



## Meet The Candidates



### President Barack Obama



Barack Obama was born August 4, 1961 in Honolulu, Hawaii. Since his dad's name was also Barack, he went by the name of Barry. Barry moved to Indonesia when he was six. After his sister was born, he moved back to Hawaii and lived with his grandparents. Barry did very well in school and played on his high school basketball team. In college, Barry changed his name back to Barack.

After Harvard Law School, Barack moved to Chicago. There he worked to help people in his community. It is also where he met his wife, Michelle. In 1996 he was elected by his community to the Illinois State Senate. In 2004 he was elected as a United States Senator.

#### Running for President:

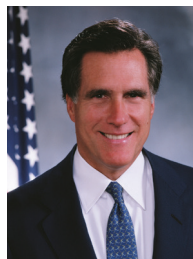
Barack Obama announced his candidacy for president in his hometown of Chicago on February 11, 2007. He worked hard in the primaries and was elected as the presidential candidate of the Democratic Party for the 2008 election. He selected Joe Biden as his running mate. In November 2008, Barack Obama was declared the winner of the national election. He made history as the first African American President of the United States.

Now his four year term is up. He decided to seek a second term as president and once again announced his candidacy from his hometown of Chicago. During the first week of September at the Democratic Convention held in Charlotte, North Carolina, Barack Obama accepted the Democratic Party's nomination to be the Democratic candidate for president in the 2012 election.

#### Interesting and Fun Facts about President Obama:

- ★ When he lived in Indonesia, he had a pet crocodile, chickens, ducks and a monkey named Tata.
- ★ He has two daughters, Malia and Sasha.
- ★ He collects comic books.
- ★ He loves to cook chili.
- ★ He lists Sportscenter as his favorite TV show on his Facebook profile.
- ★ His least favorite food is beets.
- ★ President Obama is left-handed.

### Governor Mitt Romney



Mitt Romney was born Willard Mitt Romney on March 12, 1947 in Detroit, Michigan. Mitt's father worked as a plaster carpenter and sold aluminum paint before beginning a career that led to his becoming chairman of American Motors. He was then elected governor of the state of Michigan. Later he ran for President of the United States but lost.

Mitt Romney received his degree from Brigham Young University in 1971. He later received a law degree and a Master of Business Administration degree from Harvard University. Wanting to make it on his own, Mitt moved to Massachusetts and started the investment company Bain Capital with some friends. Romney was hired to take over the Salt Lake City Committee for the 2002 Olympic Games. The Olympics were in trouble, but he was able to fix the problems and make them a success. He served as Governor of Massachusetts from 2003 to 2007. In 2008, Governor Romney made a run for the Republican presidential nomination but lost to another Republican, John McCain.

#### Running for President:

On June 2, 2011, Mitt Romney, a leader in the Republican Party, announced he was entering the 2012 race for the presidency. The announcement was made in New Hampshire, the first state to vote in the primary. Mitt was not the only candidate hoping to be the Republican nominee. Six other candidates joined him in the race: Michele Bachmann, Newt Gingrich, Jon Huntsman, Ron Paul, Rick Perry, and Rick Santorum. By May 2012, the other candidates had left the race. The Republican National Convention, held in Tampa Florida, made it official. Mitt Romney accepted the nomination and named Paul Ryan, the senator from Wisconsin, to be his running mate.

#### Interesting and Fun Facts about Governor Romney:

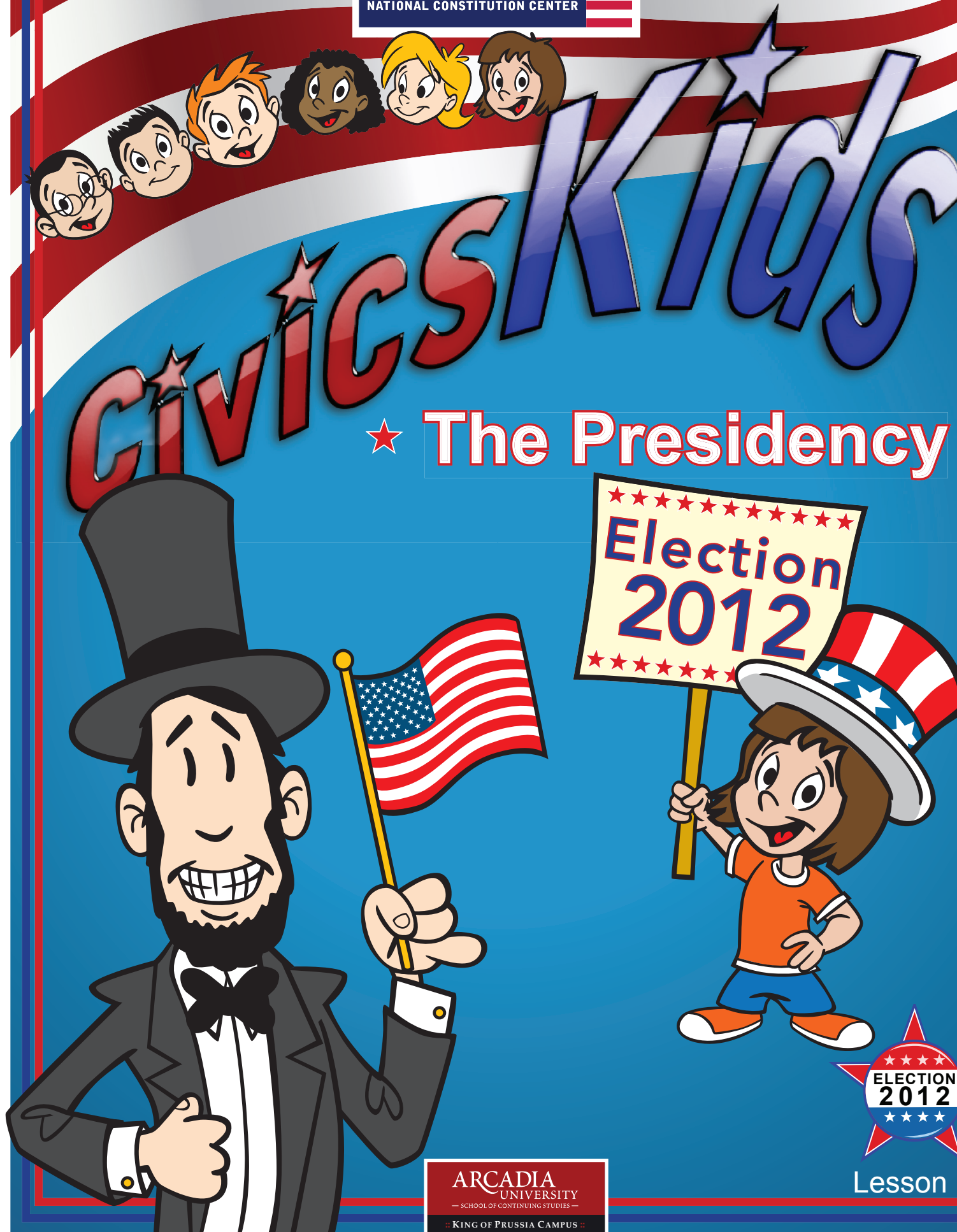
- ★ Mitt married his wife, Ann, in 1969. They first met in elementary school when he was a Cub Scout.
- ★ The Romney's have five sons, Tagg, Matt, Josh, Craig, and Ben.
- ★ His favorite foods are peanut M&M's and meat loaf
- ★ His real name is Willard, but he was called Billy up until six year old. Then he decided to go by his middle name – Mitt.
- ★ Mitt likes outdoor sports such as skiing and horseback riding.



