

## HOW TO SEE THROUGH IMAGES

As students monitor the campaign, they may find that they are bombarded with information about candidates, yet they may find it very difficult to pin down candidates' positions. Slogans, name recognition and personality are often all that comes through in the 30 to 90 second pre-packaged messages offered on the media. Even news programming often shows us the "photo opportunity" rather than a discussion of the issues. Have students take a good, objective look at the following campaign information:

**TV and Radio Commercials** – What did you learn about the candidate from the ad? Did you find out anything about issues or qualifications? Did the ad affect your attitude or feelings about the candidate? How important was the music, the setting, the script? Was the ad designed to appeal to a certain segment of the electorate?

**Party and Candidate Materials** – Campaign workers try hard to distribute leaflets and pamphlets about their candidates as widely as possible. They are left on front porches, pushed under doors and distributed at transit stops and grocery stores. Read these materials carefully. Do they tell you more about the candidate's devotion to dog and family than about qualifications for office? Be on the lookout for accusations or other statements about opponents, especially so close to election day that such statements cannot be answered or denied.

**Direct Mail** – More and more candidates are using direct mail to solicit funds or votes. Computerization has made it possible to send apparently personalized appeals to selected groups of voters. Members of women's groups, for example, may receive one message and members of veterans' organizations another. The direct mail letter may, however, help you to understand the candidate's stands on issues most important to you.

**Speeches** – Analyze a candidate's public statements. Are the appeals and arguments aimed at your emotions or your intellect? Is the candidate trying to make you angry at the opponent or incumbent or playing on your sympathy? Focus on those parts of a candidate's presentation that will have a bearing on how and what decisions are made if that candidate achieves office.