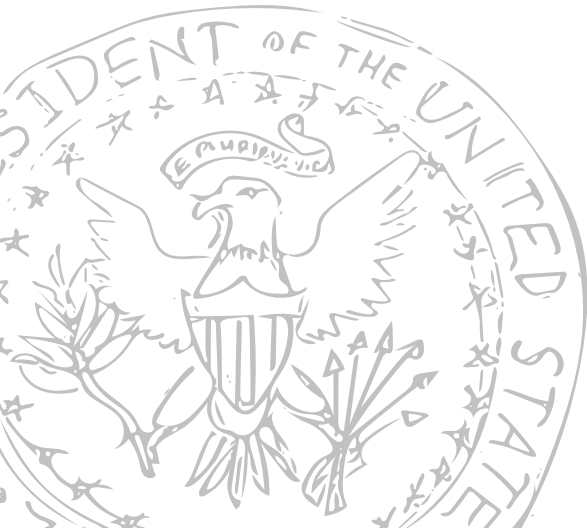
When you're ready to "throw your hat in the ring" to become your party's candidate for president, here's what you do...



Announce your plan to run for the presidency

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This usually happens in your home state and is the official beginning of your campaign. Now starts your nominating campaign to be your party's candidate. But you are not the only one hoping to be your party's candidate. Others have entered the race. You must go from state to state, giving speeches, advertising on TV, radio, and internet, and debating with the other candidates in order to make your ideas heard and win over voters.





## ★ Primary Election



Next is the primary election, or first election, in the race to the presidency

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This gives voters the chance to choose the nominee for their party. Depending on the outcome of the primary election in each state, you will gather delegates who will represent you at your party's convention. If you win the most votes in the state, sometimes you get all the delegates for that state. Other times, you might share the number of delegates depending on how many votes you and the others in the race each receive. States schedule their primary elections anytime from January to June. New Hampshire is the first to hold a primary election. Iowa is the first state to hold a caucus. Sixteen states hold caucuses. They are Iowa, Nevada, Hawaii, Maine, Alaska, Colorado, Idaho, Minnesota, Montana, North Dakota, Kansas, Nebraska, Washington, Michigan, New Hampshire, and Wyoming. A caucus is a local meeting of members of the parties to discuss the candidates and debate the issues before choosing their candidate.

- Why do you think it is important to discuss the candidates and the issues?
- What are some of the issues in the 2020 campaign? What characteristics does that person have that would make him/her a good president?

# ★ National Conventions



When all the primaries are over, it's time for  
the national conventions!

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Each party schedules its convention for the summer before the general election. All the delegates that you and the other candidates won in the state primaries or caucuses attend. Here each state will call out their votes – “The great state of Delaware casts its 17 votes to (name of candidate-maybe you).” The candidate who receives the majority of votes is declared the presidential nominee for the party. Congratulations! You are the nominee! Next you will announce your choice for your running mate- your vice-president. The national convention is also the time for the leaders of the party to discuss and form a platform – a statement of how they stand on important issues such as taxes, education, health care.

## ★ Campaign



### Time to campaign again!

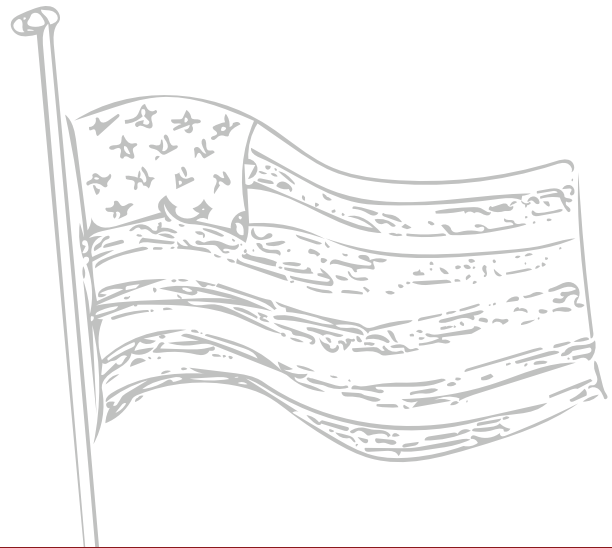
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This time you are campaigning against the presidential candidate from the other party. There are more advertisements on TV, radio, and the internet; more meetings with voters to talk about the issues and your ideas; more interviews on news shows. You and the other nominee will debate on national TV while the whole nation watches. You will talk about your position on important topics and answer questions and why your ideas are better than your opponent's. You try to reach as many voters as possible. Sometimes you will visit several states in one day! All your efforts are leading up to the one important day – **ELECTION DAY!**

