TEACHING NOTES: U.S. Election Project

Site: Teach About U.S.

Course: _Virtual Town Hall - U.S. Election 2020

Book: TEACHING NOTES: U.S. Election Project

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Introduction

This is your course's personal e-classroom. It is password-protected and everything uploaded or posted in this course is only visible to enrolled participants (with the exception of some blog posts, see below). The following teaching notes are meant as a brief and systematic overview of your course.

⬤   This book is only visible to teachers. Use these teaching tips for planning the implementation of Going Green in your course. Activity links are connected to the U.S. Election Project Demo Course.

⬤   To navigate this resource, click on the arrows at the page bottom to go forward or backward, or use the table of contents in the side block in the right margin (or at the page bottom when using mobile devices) to access the desired section directly.

Your Moodle Classroom

Get to know your course's personal e-classroom. It is password protected and everything uploaded or posted in this course is only visible to enrolled participants (except for some blog posts, see below). The following subchapters specifically introduce you to your course's

- Enrollment options
- Basic administrative features
- Sections
- Activity types
- Side blocks
- Grouping options

LearnMoodle Basics: Finding your way around Moodle 3.8

Enrollment (students)

How will your students enroll in your Moodle course?

There are two ways to enroll your students in the course:

1. self-enrollment with an enrollment key, or
2. manual enrollment by the teacher

1. Self-enrollment with an enrollment key

1. Ask your students to create a user account following the instructions in our registration tutorial.
2. Tell them the enrollment key for your course (you will receive it from our web administrator, Katja Krüger, via email).
3. Once logged in, students can insert your school's name in the course search field on the title page. Alternatively, they can click on **Courses** in the **Election tab**. Your course will be named according to your school name, for example "BB | Illinois | ABC School, 12" (i.e. the 12th-grade course at ABC School in Brandenburg participating in the Election Project).
4. Upon clicking on the course link, students will be prompted to type in the **enrollment key** (see above). Your students can now access the course page. The enrollment key is only necessary once for the first registration.

2. Manual enrollment by the teacher

1. Ask your students to create an account following the instructions in our registration tutorial. In your course, go to the side block **Administration**, select **Users → Enrolled Users**.
2. You will see a table with two users: yourself and "Going Green" (a pre-defined virtual teacher, used for trouble shooting by administrators etc.).
3. Click on **Enroll Users**. In the list of authenticated users, look up your students individually and click on **Enroll** beside their name (this only works if students registered their accounts using their actual names).
4. Click on **Finish enrolling users**. Your students are now enrolled in the course and can access the tasks and materials.

SEE ALSO:

➜ Registration tutorial (slide show)
➜ ☐ Moodle documentation: self-enrollment
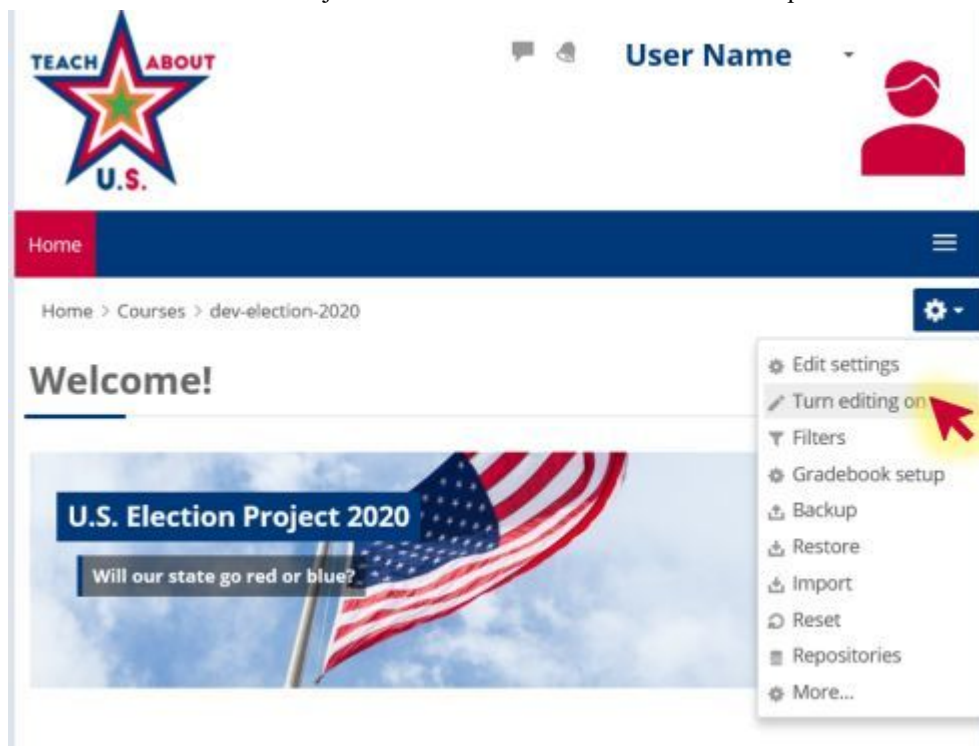➜ ☐ Moodle documentation: manual enrollment

Course administration basics

While you don't have to create a new Moodle course from scratch in this project, there are some basic course administration settings that may come in handy when planning to use Moodle in your class.

