

DISCUSS

Discuss the following questions with a partner for at least five minutes.

1. What do you know about Barak Obama?
2. What do you know about politics in the United States?

INSTRUCTIONS

Step 1: You will listen to an article on Barak Obama. The article is about five minutes long. Listen only, and don't worry about understanding everything.

Step 2: Look at the questions. Read and understand them, then listen again. As you are listening, try to answer the questions in your head. Don't write the answers yet. Next, listen again and write the answers this time. Compare your answers with a partner.

Step 3: Read the article. Check in your dictionary any unknown words. Now listen again. Can you understand more?

Step 4: Listen! Listen! Listen! Listen to the article on the train or in your free time. Each time you listen, you will slowly improve!

QUESTIONS

Answer the questions to check comprehension. If you don't know an answer, don't worry. Skip it. Then listen again.

1. When and where did people begin to hear about Barak Obama?
2. When did Obama announce that he wanted to become the next US President?
3. Where did Obama grow up?
4. How many votes did he get in the 2008 election?
5. The article talks about some of the people who voted for Obama. What does it say?
6. According to the article, what did Obama support and vote for before he became President?
7. What problems does Obama face as President?

the ARTICLE



Not so long ago, most people had never heard of Barak Obama. That changed in 2004, though. He gave a powerful keynote speech at the Democratic National Convention in the summer of 2004. He then became a US Senator in November of that year with 70% of the vote. And in February, 2007, on a cold wintry day, he announced his decision to become the next President of the United States. His struggle with Hillary Clinton, who wanted to become the first female President, captured the attention of the world.

Obama grew up in Hawaii, but has spent his adult life in the continental United States. He was educated at Columbia University in New York, then at Harvard Law School in Cambridge, Massachusetts. Both schools are at the top of the US education system. Some opponents have called him elite because of this, but he grew up in a single-parent household. His mother worked and raised two children while she was studying at university. Obama grew up humbly.

Barak Obama was the first black nominee of a major US political party. He won with nearly 53% of the popular vote and received 365 votes from the Electoral College. More than 130 million people voted in the 2008 election, which is the most since 1968. Many people wanted change and were excited about Obama's promises to bring that change, and so they voted for the first time. Others were excited about the possibility of a black President. Immediately after Obama's victory on November 4th, there were celebrations in many cities across the US.

Before Obama's Presidency began, he created legislation on climate change, nuclear terrorism, and better support for soldiers returning from war. He opposed the war in Iraq since the start. He also wanted to reduce the number of nuclear weapons in the US, put an end to research on a missile-defense shield, and lead the world through diplomacy and morality. His voting record shows that his opinions are quite liberal.

There are many challenges facing President Barak Obama. It will take many years for the economy to get better in the US, for example. Joblessness is the highest in years, and more and more people are worried about losing their jobs. Iraq and Afghanistan still need help rebuilding their nations, and terrorism is still a threat.

What do you think? Will he succeed or will he fail? Will he be considered a good President or a bad President in the future?

EXTENSION ACTIVITIES (optional)

1. Which paragraph was the easiest to listen to? Which paragraph was the most difficult? Look at the vocabulary and sentence structure, then think why one paragraph was easy and another difficult.

2. Read or listen to the article again. Can you give a one or two sentence summary for each paragraph?

paragraph 1:

paragraph 2:

paragraph 3:

paragraph 4:

paragraph 5:

3. After reading the article, what do you now think about Obama? What do you want to know more about? What do you think about his Presidency?

ANSWERS

| QUESTIONS |
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| 1. Obama gave a powerful keynote speech at the Democratic National Convention in the summer of 2004. |
| 2. In February, 2007, on a cold wintry day, he announced his run to become the next President. |
| 3. Obama grew up in Hawaii. |
| 4. He won with nearly 53% of the popular vote and received 365 votes from the Electoral College. |
| 5. Many people wanted change and were excited about Obama's promises to bring that change, and so they voted for the first time. Others were excited about the possibility of a black President. |
| 6. He created legislation on climate change, nuclear terrorism, and better support for soldiers returning from war. He opposed the war in Iraq since the start. He also wanted to reduce the number of nuclear weapons in the US, put an end to research on a missile-defense shield, and lead the world through diplomacy and morality. |
| 7. It will take many years for the economy to get better in the US, for example. Joblessness is the highest in years, and more and more people are worried about losing their jobs. Iraq and Afghanistan still need help rebuilding their nations, and terrorism is still a threat. |
| EXTENSION ACTIVITIES - Give a one or two sentence summary of each paragraph. |
| 1. Paragraph one introduces the reader to Barak Obama and when he became well known. |
| 2. This paragraph talks about his early life. |
| 3. This paragraph talks about the 2008 election and who voted for Obama. |
| 4. Paragraph four shows his voting record Obama supported before he became President. |
| 5. This paragraph mentions some of the challenges President Obama will face. |