## ★ Sticky Situation

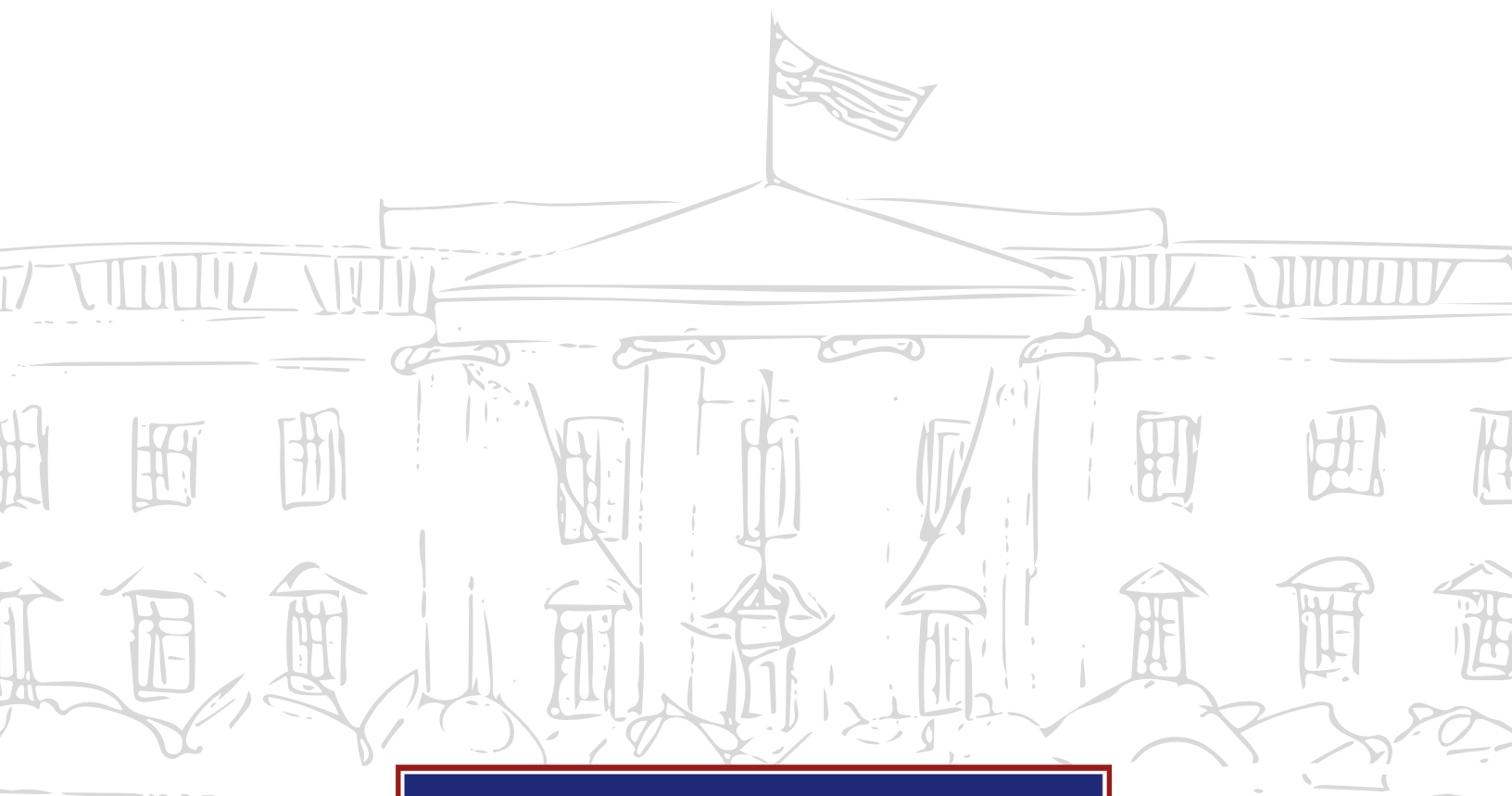
Your school has decided to start a student government. Two students are running for president of your student government and some of your classmates are not going to vote at all because they don't know the candidates.

- Do you think this is the right decision?
- What might you do or say to change your friends' mind about voting if you think they should vote?
- How might you suggest the candidates become better known to the other students?



### Literacy Links

- *Duck for President* by Doreen Cronin and Betsy Lewin
- *If I Ran for President* by Catherine Stier and Lynne Avril
- *Woodrow for President* by Peter W. Barnes and Cheryl Shaw Barnes
- *School House Rock – Presidential Minute* (On YouTube.com, search "School House Rock Presidential Minute")



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