Course overview and entering the editing mode

Your course consists of two main areas, the side blocks to the right or left (depending on the course layout) with blocks for navigation, administration, online users, and more, and the larger main content area in the center, which includes activity and resource links and the different course sections.

You can edit and customize all of these contents in your Moodle course:

- *Click on the **blue cog wheel button** in the top right corner of the course page. Select **Turn editing on**. Alternatively, go to the **Administration side block**, select **Course administration**, and then **Turn editing on**.*

Editing icons and settings

As the page reloads, you will now see **editing icons** and an edit dropdown menu next to each activity.

- ✛ *The arrow icon lets you move an activity, resource, or a whole section to wherever you wish in your course.*
- ✏ *The pencil icon lets you change the title of an activity, resource, or course section. Confirm changes by pressing* **enter***.*

Editing icons 38

Edit dropdown menu

The **edit dropdown menu** allows you to perform further changes:

- ✿ *Edit settings* *Enter the editing page for an activity or resource (see below)*
- ➜ *Move right* *Indent an activity or resource link. This is typically done in our Moodle courses for supplementary resources belonging to the same activity to indicate a hierarchy (e.g. a forum that supplements a task).*
- 👁 *Hide /* ⬠ *Show* *Quickly make an activity, resource, or a whole section invisible to your students. This does not delete the content; it will be displayed in grey to you, but your students won't be see it. Use this, for example, to make course sections or activities successively visible to your students instead of all at once.*
- ⎘ *Duplicate* *Copy an activity or resource, e.g. if you want to create similar activities or resources that adopt the same template or format.*
- 👥 *Assign roles* *Use this setting to assign user roles for an activity, resource, or section. This means that, for example, an activity or section is made available only to a predefined group within your course but remains invisible to other learners. This may be useful to distribute specialized materials or tasks to different groups or for forming international work groups. See the chapter on groups for further information.*
- ✖ *Delete* *Deletes the activity or section. Use this with care.*

Editing texts and assignments:

The standard activity you will find in your Moodle course is based on the assignment module. It will typically feature some text-based task instructions and additional text-based or multimedia content and ask learners to perform some activity and produce an outcome (e.g. an essay, a poster, a forum contribution etc.). You can customize this most basic structure to suit your needs, for example:

- set a time during which an activity will be available or set a deadline
- collect learner products - an online text or a file - directly in the assignment and potentially provide grades and/or feedback
- change the task instructions, e.g. by simplifying the task, adding annotations, or further explanations
- ...

Editing text

To edit the text in an activity or resource, press **Turn editing on** (see above) and select **edit settings** next to the activity or resource (see above), or enter the activity directly and select **Edit settings** in the **Administration side block** or the blue **cog wheel button** inside the activity.

You are now seeing the editing page of the activity or resource with a text field and further administrative

settings. The same text editor is used for different applications across Moodle, including editing assignment texts. It has many of the same features that you can also find in your word processing software:

Add Edit text 38

Further assignment settings

As a standard mode, further administrative settings like task deadlines or file submissions have been disabled in your Moodle course. However, you can enable these settings to make more comprehensive use of Moodle's learning management affordances. The settings below the activity's text field can be modified by you. The question mark icons next to each setting provide brief explanations of each of these settings.

Course sections

Besides the introductory section, this course contains four main sections. Each section is divided into sub-sections. Activities and tasks are usually displayed as links in the respective section.

If a link is indented, this means that it is an additional resource or activity related to the superordinate task.

The first task in each section has a star (★), denoting that this is the core task of this section. In other words, if you only have limited time for the project and cannot cover the entire project curriculum, select the five tasks with a star to work on with your students.

These are the individual sections of your e-classroom

Title section

In the title section, you will find general resources and forums that could be useful for the entire duration of the project:

- The Course Forum is a regular discussion forum that can be edited by all participants. It can be used for any questions arising out of the project that are not related to a particular task, resource, or tool, or for discussions focusing on one of the tasks.

- The glossary Election Lingo serves as your course's central glossary for vocabulary definitions. Students can add entries to this glossary consisting of text, but also web-links, images, and videos. Students should also provide sources of the cited information and example sentences and they can comment on each other's entries, thereby adding or correcting information. Several activities throughout the project refer to this glossary, so that it can easily become a record of classroom work and a resource for exam preparation.

