

WHAT IN THE WORLD?

LEVEL 2 (GRADES 8 AND UP)

The 2024 U.S. Election

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2024/2025: ISSUE 1



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NATIONAL

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INTERNATIONAL

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"I love this publication! It is an excellent complement to my Social Studies curriculum and the activities enable me to cover many provincial outcomes."

- S. Giffin, Dartmouth, NS

WHAT IN THE WORLD?

Level 2, 2024/2025: Issue 1

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HAY'SXW'QA!

LesPlan is grateful to the Lkwungen Peoples, the Songhees and Esquimalt Nations, on whose unceded land we now live, and do our work.

We welcome your comments and appreciate your suggestions. Please contact us at any time.

MISSION STATEMENT

LesPlan Educational Services Ltd. aims to help teachers develop students' engagement in, understanding of, and ability to critically assess current issues and events by providing quality, up-to-date, affordable, ready-to-use resources appropriate for use across the curriculum.



I have had many parents comment to me about how great they think *What in the World?* is, and they look forward to each month's issue coming home... This is a great resource for a small country school to explore the global issues that affect us all.

K. Camelon, Grade 7/8 teacher

Admaston, ON



GET BREAKING NEWS STORIES FREE ONLINE

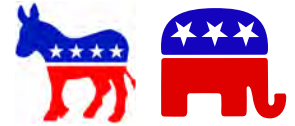
Articles and supplementary materials for breaking news stories are posted at www.lesplan.com

Download as many as you'd like!





INTERNATIONAL THE 2024 U.S. ELECTION



BEFORE READING

1. Draw a simple T-chart like the one below on the board.

<i>What I know</i>	<i>What I wonder</i>

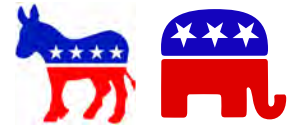
2. Project the title of the article that students are about to read: **The 2024 U.S. Election.**

3. Using a **Think-Pair-Share** strategy, have students brainstorm and jot down what they know about the topic. Add ideas from each pair to the *What I know* column.

4. Repeat this process for the *What I wonder* column.

5. Invite students to set a purpose for reading the article, using one of their wonderings from the second column. (e.g., *My purpose for reading this article is to find out ...*). Refer to the resource page **Setting A Purpose Before Reading** as needed.

6. After reading the article, refer back to the co-created T-chart to share and discuss any information that answered questions identified in the *What I wonder* column.



Who's the most powerful person on Earth? Many people say it's the American president. Why? Because the United States is a **superpower** – and the president is its leader. So when there's a U.S. presidential election, people in other countries – not just Americans – are interested in the results.

The world is certainly watching closely now. Under the **U.S. Constitution**, presidential elections must be held every four years. The next one takes place on November 5 – and the run-up so far has been full of drama.

A TENSE ELECTION SEASON

For one thing, there was a heart-stopping moment on July 13 when Republican candidate Donald Trump was almost **assassinated**. A gunman's bullet nicked his ear as he spoke at an open-air rally in Pennsylvania.

For another, the Democrats have experienced a roller coaster ride. The reason? Joe Biden is the **incumbent** president and he was elected in 2020 after he defeated Donald Trump. Mr. Biden planned to run again. U.S.

presidents can serve a maximum of two four-year terms.

But Mr. Biden is 81. Some observers watching his increasingly shaky **demeanor** feared that's too old to take on such a demanding job for another four years.

Yet Mr. Biden vowed to keep going even as his popularity sagged and Democratic hopes waned. Finally, in July, after a poor debate performance and pressure from friends and allies, Mr. Biden declared he would not seek re-election. He endorsed **Vice President** Kamala Harris. U.S. presidents choose their own vice presidents. Mr. Biden had picked Ms. Harris in 2020. Mr. Biden will remain president until January, when November's winner will be sworn in as the 46th U.S. president. Then, he will retire.

After Mr. Biden's decision, Democrats quickly rallied to support Ms. Harris as the new candidate.

A TWO-PARTY SYSTEM

Since the 1860s, the Republicans and the Democrats have dominated electoral politics in the U.S. The difference between these two political parties? The Republicans have a more conservative **platform**. They believe in less government control, a strong military, and reduced taxes. The symbols of the Republican Party are the elephant and the colour red.

The Democrats are more **progressive**. They emphasize the military less, but the environment and social programs more. Their symbols are the donkey and the colour blue.

