

# Pioneering Politicians

## 40 min. City Districting Activity (steps 1-9) (Modeled/Guided)

1. Distribute Historical Background Handouts to all students and instruct them to read silently or with a partner as a read aloud. When students are finished instruct them to write a brief summary about what they read (the summary could also be completed as a class).
2. Make enough copies of role cards for students (In a class of 28 you will need 7 role cards total. If more than 28 students had out roles randomly, but as evenly as possible). Instruct students to read their role silently.
3. After they are familiar with their role distribute a 3x5 note card of paper and instruct student to fill in the details such as Name, Date of Birth, Occupation. Provide approximately 5 minutes to complete.
4. When students are done filling in the details they are to circulate around the room introducing themselves to 3 other individuals. Provide approximately 3-5 minutes to complete this task. When students are done or time is up instruct students to return to their seats.
5. Next display the "Candidates" information. On their Index cards or a piece of paper instruct students to write the number of the candidate that they would select and why.
6. Next instruct students to indicate they election results by show of hands. Keep a tally on the board.
7. Next instruct students to move to the North, South, East or West part of the room, this will be based off of where they live as indicated on their role card. For example Role Card A would move to the North part of the room.

## (Shared)

8. Inform each group that they are now to discuss the candidates as a group. Provide each "district" with a large piece of poster paper and instruct the students to make a "T" chart with one side labeled Pros and the other side Cons. Allow the students a couple of minutes to discuss the pros and cons of each candidate.
9. After a few minutes instruct the students to individually cast a vote. Write the years 1975, 1979, and 1992 on the chalkboard. Below write the labels North, South, East and West. Tally individual votes per district. Compare and contrast the election results using the following questions:
  - a. How were the elections results similar and different from 1968-1975, 79, and 92
  - b. Why do you think there were differences?
  - c. The years 1975, 79, and 92 are used in this activity. Based off of our activity what significance do they hold?
  - d. The elections from 1975, 79 and 92 were an example of District voting. What do you think "District Voting" is. What are the benefits associated with this approach.

## 40 minutes Extension Activity (Independent)

10. As an extension activity you could instruct students to access the following link:  
<http://www.ops.org/invisiblehistory/StudentProjects/2011StudentProjects/PoliticsPioneeringPoliticians/tabid/164/Default.aspx>  
and instruct them research "Pioneering Politicians" in the Omaha area and have the students provide a brief essay, which discusses how these politicians' actions have improved the lives of all Omaha residents.

## Historical Background 1968 Handout



In 1968, during the presidential primary held in Nebraska, George C. Wallace's, a segregationist candidate from the American Independent Party, campaign speech incited a riot when around 500 African American youth came to protest his position on race and Wallace supporters began acting violently towards the youth. The incident resulted in multiple acts of police brutality against the African American youth and an unarmed 19-year-old black individual was shot and killed by the police. The riot caused officials to move the 1968 state championship sports tournaments to Lincoln, NE to avoid the chaos and they remain there to this day. Then Governor Tiemann called Wallace and his supporters "racist and bigot[s]" and blamed them for the civil disorder. Also in 1968, Democratic Presidential candidate Robert Kennedy visited Omaha and made a campaign stop in the heart of North Omaha. Nearly 1000 members of the African American community came out to support Kennedy and his political platform that favored civil rights.

**The Effect:** In the days, weeks, months and years that have followed the destruction of the Omaha Riots of 1968, many businesses and upstanding leaders of the North Omaha Community left. Leaving many in the community searching for jobs and opportunities. Another side effect of the riots is a large number of abandoned buildings, which have invited instances of crime. With the increased instances of crime, many within the community feel trapped in a vicious cycle of poverty, lack of opportunity, violence and hopelessness. Many who live in North Omaha feel that this cycle can be ended with the right kind of leadership. The problem: many members of the North Omaha community feel their voices are not heard.

<p>Election 1968</p> <p>Role Card A</p> <p>You are a father of 3 young children. When you moved to North Omaha from Arkansas two years ago, it was a community on the rise economically. However after the riots it feels as if the community is struggling to come together. You fear that with all of the businesses leaving, you too may have to move to a part of the city that has more opportunity. This decision pains you, but you are prepared to do what is in the best interest of your family.</p>	<p>Election 1968</p> <p>Role Card B</p> <p>You are a business owner in North Omaha who has managed to rebuild after the riots, however many of your best customers have left as a result of the violence. You are seeking a candidate that will help business owners like you to receive assistance from the city to help in your communities rebuilding efforts.</p>	<p>Election 1968</p> <p>Role Card C</p> <p>You are an entrepreneur from South Omaha that sees opportunity in building a restaurant West of 72<sup>nd</sup> street and South of Dodge. You are looking for a politician who is concerned about new development, not putting money in rebuilding older communities.</p>	<p>Election 1968</p> <p>Role Card D</p> <p>You are a father or a mother of six children from East Omaha, and have been happily married for 10 years. You have recently bought a house in a developing neighborhood off of 80<sup>th</sup> and Center Street. You are looking for a candidate that can ensure that the violence experienced during the riots will not spread to your neighborhood.</p>
<p>Election 1969</p> <p>Role Card E</p> <p>You are a mother of 1 child. When you moved to North Omaha from Chicago last year North Omaha was a vibrant community full of life. However after the riots it feels as if the community is struggling to come together. You fear that with all of the businesses leaving you too may have to move to a part of the city that has more opportunity. This saddens you because you have felt such a connection to this community. You also know that you must do what is best for your child.</p>	<p>Election 1968</p> <p>Role Card F</p> <p>You are a grocery store owner in North Omaha who has managed to rebuild and restock your shelves after the riots. You have noticed in the months after the riots many of your best customers are not returning. You are seeking a candidate that will help business owners keep their doors open, and has a plan that will help young entrepreneurs start their own businesses.</p>	<p>Election 1968</p> <p>Role Card G</p> <p>You are an entrepreneur from West Omaha that sees opportunity in building a restaurant West of 72<sup>nd</sup> street and South of Dodge. You are looking for a politician who is concerned about new development, not putting money in rebuilding older communities.</p>	<p>Election 1968</p> <p>Role Card H</p> <p>You are a father or a mother of six children from West Omaha, and have been happily married for 10 years. You have recently bought a house in a developing neighborhood off of 80<sup>th</sup> and Center Street. You are looking for a candidate that can ensure that the violence experienced during the riots will not spread to your neighborhood.</p>

## The Candidates

1. You are a Native of North Omaha and have witnessed first hand the level of destruction that the riots of 1968 have done to your part of the city. You have a plan that will increase funding and services to businesses in that part of the community, and if elected vow to return North Omaha to its once economically prosperous and influential position.
2. You are a North Omaha Native, however as an entrepreneur you see economic opportunities farther west within the city limits. While you see the devastation that the 1968 Riots have left, you feel compelled to see that the city of Omaha grows in a westward direction.
3. You are a “Family Man” and place a high value in providing **newly** built communities for families to grow into. In addition to the importance of building new homes for families you also feel it important these new communities provide a sense of stability and security.
4. You are a candidate that has a firm belief in the idea that strong communities are centered on education. While acknowledging that there are some parts of the Omaha community that are in need of resources and services that would improve the educational quality and consequently student achievement; you feel it necessary to invest your time and money into where the city is growing most. In your opinion a thriving community cannot ignore the future demand for education in the westward developing communities.