- The database Learner Texts serves as a repository for learner texts and files worth sharing that arise out of the different tasks in this course. In order to upload a file or insert a text, learner need to open the database, click on 'Add entry' and fill out the form. Uploaded learner texts can be browsed and accessed by all course participants. They can also add comments and provide peer feedback.

- The Project Journal is a notebook that can be used to document the project work in a systematic or rather informal way. All students can edit this journal and add contents. For example, you could nominate students to document the findings from the several tasks in this course, to collect the information on the candidates and their platforms, and all further information that helps them with their final prediction of the election outcome in their adopted state.

You can either use this module in Moodle or take advantage of the conveniences of Google Docs (at least one persona has to have a Google account for this). Here are short tutorials for both options:

- SWAY: Using the Project Journal
- SWAY: Setting up your Project Journal with Google Docs

Introduction

INTRODUCTION

This introductory course section leads the students into the project by setting the goal and context of the subsequent curriculum. Participant courses adopt one U.S. state and become its virtual citizens – research its population's demography, culture, economy, and voting history. As a final task in the project, students will make an informed prediction for their state's voting behavior on Election Day and participate in the U.S. Election Project School Competition.

In this introduction, students explore their state for the first time and form hypotheses about its voting behavior.

This section includes:

- ★ TASK: Explore Your State
- TASK: Who Would You Vote For?

❶ *To learn more about this section and its activities, read the TEACHING NOTES: Introduction section.*

1   The Electoral System

THE ELECTORAL SYSTEM
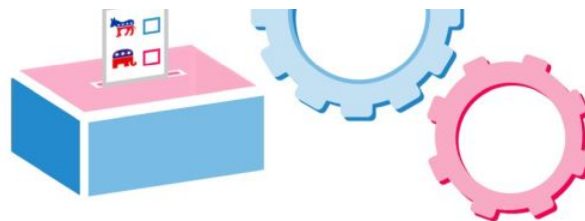
The section "The Electoral System" serves as a general introduction to the elections through engaging students in learning about how Presidential Elections in the U.S. work.

Students research this content by watching explanatory videos and reading more detailed texts on the

individual phases of the election. Scaffolding is provided through viewing guides. Students then summarize their findings on posters and present them orally to their classmates.

This section includes:

- ★ TASK: Electing the U.S. President
- TASK: The Electoral System – Step by Step

ℹ️ *To learn more about this section and its activities, read the TEACHING NOTES: Section 1.*

2   The Candidates

THE CANDIDATES

The goal of this section is threefold: to learn about the personal and biographic background of the candidates, to analyze their political campaigns and how they present themselves, and to contrast this with how they are perceived in the American public.

Students research the candidates' background online and present their findings in a role playing activity. They analyze both candidates' political advertisements. Finally, they deconstruct political cartoons as one form of political commentary on the campaigns.

The activities in this section include:

- ★ TASK: Meet the Candidates

- TASK: Campaign Ads
- TASK: The Candidates' Secret Playbook

- TASK: What Are Political Cartoons?
- TASK: Writing a Political Cartoon Analysis
- TASK: Working with Political Cartoons Creatively

ℹ️ *To learn more about this section and its activities, read the TEACHING NOTES: Section 2.*

3   The Campaign Issues

THE CAMPAIGN ISSUES

HEALTHCARE FEDERAL SPENDING GUN CONTROL IMMIGRATION CLIMATE CHANGE EDUCATION ABORTION FOREIGN POLICY

The section "The Campaign Issues" introduces students to the topics and issues that American voters are discussing in 2016. This includes getting an overview of the 2016 campaign issues, researching select issues in more detail, and finding out where the candidates stand on these issues.

Students research the issues by following major U.S. news media and create an issues mind map collaboratively in class. They analyze the candidates' websites and other sources and brief their classmates on central findings. Task support comes from the issues chart handout.

The main activity in this section is ★ TASK: The Campaign Issues and Where the Candidates Stand. Two extension activities are offered focusing on oral debate and written composition:

- TASK: Clinton's and Trump's Campaign Managers on the Ground
- TASK: Reaction to the Campaign Issues

❶ *To learn more about this section and its activities, read the TEACHING NOTES: Section 3.*

4   The Election in Our State

OUR STATE

The target task of this project is to adopt one U.S. state and become its virtual citizens – research its population's demography, culture, economy, and voting history. Students are supposed to make an informed prediction for their state's voting behavior on Election Day and participate in the U.S. Election Project School Competition.

Task support for this activity is provided in the form of the state fact sheet. The section includes:

- ★ TASK: Predict the Election Outcome
- TASK: Participate in the student competition.

