

Maggie's Civics Corner

Lesson #49- Campaign Finance



Maggie says ...

Elections sure can be exciting! It looks like there is a whole lot that happens with an election. Television ads, campaigning, bumper stickers, and lawn signs – who pays for all that stuff? Where does the money for that stuff come from?

Today's lesson is about CAMPAIGN FINANCE. Running a political campaign sure is hard work. It takes months of hard work and lots of people to run a campaign for a big job like

trying to become the next President of the United States. If I wanted to be President of all the dogs in the USA, I would need to run a campaign. I would need some other dogs to help me convince dogs all across the country to vote for me. But how am I going to pay all my doggy friends to help me with my campaign?

Sticky Situation: Let's say that your school decides to hold an election. Both you and your friend decide to run to be the Class President. You each have five (5) dollars to spend on supplies to make posters that explain to your classmates why they should vote for you. But then, the principal gives your friend an extra 100 dollars!

Do you think it is fair for the Principal to offer additional money to only one candidate?

What do you think might happen if your friend can spend so much more money than you on the election?

What if instead of giving only one candidate additional money, the Principal allowed each candidate to host a fundraiser to generate money for their campaign?

What if one of those fundraisers produces more money than the other?

Activity: Visit the [FollowTheMoney.org](https://www.followthemoney.org) website and click around on the different states to learn about how much money candidates are raising for their election campaigns. Try finding your state – how much money is going into campaign elections in your state? Later, consider what all that money is going to be spent on. Then, list a few different things you think might be top expenses for an election campaign. Then, try talking in small groups at school, or if at home – to a family member – to learn what others think might be done with all that campaign money!

Civics Resources: Check out these websites for additional information about campaign finance:

[Khan Academy – Campaign finance: lesson overview](https://www.khanacademy.org/learn/civics/campaign-finance)

[U.S. Federal Election Commission](https://www.fec.gov/)