

RUNNING FOR OFFICE

Candidate Speeches and the General Election

CIVICS

GOVERNMENT

PUBLIC SPEAKING

ELECTIONS

AT A GLANCE

GRADES	9-12 (adaptable for younger students)
TIME	Four sessions, each 30 minutes long, with the fourth running 45 minutes if time allows.
HANDOUTS	1. Candidate Form; 2. Campaign Speech Frame and Rules; 3. Press Conference Questions; 4. Ballot

THE STORY PROBLEM

Storybook County must elect a Governor, a Lieutenant Governor, a Speaker of the Assembly and an Attorney General. The candidates are drawn from the county's best known residents, and every one of them has a record.

► THE PROCESS PRACTICED

Elections for conference office. At a YMCA Youth and Government conference, candidates for Governor, Lieutenant Governor, Speaker, Senate President, Attorney General, Comptroller and other offices file a candidate form, run a positive campaign tied to the core values, give a timed speech (three minutes; four for Governor) with gavel time signals, answer press conference questions, and are elected by the delegates, with the Secretary of State running the vote. For Speaker and Senate President, the second-place finisher becomes Deputy. Students run the whole process with public domain characters as the candidates.

► CHARACTERS FOR CONSIDERATION (STUDENTS MAY ADD OTHERS):

1. **Robin Hood** (strong on fairness, weak on respect for property law)
2. **The Tortoise** (slow, steady, finished what he started)
3. **The Little Red Hen** (did all the work herself; will she delegate?)
4. **Ebenezer Scrooge, reformed** (knows the budget; has a past)
5. **Dorothy Gale** (built a coalition of very different partners and got them to the Emerald City)
6. **Badger** (quiet, respected, would rather not run)
7. **The Ant** (from Aesop; planned ahead; a little hard on grasshoppers)
8. **Puss in Boots** (clever; a little too clever)

► LEARNING OBJECTIVES:

- Students will be able to complete a candidate form and state a platform in one sentence.
- Students will be able to write and deliver a positive three-minute campaign speech that connects a platform to a core value.
- Students will be able to respond to a press conference question in thirty seconds.

- Students will be able to run an election (Secretary of State and poll workers) and explain the result, including why second place becomes Deputy.
- Students will be able to compare plurality voting with ranked choice voting (the method taught in the Trial Proposals lesson).

► MATERIALS:

- Handout: "Candidate Form" (Supporting Document 1)
- Handout: "Campaign Speech Frame and Rules" (Supporting Document 2)
- Handout: "Press Conference Questions" (Supporting Document 3)
- Ballots (Supporting Document 4), one per voter
- Gavel and timer; placards; a ballot box

► PRE-PLANNING:

- **Assign Roles:**
 - **Candidates** (8-12 students): each plays a character running for one office. Two or three candidates per office.
 - **Campaign Managers** (one per candidate): help write the speech and run a positive campaign.
 - **Secretary of State** (1 student) and **Election Workers** (2-3): check candidate forms, run the vote, count, announce.
 - **Press Corps** (2-4 students): write and ask the press conference questions; can connect to the Press Corps lesson.
 - **Delegates** (everyone else): the voters. Each belongs to a district.
- Campaign rules, as at the conference: positive only; speak about yourself and your plan, not about opponents; one candidate per district per office; advisor (teacher) approval of the form.

SESSION 1 FILING TO RUN

30 MINUTES

5 **Hook.** "Robin Hood is running for Governor. His platform is taking from the rich. The Sheriff's office has questions." Ask: what does a candidate have to do before anyone votes?

10 **The Offices.** Describe each office in one line using the Storybook County structure: Governor leads the conference and signs bills; Lieutenant Governor leads service and parliamentary support; Speaker presides over the Assembly; Attorney General argues for the county in the Court of Appeals. Note which offices need an experienced candidate (at the conference, Governor and Lieutenant Governor candidates must be juniors).

10 **Candidate Forms.** Candidates and managers complete the form: office sought, district, platform in one sentence, the core value the campaign stands on, and one accomplishment from the story that proves readiness. The Secretary of State checks each form for completeness.

5 **Delegates' Work.** While forms are checked, delegates list the three qualities they want in each office.

SESSION 2 WRITING THE SPEECH

30 MINUTES

5 **Rules and Signals.** Three minutes for every office except Governor (four). One gavel tap at 30 seconds remaining, two at 15. Speeches must be positive and tie the platform to a core value. Random order, drawn by the Secretary of State.

5

Speech Frame. Teach the frame in Supporting Document 2: who I am and where I come from; what I have done (a story event as proof); what I will do (two promises); which core value guides me; the ask.

15

Draft. Candidates draft with their managers. The Tortoise's manager, for example, turns "slow" into "I finish what I start, and I have never missed a deadline." Delegates meanwhile draft one press conference question per office, which the Press Corps collects and refines.

5

Timed Read. Managers time a first read and trim.