❶ *To learn more about this section and its activities, read the TEACHING NOTES: Section 4.*

Course 3 8

▶

SEE ALSO:

→ ☑ Moodle documentation: Collapsed topics course format

Activity types

These are the activity types of this course (in alphabetical order):

Assignment/Task

All links starting with "TASK:..." belong to this category. An assignment or task usually provides task instructions for students. In this course, we have also added most relevant materials and resources as links below the task instructions. In the settings to this activity type, a submission type (online text, a file etc.) can be selected and, then, individually graded by the teacher. However, in this course we have mostly disabled this feature as in most cases students are asked to contribute to a forum or database, or produce an offline outcome (e.g. a classroom presentation) in order to complete the assignment. Click here for more documentation on this activity type.

Assignment 3 8

Choice

A choice activity is very simple – the teacher asks a question and specifies a choice of multiple responses. It can be useful as a quick poll to stimulate thinking about a topic; to allow the class to vote on a direction for the course; or to gather research consent. Click here for more documentation on this activity type.
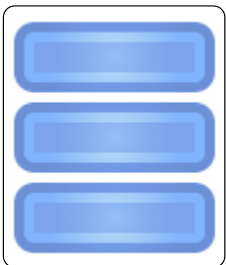
Database

The database activity module allows the teacher and/or students to build, display and search a bank of record entries about any conceivable topic. The format and structure of these entries can be almost unlimited, including images, files, URLs, numbers and text amongst other things. Click here for more documentation on this activity type.

Database activity: Share content

Forum

The forum module is an activity where students and teachers can exchange ideas by posting comments. These comments can include text, images, videos, links, and files. Forums can be used for course administration, social exchange, topic discussion, brainstorming, etc. Click here for more documentation on this activity type.

Glossary

The glossary activity module allows participants to create and maintain a list of definitions, like a dictionary, or to collect and organize resources or information collaboratively. The entries can be searched or browsed. The auto-linking feature will highlight any word in the course which is annotated in the glossary. Click here for more documentation on this activity type.

Glossary 3 8

▶

Questionnaire

The questionnaire module allows you to construct and administer surveys using a variety of open and closed question types, for the purpose of gathering data from learners. Answers can be collected anonymously or, as in the example of section 1, visible for all participants.

Quiz

The Quiz activity module allows the design of quizzes consisting of a large variety of Question types, including multiple choice, true-false, and short answer questions. Short quizzes with three multiple choice questions are used in the beginning of section 2.1, 2.2, 2.3, and 2.4. Click here for more documentation on this activity type.

Resource/page

Web-page resources are simple pages with text and other media for the display of information. The teaching notes are examples of this feature. Click here for more documentation on this resource type.

URL/Link

These are simple links on the internet to a website or online file. Usually, they lead to additional information for further research or to additional web-tools that are useful or necessary for an activity. Click here for more documentation on this resource type.

Wiki (project journal)

A wiki is a collection of collaboratively authored web documents. Basically, a wiki page is a web page everyone in your class can create together, right in the browser, without needing to know HTML. A wiki starts with one front page. Each author can add other pages to the wiki by simply creating a link to a page that doesn't exist yet. Click here for more documentation on this resource type.

SEE ALSO:

➜ ☑ Moodle documentation: activities
➜ ☑ Moodle documentation: resources

Side blocks

At the right side of your course overview, you can access a selection of mostly orange boxes. If you or your students find them distracting, you can collapse them or have a minimized version of them docked to the left edge of your screen. Simply click the respective button in the top right corner of the orange box.

Navigation

Use this block to navigate through the different site pages (`Site pages`), your user profile (`My profile`), different course sections and activities (`Current courses`), and other courses in which you are enrolled as a user (`My courses`).

☐ Click here for more documentation on this side block.

Administration

Use this block to administer your course. In fact, all the basic settings for your course have already been prepared and set – so only use this block if you need to make any further changes to your course page (for advanced users). Two useful settings in this block are:

- `Course administration` → `Turn editing on` : Lets you access the editing mode, e.g. to make certain assignments, resources, and links invisible.
- `Switch role to...` → `Student` : Lets you switch your user role to that of a student, i.e. you only see links

and settings that your students can see. Thus, in this mode you do not see e.g. any invisible links such as the teaching notes.

⬀ Click here for more documentation on this side block.

Activities

In this block, all available activity types for your course are displayed. Clicking on these activity types leads you to an overview list with all activities of this type in your course. This list also includes a basic summary of participation in these activities.

⬀ Click here for more documentation on this side block.

Online users

A list of users currently online. Clicking on a user's name leads you to their profile page.

⬀ Click here for more documentation on this side block.