ABOUT THE VICE PRESIDENT

Ms. Harris lived in Canada from 1976 to 1982. When she was 12, Ms. Harris, along with her mother and sister, moved to Montreal. She graduated from Westmount High School and then attended Vanier College. She attended Howard University, in Washington, D.C., and then law

DEFINITIONS

ASSASSINATE: to kill someone famous or important, usually for political reasons

DEMEANOR: the way that someone looks or behaves

INCUMBENT: a person who holds a particular office or position

PLATFORM: a political party's statement of principles and goals

PROGRESSIVE: favouring progress, improvement, and reform

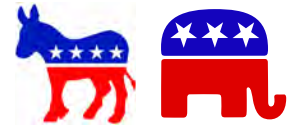
SUPERPOWER: a country that has great military, economic, and political power and can influence other countries

U.S. CONSTITUTION: the fundamental law of the U.S.

VICE PRESIDENT: the assistant to the president



INTERNATIONAL THE 2024 U.S. ELECTION



school. She was a district attorney in San Francisco before becoming the attorney general of California. She then served as a U.S. **senator** from 2017 to 2021.

Ms. Harris is the first female vice president and if she wins, she will be the first woman, and the first person of Black and Indian descent, to become a U.S. president.

Democrats celebrated the candidate change and the campaign restart. The party became energized and supporters showed their enthusiasm by opening their wallets. During the first week, over \$200 million was donated to Ms. Harris's campaign. On August 6, Ms. Harris announced Minnesota Governor Tim Walz as her vice presidential running mate.

ABOUT THE CHALLENGER

And what about Donald Trump, the Republican candidate running again? He already served as U.S. president between 2016 and 2020. Now, he's hoping for a comeback in 2024.

Mr. Trump attended New York Military Academy (a private boarding school), Fordham University in New York, and he received an economics degree from the University of Pennsylvania. He then worked for his father's real estate business. Mr. Trump became a real estate developer and businessman and was involved with hotels, casinos, golf courses, resorts, and various properties in New York City and around the world.

In 2016 he won the Republican nomination and defeated Hillary Clinton to become president. But he then lost to Joe Biden in 2020. He is the Republican candidate again and

in mid-June he selected JD (James David) Vance as his vice presidential candidate. Mr. Vance is an author and Marine veteran who has served since 2023 as a senator from Ohio.

COMPETING CAMPAIGNS

In early summer, the Republican effort was running smoothly and gaining ground. The polls favoured Mr. Trump. However, when Kamala Harris took control of the Democratic campaign, supporters rallied behind the new candidate and momentum shifted to the Democrats.

Both parties have multi-million dollar war chests for advertising and there are a number of major issues at the heart of the campaign. These include: the economy, immigration, health care and prescription drugs, taxes, tariffs, trade, crime, and foreign policy. There are many other issues as well.

Democrats also want voters to remember Mr. Trump's four tumultuous years in office. During his term he was dogged by legal and ethical scandals and he was **impeached** twice by the House of Representatives. His efforts to undermine the 2020 election and overturn the results peaked when he incited an insurrection in Washington on January 6, 2021.

Mr. Trump also occupies a unique place in history. He is the first former U.S. president to be convicted of a **felony**. In May he was found guilty of 34 counts of falsifying business records. He is also facing various other charges. Prosecutors say he illegally removed and stored secret government documents. They also claim he tried to tamper with Georgia's election results.

THE U.S. ELECTORAL SYSTEM

In the U.S., voters don't directly elect the president. Instead, the head of state is chosen by the **Electoral College**.

Here's how the system works: Each of the 50 U.S. states has a number of electoral votes. The more people in a state, the more electoral votes the state gets. California, the most populated state, has 54 electoral votes. Alaska, with a much smaller population, has only three electoral votes.

Voters in each state cast a ballot for their choice for president. The candidate who wins the **popular vote** in each state usually wins all of that state's electoral votes, too.

There are 538 electoral votes in total. The candidate who wins the most electoral votes – 270 or more – wins the presidency, even if he or she doesn't win the nation-wide popular vote.

TOO CLOSE TO CALL

The polls continue to show a close race. Here's why. About 40 to 45 percent of all voters from either party are committed supporters ('the base'). About ten percent of all voters are independent-minded and this group will decide who wins. Also, national polls do not show regional patterns. Some states always vote for a certain party. Texas is a Republican fortress and California always votes Democratic. Most campaign efforts are focussed on a small number of 'swing' or 'battleground' states which could go either way.