SESSION 3 CAMPAIGN SPEECHES AND PRESS CONFERENCE

30 MINUTES

20

Speeches. The Secretary of State draws the order. Candidates speak with gavel signals. Delegates take notes against the three qualities they listed in Session 1.

8

Press Conference. The Press Corps asks each Governor and Lieutenant Governor candidate two questions and each other candidate one; answers are thirty seconds, timed. Sample questions are in Supporting Document 3.

2

Close of Campaigning. The Secretary of State announces that campaigning is closed and polls open next session.

SESSION 4 ELECTION DAY AND RESULTS

30-45 MINUTES

10

Voting. Delegates (and candidates, who may vote) receive ballots. The ballot asks for a single choice per office and also a ranking, so the class can compare two methods. Election Workers collect ballots in the box.

10

Counting. Election Workers count first choices per office on the board. The Secretary of State announces winners. For Speaker, the second-place finisher is announced as Deputy Speaker, as at the conference.

10

Second Look. For the Governor's race only, the Election Workers run the ranked choice count from the same ballots (eliminate the lowest, redistribute, repeat). Compare the winner under each method. If they differ, discuss why; if they match, discuss whether the margin changed.

5-

10

Wrap-Up and Inauguration. The new Governor is sworn in by the Chief Justice (or teacher) and gives a one-sentence acceptance. Discussion: what mattered more to voters, the character's record or the speech? Would the vote have changed if the campaign rules allowed attacks?

► ASSESSMENT

Candidate Form Complete, approved, platform in one sentence.	10
Speech Content All five frame elements present; platform tied to a core value; proof drawn from the story; entirely positive.	30
Delivery Within time; responded to gavel signals; audible and composed.	20
Press Conference Answered the question asked, within thirty seconds.	15
Election Administration Forms checked, order drawn fairly, count accurate, results announced clearly, Deputy named.	15
Delegate Participation Notes taken; ballot completed in both formats; discussion contribution.	10

► DIFFERENTIATION

Support

Provide a complete sample speech for the Tortoise.
Allow two-minute speeches. Let delegates vote by show of placards instead of paper.

Challenge

Add a candidate debate round in which candidates for the same office answer the same question in turn. Ask the Press Corps to publish a one-paragraph results story (ties to the Press Corps lesson).

CANDIDATE FORM

Character name: _____ Student name: _____

District: _____ Office sought: Governor / Lieutenant Governor / Speaker / Attorney General

Platform (one sentence): _____

Core value my campaign stands on: Caring / Honesty / Respect / Responsibility

One accomplishment from my story that shows I am ready: _____

I agree to run a positive campaign and to speak about my plan, not my opponents. Signed: _____ Advisor
approval: _____

CAMPAIGN SPEECH FRAME AND RULES

Rules: Three minutes (Governor: four). One gavel tap at 30 seconds remaining, two at 15. Positive only. Tie your platform to a core value. Order drawn at random.

Frame

1. **Who I am and where I come from.** One or two sentences in character.
2. **What I have done.** One event from the story, told as proof of a quality. (Dorothy: "I brought a lion, a scarecrow and a tin man to the same table and we got where we were going.")
3. **What I will do.** Two specific promises connected to Storybook County's problems.
4. **Which core value guides me, and why.**
5. **The ask.** "I ask for your vote for _____."

PRESS CONFERENCE QUESTIONS (THIRTY-SECOND ANSWERS)

For Governor: Which bill in our bill book would you veto, and why? Our theme last year was _____; what would yours be? When has your record been held against you, and what did you learn?

For Lieutenant Governor: What service focus would you choose for the county, and how would you measure it? How would you support a Committee Chair who is struggling?

For Speaker: A member keeps speaking without recognition. What do you do, in order? How do you stay neutral on a bill you care about?

For Attorney General: The county is appealing the Wolf's acquittal. What is your first question for the trial record?

For any candidate: Name one thing your opponent does better than you.

BALLOT

Storybook County General Election. Mark ONE choice per office in the left column. In the right column, rank all candidates for Governor (1 = first choice).

Governor: ___ Robin Hood The Tortoise Dorothy Gale Rank: //

Lieutenant Governor: ___ The Little Red Hen ___ Badger

Speaker of the Assembly: ___ The Ant Puss in Boots ___ Ebenezer Scrooge

Attorney General: ___ (write in from class candidates)

Second-place finisher for Speaker becomes Deputy Speaker.

ABOUT THIS SERIES

Storybook County Lesson Plans use public domain stories to practice real YMCA Youth and Government processes: bills, committees, debate, courts, elections, service, and proposals. Every lesson is three or four 30-minute sessions, and all of them live in one folder:

drive.google.com/drive/folders/1MleLDxVzKNq7QTWjw2EPFDqgMOaaJ2US. Part of the YMCA Youth and Government Educator Toolkit at nysyag.org. Questions: Drew Caldwell, dcaldwell@ymcanys.org.