SEE ALSO:

➜ ⬀ Moodle documentation: Blocks

Groups

Groups are a quick method in Moodle to grant access to certain resources only to a subset of your students, e.g. if you have assigned long-term work groups or if you collaborate with a transatlantic partner teacher (in the U.S./Germany) in the same Moodle course.

Example: Create specific group forums to allow work groups to discuss, plan, and organize their group activity in private, without other learners accessing their discussion. To do this, you first have to create separate groups.

How can I add groups to my Moodle courses?
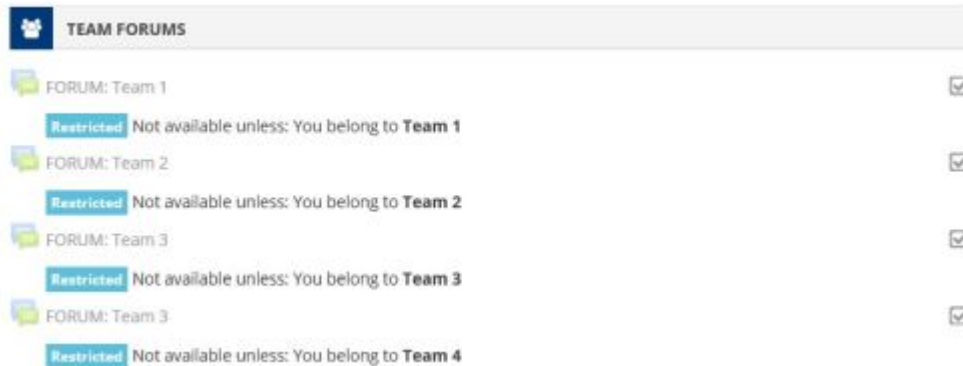
Creating a group

1. Select **Administration** > **Course administration** > **Users** > **Groups**.
2. Add a **group name** and **optional description** (displayed above the list of group members on the participants page), enrolment key and picture (displayed on the participants page and next to forum posts)
3. Tick the box **Enable group messaging** if you wish to engage in group conversations. You will then be able to send group messages from the messaging drawer.
4. Click the **Save changes** button
5. Select the group to which you want to add participants, then click the **Add/remove users button**
6. In the "**Potential members**" list, select the users you want to add to the group. Multiple users may be selected using the Crtl key.

7. Click the **Add** button to add the users to the group

Restricting an activity, resource, or course topic to a particular group

To be able to restrict an activity, resource or course topic to a group, **Restrict access** must be **enabled** in the activity settings (Access the activity and click on the blue cogwheel button in the top right corner). This will result in a 'Restrict access' section in the activity, resource or topic settings and a group restriction can then be added.

Team forums in a Moodle classroom

SEE ALSO:

➔ ☑ Moodle documentation on groups

Introductory section

This introductory course section leads the students into the project by setting the goal and context of the subsequent curriculum. Participant courses adopt one U.S. state and become its virtual citizens – research its population's demography, culture, economy, and voting history. As a final task in the project, students will make an informed prediction for their state's voting behavior on Election Day and participate in the U.S. Election Project School Competition.

Since this section marks the beginning of your project participation, discuss with your students what you will do in the upcoming weeks, what the anticipated outcomes or learning objectives are, and how they can contribute to the project's trajectory to make it 'theirs'. Also, if working with the Moodle course, ask your students to update and personalize their user accounts.

In this introduction, students explore their state for the first time and form hypotheses about its voting behavior.

ℹ The section includes two task cycles

- ★ TASK: Explore Your State
- TASK: Who Would You Vote For?

★ TASK: Explore Your State

The ★ TASK: Explore Your State asks students to take a first look at their adopted state. This is an open task allowing students to decide what aspects of their state they wish to look into and how to get a first overview of their state's culture, history, political landscape, and economy. One suggestion is to fill out a K-W-L chart (**k**now – **w**ant to know – **l**earned) and collect information in the Project Journal. Task support is provided in the form of the state fact sheet with condensed information on the mentioned aspects and links for further research.

If you are participating with a transatlantic partner, then this task provides an excellent opportunity for a first virtual exchange between both courses. Students in Germany could, for example, design questionnaires or interview questions to be forwarded to their U.S. peers about their home U.S. state.

⚙ Tech tips

- Ask students to bring their own devices or reserve the computer lab (although the research portion of the task could be done at home).
- Students should get an initial impression of their state and having web-access during this phase would be helpful.
- If participating together with a transatlantic partner, discuss with your students how this exchange could

best be facilitated (synchronously via Skype, or asynchronously through e-mails and forum discussions etc.).

TASK: Who Would You Vote For?

In the TASK: Who Would You Vote For? students take a first poll as to who they would vote for in they were allowed to cast their votes on Election Day. In the first part of the task, students take the Societly President quiz in order to find out which platform aligns best with their personal political views.

