

THE CAMPAIGN: ISSUES AND STRATEGIES CAMPAIGN PRESS COVERAGE

LESSON OBJECTIVE(S)

The student will be able to:

- Analyze the amount and type of press coverage given to selected candidates

MATERIALS AND RESOURCES

Activity 1	Handout 1-1	Campaign Press Coverage
Activity 2	Handout 2-1	Campaign Calendar
	Handout 2-2	Map of the United States without state names
	Handout 2-3	Map of the United States with state names

ACTIVITIES

Activity 1 – “What is the Impact of Media Coverage on a Candidate?”

Divide the class into small groups based on the number of candidates running for office. Have each student in the group monitor press coverage of one or two of the candidates using Handout 1-1 to record information. Students should follow the candidate in the newspaper and/or television for a period of one week. To compare candidate coverage in different media use the following formula: 4 inches of print=1minute of television or radio news. At the end of the week the groups should meet and compare their findings. Have each group answer the following questions:

- a. Which candidate received the most coverage?
- b. Why do you think this candidate received more coverage than his opponent?
- c. Was the coverage helpful or harmful to the candidate?
- d. How much coverage did the issues receive? Personalities of the candidates? Their image?
- e. What is meant by the “love-hate” relationship between politicians and the press?

Activity 2 – “How do Candidates Attract Media Coverage?”

Students should continue working in their small groups to complete this activity. Distribute Handout 2-1 “Campaign Calendar.” Have students use the articles they collected on one candidate to record the following information on the correct date on the calendar:

- a. City/country visited
- b. Name of group/organization/individual to whom the candidate spoke.

Also have students plot the campaign route their candidate traveled on a map of Alabama. Working in their groups, students should compare the candidates and answer such questions as:

How many miles did they travel? Which candidate did the most traveling? Did the candidates speak to similar groups of voters or did they seek out different constituents?

Activity 3 – “How are Decisions Made by the Media Related to Covering Candidates?”

Invite a newspaper or television reporter to speak to the class about what is involved in reporting on an election.