So will you pay attention on Nov. 5? It's bound to be a nail-biter. ★

DEFINITIONS

ELECTORAL COLLEGE: the group of electors who formally elect the U.S. president and vice president

FELONY: a serious crime in the United States

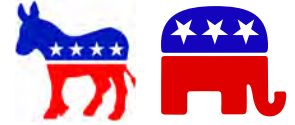
IMPEACH: to charge a public official with misconduct

POPULAR VOTE: votes calculated across an entire region

SENATOR: member of the upper branch of the U.S. legislature



INTERNATIONAL THE 2024 U.S. ELECTION



COMPREHENSION QUESTIONS

1. When will the U.S. presidential election occur?

2. Describe what the Republican Party stands for. What symbols represent this party?

3. Describe what the Democratic Party stands for. What symbols represent this party?

4. List the Democratic and Republican presidential and vice-presidential candidates.

5. Explain what the **Electoral College** is.

6. How many votes are needed to become the president of the U.S.?

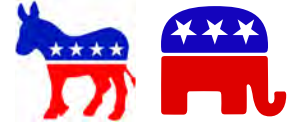
7. Why did President Biden withdraw his bid for re-election?

8. Identify at least three important details about Kamala Harris. List this information in the order you think is important.

9. Identify at least three important details about Donald Trump. List this information in the order you think is important.



INTERNATIONAL THE 2024 U.S. ELECTION



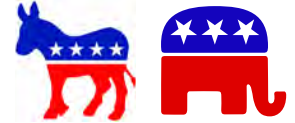
QUESTIONS FOR FURTHER THOUGHT

1. Joe Biden had planned to run again for a second term as U.S. president but made the decision to pull out of the race and to endorse his vice president, Kamala Harris. As you see it, did President Biden make the right decision? Discuss the pros and cons of his choice.

2. Donald Trump's presidency from 2016-2020 is described as 'tumultuous'. During his term as president, he endured legal and ethical scandals, was impeached twice by the House of Representatives, claimed that the results of the 2020 election were false, incited an insurrection in Washington on January 6, 2021, and he has been convicted of a felony for falsifying business records, with other legal challenges still ahead of him.

In your opinion, for what reasons would American voters support a candidate with such a checkered past? Do you believe that a convicted felon should be allowed to run for political office? Why or why not?

3. If Kamala Harris wins the U.S. presidential election, she will be the first woman, the first person of Indian descent, and only the second Black person to become a U.S. president. As you see it, what impact would a 'President Harris' have on the voters of the United States? Give examples to support your thinking.



QUESTIONS FOR ONLINE EXPLORATION

Note: The links below are listed at www.lesplan.com/links for easy access.

1. Watch this TED-Ed video which explains how the Electoral College works during a U.S. presidential election:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=W9H3gvnN468> [5:21]

What questions do you have?

2. Hear why President Biden made the decision not to run for re-election:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-iyLT6Ze1jo> [11:02]

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xLH4fKB2V6E> [3:02]

What did you learn about why President Biden decided to step down?

3. Learn how Kamala Harris is recharging the Democratic party since her nomination as candidate for president:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=32DtCdZ9crU> [9:55]

What qualities might Vice President Harris bring to the presidency?

4. Why did Kamala Harris choose Tim Walz as her vice-presidential running mate for the Democratic party?

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rYS4SI7dovg> [8:34]

5. Explore the highlights of Donald Trump's acceptance speech for presidential nominee:

<https://www.cbc.ca/news/world/trump-rnc-speech-thursday-1.7268328>

What ideas stood out for you? Explain.

6. Why did Donald Trump choose JD Vance as his vice-presidential running mate for the Republican party?

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=omIF15uvGw> [3:13]