In the second step, they cast their vote in this course and make a first 'impromptu' prediction of how their state might vote in November. The result of this poll can be used as a first hypothesis of the course participants and a backdrop against which to compare the final prediction that they will make in the final section of this course.

The FORUM: First Assumptions provides space to discuss the students' initial ideas and predictions as they enter the project and which will shape their subsequent project participation.

⚙ Tech tips

- The President quiz and both polls require access to computers/electronic devices.
- Both tasks can be used as homework assignments to generate first ideas and hypotheses as the foundation for a subsequent classroom discussion, especially if the forum discussion is integrated.
- Discuss criteria for the forum with your students (no criteria at all? everyone should make at least one posting? everyone should react to one posting? etc.)

This section also includes a vocabulary warm-up activity, WARM-UP: Political Vocabulary Word Search. As the name implies, this is a simple word search activity that your students can complete as a follow-up to the previous tasks. The subsequent course section will then focus on the technicalities of the electoral system and the necessary vocabulary in more detail.

Section 1: The electoral system

As a thematic introduction to the U.S. Presidential elections, this section introduces the U.S. electoral system. This includes major terminology and procedures of the election process. This is a necessary prerequisite for your students to understand why it makes sense to focus on individual U.S. states and their role for the outcome of the election later in the project. However, keep in mind it is also easy to get lost in the technicalities of the electoral system, which is why we propose this systematic approach:

> ☰ **The section includes two task cycles:**
>
> - ★ TASK: Electing the U.S. President
> - TASK: The Electoral System—Step by Step

★ TASK: Electing the U.S. President

The ★ TASK: Electing the U.S. President introduces the electoral system with two videos explaining the major procedures in a condensed way. As a systematic form of scaffolding, a PDF viewing guide is provided for each video. They can be filled out while viewing the videos and serve as a guide for the subsequent classroom discussion. (Alternatively, the two links below the task are the same videos in an interactive format.) Task outcomes can be documented by posting them in the Project Journal and by defining the core terminology in the glossary Election Lingo.

⚙ **Tech tips**

- Individual web-access is not required here; show the videos in plenary mode and make enough copies of the viewing guides.
- Have students summarize the main contents for the Project Journal and glossary Election Lingo either during the lesson or as a homework assignment.

TASK: The Electoral System—Step by Step

As an extension, the TASK: The Electoral System—Step by Step asks students to analyze the individual phases of the election campaign with additional resources in group work. Students are supposed to form expert groups on the topics (1) primary elections, (2) political party conventions, (3) Election Day, (4) after the election. Based on their research, the expert groups present what happens during their phase, who is affected, and what the consequences are. They can present their results in a jigsaw puzzle or a brief poster presentation, or online in a forum discussion (in the Course Forum). Again, results can be documented in the Project Journal as a summary and in the glossary Election Lingo.

Conclude the task cycle with the QUIZ: Electing a U.S. President. If you log in on the website with your Google account, you can set up the quiz as a homework assignment and your students can save their results and compete against each other. More online quizzes are provides in the LINK: More quizzes...

⚙ Tech tips

- If done online (computer lab or students' devices), this task invites students to conduct additional research online and document their findings on Moodle.
- Alternatively, make copies of the resources (all are available as PDF) and distribute them in class.

QUIZ: The Electoral System

As a conclusion of this first chapter, have students create a quiz on the electoral system in which they can re-use their findings from both tasks above, e.g. from their expert groups. You can collect quiz questions in class and read them out or make copies for each student. Alternatively, you can set up an online quiz in the activity QUIZ: The Electoral System. In this case, students can upload their questions and take the quiz individually while logged in. This quiz is easy to set up. Here's a brief tutorial:

- SWAY: Quiz editing tutorial

For political science classes, have students compare the electoral system of the U.S. and Germany.

⚙ Tech tips

- Setting up the online quiz is easy and only requires a few preparatory steps: Complete these preparations for creating a Moodle quiz (click here).
- Further instructions on how your students can insert questions and answers can be found in the QUIZ: The Electoral System.

Section 2: The candidates

The focus in this section is on the candidates and their campaigns. This includes their personal and biographical background, their political campaigns and platforms, and their perception in the American public. Understanding who the candidates are and how their public persona is shaped in the election campaign is key to making an informed prediction about the election outcome at the end of the project. This section includes three areas with the following tasks.