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# The Presidency

Did you ever wonder how the United States decided to have a president as its leader instead of a king or queen? Let's go back to 1787, four years after the Revolutionary War had ended. The American colonies had won their independence from England and needed to form a new government. As they had done before, delegates from each of the states met in Philadelphia. This time they gathered to further develop a plan for their government. This plan became known as the Constitution.

At first the delegates argued over what type of leadership they should have...should it be one, two or three leaders? It was from delegate James Madison's suggestion for one strong leader that the delegates developed the framework for the American presidency. The delegates wanted a leader who was chosen by the people to serve for a term of four years. After four years, there would be a new election and the people would choose again. They also decided on a leader who would share the power with the other two branches of government, the states, and We the People. (Why do you think the delegates wanted the president to share the power?)

The Constitution says to become president there are only three requirements:

- ★ You have to be at least 35 years old.
- ★ You have to be a natural born U.S. citizen which means you have to be born in a state or U.S. territory.
- ★ You have to have lived in the U.S. for at least 14 years.

(Do you know someone who would make a good president? What characteristics does that person have that would make him/her a good president?)

The Constitution also lists the duties of the president. He/she has a lot of responsibilities and a lot of power...but not all of the power and not all of the responsibilities.

As **Chief Executive**, the President of the United States;

- ★ Enforces the laws while the Senate and House of Representatives, known as the Congress, make the laws;
- ★ Has the power to approve or veto the laws made by Congress;
- ★ Appoints judges, including Supreme Court Justices;
- ★ Grants pardons to people accused or convicted of a crime.

As the **Commander in Chief**, the President of the United States:

- ★ Is in charge of the Army, Navy, Air Force, and Marines;
- ★ Makes decisions about our national security in order to help keep all Americans safe.



As **head of state**, the President of the United States represents the U.S. in meetings with foreign leaders.

In 2012, Americans are getting ready to vote in the 57th presidential election! The great experiment of 1787 worked! The concept of a president elected by the people every four years who shares power with other groups continues to make our government unique.

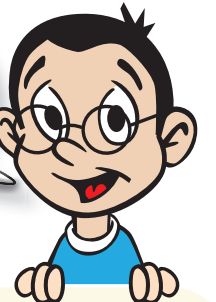
At this time, there are two main political parties - the Democratic Party and the Republican Party. Each party has a candidate running for president. Barack Obama is the candidate for the Democratic Party. He is an incumbent, which means he is the current president and is seeking re-election for a second four-year term. Mitt Romney is the Republican candidate. Why do people want the job of President of the United States? Would you want to be president? Why?

*Let's meet the candidates!*

## Sticky Situation:

Your principal decided that your school should have a student council, a group of student leaders who meet regularly to discuss school issues such as fundraising ideas, special events, environmental issues, dress codes for students, and more. The principal suggested that the student council should have representatives from each classroom as well as officers including a president, vice president, and secretary. Although there will be student council representatives from all of the classes including kindergarten, first and second grades, your friends feel that only third graders on up should be able to vote for the officers of your student council. Would you support this idea? Why or why not?

What would you do?  
Why?



## Literacy Links

- **Grace for President** by Kelly S. Di Pucchio
- **So You Want to Be President** by Judith St. George and David Small
- **TIME for Kids: Presidents of the United States** by Editors of **TIME for Kids**
- **Schoolhouse Rock – No More Kings**  
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=t-9pDZMRCpQ>
- **Scholastic Election 2012**  
<http://magazines.scholastic.com/election-2012>
- **Videos: The Presidency, Barack Obama: The Early Years, Mitt Romney: The Early Years**
- **National Constitution Center** - Constitution Hall Pass - The Presidency  
<http://www.constitutioncenter.org/hallpass>