7. Visit the official websites of both the Democratic and Republican parties.

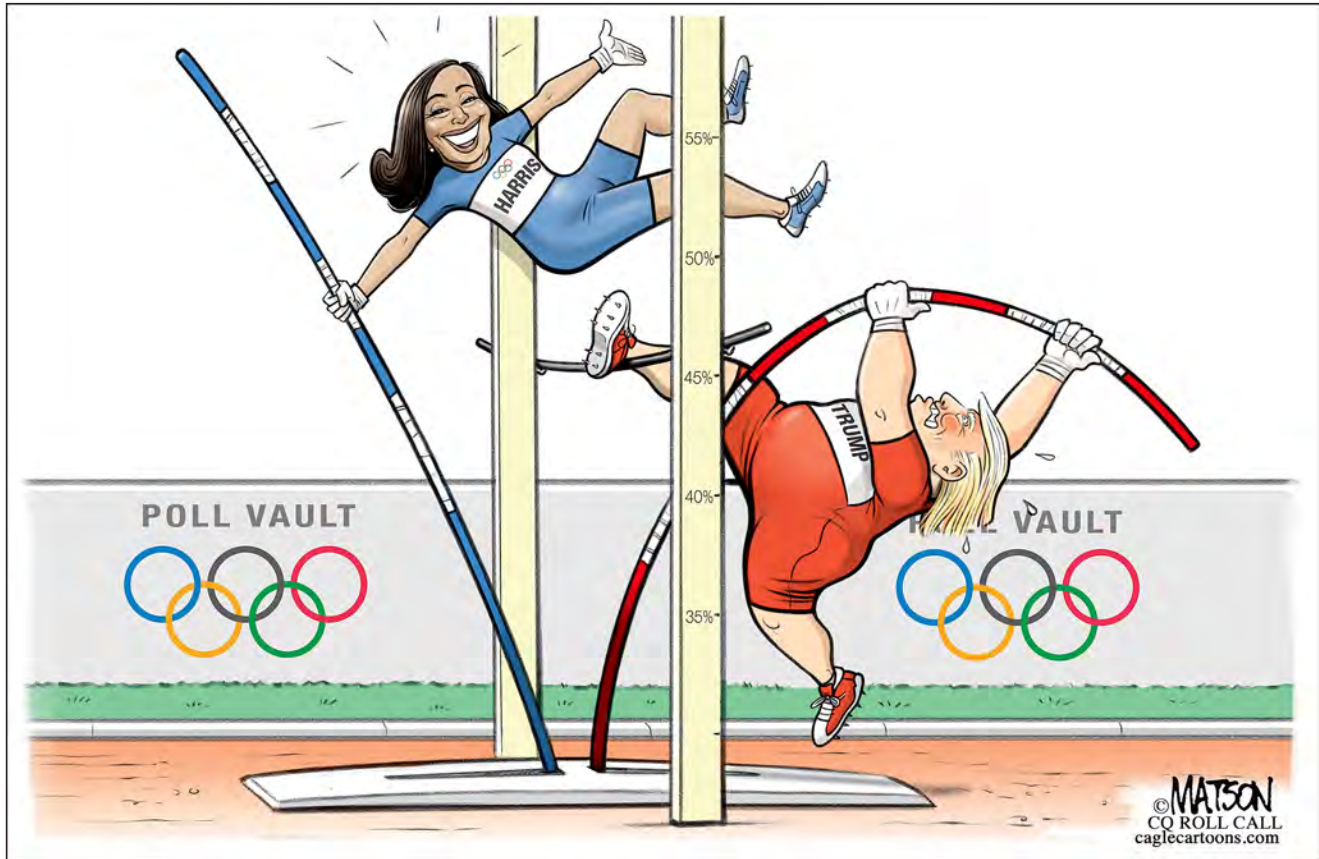
Democratic Party website: <https://democrats.org/>

Republican Party website: <https://gop.com/#>

How are they similar? How are they different?



INTERNATIONAL THE 2024 U.S. ELECTION



YOUR TASK:

Examine the editorial cartoon. Then, use the questions below to help you decode the cartoon's message. Be specific and include as many details as possible in your answers.

INITIAL READING: What can an initial look reveal?

1. Glance quickly at the cartoon. What is your first impression – your “gut response”?
2. Consider your background knowledge. What do you already know about the context of the cartoon – the time, place or situation? (List key facts.)

CLOSER LOOK: What's happening in the cartoon?

3. Describe what you *see* and *read* in the cartoon.

DRAW CONCLUSIONS: What overall impression can you draw?

4. Identify possible biases. Whose perspective or point of view is expressed in the cartoon?
5. Explain the overall message of the cartoon in a paragraph. (Remember, a good interpretation is *specific* and *detailed*.) ★



AMERICAN SWING STATES

INSTRUCTIONS

Complete this map assignment to better understand the article *The 2024 U.S. Election*.

1. Obtain the required resources and read **all** the instructions before starting.
2. Colour your map **after** all labelling is completed.
3. Print in pencil only first, then go over the printing in black ink.
4. Work carefully and neatly.

Resources Required: pencil, black pen, pencil crayons, ruler, eraser and an atlas.

Part A Locate and label the capital of the United States and underline this city name.

Part B Locate and label the following three large states that voted Democratic in November 2020 in CAPITAL letters. Colour each state blue.

California	New York	Illinois
------------	----------	----------

Part C Locate and label the following three U.S. states that voted Republican in November 2020 in CAPITAL letters. Colour each state red.