☰ This section includes the following tasks

- ★ TASK: Meet the Candidates
- TASK: Job Posting

- TASK: Campaign Ads
- TASK: The Candidates' Secret Playbook

- TASK: What are Political Cartoons?
- TASK: Writing a Political Cartoon Analysis
- TASK: Working with Political Cartoons Creatively
- TASK: Create a Political Meme

★ TASK: Meet the Candidates

In the ★ TASK: Meet the Candidates, students explore the biographic background of the candidates in a combined research and role playing activity. In order to draw attention to the candidates' persona, students are supposed to stage a role play between news journalists, the candidates (optionally), and a family member. In addition to emphasizing the candidates' personal background, this approach directs attention towards the significance of the First Family in the U.S. context – an aspect that students can discuss and compare with the situation in Germany. In the research phase of this task, learners work with pre-selected online resources. In addition, they can access the candidates' social media outlets for condensed statements and talking points, or videos that can give them clues on typical gesture and mimicry.

During the role play, those students not performing should take notes on the content of the arguments, argumentative structure, language use, and overall performance. They could also provide feedback in the form of an 'analog Twitter wall' by writing short responses on paper slips and sticking them on the blackboard. In addition, the role play could be video-recorded for a subsequent analysis and reflection.

As an extension or alternative, the TASK: Job Posting involves a job interview for the position of "President of the United States" where your students get to know the necessary qualifications a candidate should bring with him or her.

⚙ **Tech tips**

- Web-access is necessary in order to use the materials on the candidates and their families.
- Ask students to bring/use headphones since many videos are included.

Campaign Ads

The TASK: Campaign Ads introduces students two one important component of political campaigns: the TV ads that air nationally or in specific areas in the U.S. Although social media play an important role in political campaiging today, these ads still reveal much about the campaign strategies and narratives of the candidates.

The TASK: Campaign Ads includes three steps: Students first review a small corpus of successful historic TV ads and deduce successful elements of these examples; they then analyse two TV ads of the current campaign with the help of the TV ad analysis chart that covers visual, aural, textual, and narrative aspects of the ads; finally, students apply these analysis skills to campaign ads of their choice and share the results with their classmates.

A potential extension activity, the TASK: The Candidates' Secret Playbook introduces the aspect of narrative architecture of political ads. In a video featuring a former campaign strategist for President George W. Bush, campaign ads are likened to storytelling techniques, pointing out that political campaigns typically define the motives of threat, fear, opportunity, hope, villain, resolution, hero, and victim.

⚙ **Tech tips**

- Have students complete the preparatory task at home and discuss their findings in class.
- In order to analyze exemplary TV ads, discplay them in plenary mode and show the ads several times, allowing students to fill out the TV ad analysis sheet one column at a time.
- Web-access is required for the subsequent individual analysis of campaign ads (at least one device per group).
- Ask students to use headphones.

Understanding Political Cartoons

By introducing political cartoons and strategies for analysis and interpreting these texts, this last sub-section places the focus on how the candidates and their campaigns are perceived by the American public.

The TASK: What Are Political Cartoons? serves as an introduction to this text genre by asking students to create a small corpus of political cartoons about the ongoing campaign and look for common characteristics.

In a second step, the TASK: Writing a Political Cartoon Analysis scaffolds the process of analyzing political cartoons from the description of visual elements, to the critical analysis of persuasive techniques, to a final interpretation and evaluation of its communicative effect. In this task, students are asked to compose a written analysis. They can upload and share their analyses in the database Learner Texts.

Finally, the TASK: Working with Political Cartoons Creatively gives students a choice of three possible

extensions to the cartoon analysis, namely preparing a lead discussion about a cartoon of their choice, making cross-cultural comparisons between German and U.S. cartoons, and conducting a cartoon case study on one election topic or one cartoonist.

As an extension activity, the TASK: Create a Political Meme shifts the focus to memes, i.e. a different area of visual culture relevant to the election. As opposed to political cartoons, memes are often created by users themselves, are less curated than political cartoons, commonly published and shared online, even more ephemeral, and follow their own specific genre conventions.

⚙ Tech tips

- The preparatory research for this task can be given as a homework assignment.
- The subsequent analysis of political cartoons can be done offline with printouts of the cartoons or online with all students having access to electronic devices and the platform. In this case, you can have students comment on the corpus of political cartoons online either by just posting reactions below the cartoons or, for example, by suggesting captions or titles for the cartoons in this section.

Section 3: Campaign issues

In this section, students explore the topics and issues that American voters are discussing in 2016. This includes getting an overview of the 2016 campaign issues, researching select issues in more detail, and finding out where the candidates stand on these issues.

Students research the issues by following major U.S. news media and create an issues mind map collaboratively in class. They analyze the candidates' websites and other sources and brief their classmates on central findings. Task support comes from the issues chart handout.

