

## Analyzing the Candidates

In many cases, one candidate is clearly better than another, so there is no need to study them in detail. But in some cases, you need to think carefully about the candidates for a certain office. Here's a worksheet of questions to fill in about each candidate:

1. What is the candidate's previous experience? (Experience outside of government is worth something, too.)
2. Is the candidate well-qualified? What is his or her educational background?
3. Does the candidate's statements demonstrate intelligence and an understanding of the issues?
4. Has the candidate shown an ability to work well with others? (Can the candidate negotiate? Can the candidate inspire? Can the candidate organize work? Has the candidate made political enemies that will neutralize his/her effectiveness?)
5. Does the candidate appeal to your emotions (bad) or your intelligence (good)? In other words, does the candidate talk about hot-button issues that get people angry and not about priority issues that affect people?
6. Does the candidate present clear solutions, plans, new approaches?--Or does the candidate just talk about values, visions and problems in interesting or inspiring ways. (Just because you can impress people about your knowledge of the problems, it doesn't mean you have any solutions.)
7. Does the candidate also talk about funding the new solutions? Does he or she have any creative ideas about saving money or generating funds?
8. Does the candidate offer simplistic and no-sacrifice solutions to complex problems? (bad) Is the candidate able to take unpopular but principled positions, for instance, asking people to face long-term issues that require some sacrifice? (good)
9. Are the candidate's priorities the same as yours? Or does the candidate focus on things that aren't important, that don't greatly affect the quality of life of enough people?
10. What is the candidate's voting record on these major issues?

How government operates (structural issues)?

The economy?

Government spending/Taxes?

Education?

Healthcare?

Other social services?

The environment?

Homeland security?

Another key issue for you \_\_\_\_\_

Another key issue for you \_\_\_\_\_

Another key issue for you \_\_\_\_\_

The following list may remind you of other issues that are key for you:

Agriculture/Food

Housing

Animal Welfare

Immigration

Arts/Humanities

Intelligence

Budget

Jobs/Labor

Business/Commerce

Media

Campaigns/Elections

Medicare/Medicaid

Children/Families

Race

Civil Rights

Religion

Consumer Affairs

Reproductive Rights/Abortion

Crime/Police

Seniors/Aging

Defense/Military

Social Security

Disabilities	Technology/Science
Drug Policy	Trade
Energy	Transportation
Finance/Stocks	Urban Affairs
Foreign Policy	Veterans Issues
Guns/Weapons	Welfare
Homeland Security	Women's Issues

11. Who is making and has made major contributions to the candidate's campaign? Does the candidate seem to be bought by these contributors?

**Next, make a decision about which candidate is better.**

Here are three questions to ask yourself:

1. For a minute, ignore the facts about the candidates. What is your emotional reaction or gut reaction toward each candidate? Why do you like or dislike this or that candidate? Why do you trust or distrust this candidate?

2. Is there a good reason for your attitude, or has your thinking or attitude towards any of the candidates been biased or unfairly influenced by hype, rumors, slogans, images or any other sources of bias? Can you get beyond this bias?

3. Recalling their stands on issues and the facts, which candidate is more likely to create laws or policies that you favor? (Vote for this one!)