≡ **This section includes the following tasks:**

- ★ TASK: The Campaign Issues and Where the Candidates Stand
- TASK: Biden's and Trump's Campaign Managers on the Ground
- TASK: Reaction to the Campaign Issues

★ TASK: The Campaign Issues and Where the Candidates Stand

This is the core task of this section. As an introduction, students select one or several U.S. news outlets and scan it for different campaign issues and topics being reported about in order to collect these findings in class (e.g., in the form of a mind map). The then split up into expert groups and select one of the issues for a more detailed analysis and, in a second step, where the two candidates stand on this issue. Task support is provided in the form of a selection of useful resources and the handout 'Issues Chart', which serves to structure and document the research findings. Finally, these findings can be collected in class, for example in the form of a gallery walk.

⚙ **Tech tips**

- The first part of this task can be done at home.
- The group and research phase requires web-access at least one device per group.
- Ask students to use headphones for videos.
- Document results 'offline' by creating posters from the issues charts or online in the Project Journal.

TASK: Biden's and Trump's Campaign Managers on the Ground

The TASK: Biden's and Trump's Campaign Managers on the Ground is an oral extension to the preceding task in the form of a role play-like issues debate: Students slip into the roles of spokespeople of the two campaigns in their adopted states and defend their proposed policies. Before you begin, discuss the structure and practicalities of oral debates with your students. They should support each other in developing effective arguments and potential counter arguments. In this fishbowl setting, the debaters change fast, so every student should be prepared to 'jump in' if necessary.

Alternatively, this task could be done in a video conference format or with pre-recorded statements by the different roles.

⚙ **Tech tips**

- Individual web-access is required to access texts and videos introducing the characters.
- Ask students to bring headphones.
- As with the ★ TASK: Meet the Candidates, have your students video-record the debate for a subsequent analysis.

TASK: Reaction to the Campaign Issues

The TASK: Reaction to the Campaign Issues is a written extension to the first task in this section. Here, students can choose between three options: writing a memo for their candidate's voluntary campaign aides, a press release endorsing the candidate on behalf of an NGO, or a news article '100 days after the Election'. In all three options, students need to apply their findings from the previous task: They need to define the issue first and then lay out the candidate's proposed policies, quote their statements on the issues, and contextualize these arguments according to the targeted audience.

⚙ **Tech tips**

- As an extension of the previous task, this task does not require individual web-access.
- Students could be asked to upload their texts into the database Learner Texts, so that they can comment on each other's texts and provide peer feedback.

Section 4: The election in our state

This is the most important section of the project as it contains the target task for your course. Students are supposed to adopt one U.S. state and make an informed prediction about how that state is most likely going to vote on Election Day.

> ☰ **This section includes the following tasks:**
>
> - ★ TASK: Predict the Election Outcome
> - TASK: Participate in the Student Competition

★ TASK: Predict the Election Outcome

In the target task of this project, students are supposed to predict how their state is going to vote on Election Day. By definition, this task draws on insights and learning outcomes from all preceding task cycles. That is, understanding how the electoral system works, who the candidates are, what their platforms include, and how this is perceived in the national and state context are all potential sources for making the final prediction.

As a first step, students update their findings and hypotheses from the initial ★ TASK: Explore Your State. One core question here is whether your state is a swing state or a solid state. In both cases, one goal of this task is to find out precisely why this is the case, e.g. why the state supports one party or why it is divided.

The major resource for the subsequent research phase is the state fact sheet. Here, have your students decide on the procedure and which of their state's aspects they wish to include in the prediction. Have them form expert teams, conduct research on their selected topics, and then bring these insights together to form the prediction.

Your course's prediction must be submitted by **October 25, 2020** in the DATABASE: Ballot Box & Competition in the Virtual Town Hall. If your students decide to participate in the student competition (see below), then use this database for both your prediction and your competition entry.

⚙ **Tech tips**

- You can make copies of the state fact sheet for each student.
- Reserve your school's computer lab for this phase or ask your students to bring their own devices in order to complete the research task.

TASK: Participate in the Student Competition

This task is a continuation of the preceding task. If you and your students decide to participate in the U.S.

Election Project student competition, you can integrate both tasks in this section. Here, students are asked to present their prediction creatively with their own product. Such a product can take a variety of forms, for example, a video, a song, a poster etc. In the task description, you will find a list of all possible types of products and the competition criteria.

Most importantly, only one contribution per course is possible and in order to participate, one representative of the course (or you) must upload the product onto the Virtual Town Hall by **October 25, 2020**. The product must not violate any copyrights. (See task description for more details and the upload link.)

⚙ Tech tips

- You can make copies of the State Fact Sheet for each student. It is advisable to reserve your school's computer lab for this phase or ask your students to bring their own devices in order to complete the research task.
- In the Virtual Town Hall, in the section 'More Links, Tools, and Resources', you will find a selection of useful web applications for creating your competition entry, (video or presentation apps, online databases for copyright-free sounds and images, etc.).