Texas	Florida	Ohio
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Part D Locate and label the following seven U.S. 'swing states' in CAPITAL letters. Colour each swing state purple.

Arizona	Georgia	Michigan
Nevada	North Carolina	Pennsylvania
Wisconsin		

Part E List the number of Electoral College votes for each of the 13 states above.

S(See: <http://www.archives.gov/federal-register/electoral-college/allocation.html>)

Part F Colour all remaining U.S. states orange.

Part G Locate and label the following countries in CAPITAL letters and shade each as indicated:

Canada (green)	Mexico (yellow)
Cuba (pink)	The Bahamas (yellow)

Part H Locate and label the following and shade all salt water grey:

Pacific Ocean	Atlantic Ocean
Gulf of Mexico	

Part I Locate and label the Great Lakes and shade them light grey.

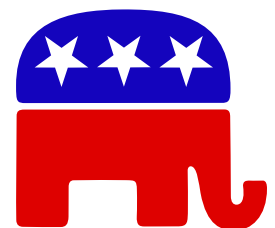
Part J Complete your map with a frame, title, and compass. ★



Democratic Party



United States



Republican Party



0 150 300 450 600 Kilometres



INTERNATIONAL THE 2024 U.S. ELECTION

PUTTING IT ALL TOGETHER

A. Write the letter that corresponds to the best answer on the line beside each question:

_____ 1. How long can a U.S. president serve in office?

- a) 4 years
- b) 6 years
- c) 8 years
- d) 10 years
- e) 12 years

_____ 2. Which institution officially decides who becomes the U.S. president?

- a) Supreme Court
- b) Electoral College
- c) Senate
- d) State Department
- e) Congress

_____ 3. Who is the current U.S. president and the current vice president?

- a) Donald Trump - Nancy Pelosi
- b) JD Vance - Ron DeSantis
- c) Barack Obama - Joe Biden
- d) Joe Biden - Kamala Harris
- e) Kamala Harris - Tim Walz

B. Mark the statements T (True) or F (False). If a statement is True, write one important fact to support it on the line below. If a statement is False, write the words that make it true on the line below.

_____ 4. **True or False?** Either political party has a good chance to win a 'swing state.'

_____ 5. **True or False?** Joe Biden decided last year not to run for re-election.

_____ 6. **True or False?** The U.S. presidential candidate who wins the popular vote wins the election.

C. Fill in the blanks to complete each sentence.

7. A person who holds a position is called the _____ .

8. The two major U.S. political parties are the _____ and the _____ .

9. A serious crime in the U.S. is called a _____ .

D. Respond to the following question in paragraph form. (Use a separate sheet of paper if necessary.)

10. *What prediction can you make about the upcoming U.S. presidential election? Who do you suppose will win?*
Give reasons to support your response.



SETTING A PURPOSE BEFORE READING

There are a number of reasons we read, and setting a purpose for reading – knowing WHY we are reading – helps us to focus on important information and to better understand and remember what we read. It also helps us decide HOW we will read the text.

We don't read all texts for the same purposes or in the same way. For example, we read an instruction manual for a new Blu-ray player for a different reason than we read a book or a website. How we will read it – the strategies we use – will also differ. We are more likely to skim to find the information we need in a manual. Once we find what we need, we might read the instructions carefully to figure out what to do. Then, we stop reading, put the manual down, and carry out the steps. We may have to reread if we get confused or forget what to do.

This is a very different approach than the one we would use to read a book. When we read a book, we usually read cover-to-cover. We read carefully so we don't miss any details because we want to understand the whole story. Sometimes we make connections or create images in our minds as we read to help us better understand what we are reading. Depending on its length, we may put the book down before we finish reading it but we will start reading where we left off.

Good readers are flexible and responsive. This means that they match their reading strategies to their purpose for reading. What types of text do you read? Why do you read them? What strategies do you use to read each of these texts? The chart below is a summary of the main purposes for reading and what each entails.

Purpose for reading	What it looks like
For enjoyment	Usually student-selected. Allows students to choose a variety of genres and forms. Allows students to pursue what interests them while developing reading skills.
To experience something new	Students make connections between their personal experiences and those of people around the world.
To learn more about themselves and others	Students reflect on what they've read and express opinions and perspectives. Students develop a sense of their personal values and make sense of the world around them.
To gain information	Students use the features of informational texts to gather, analyse and apply what they've learned.
To understand issues	Students develop a sense of perspective. Students pose questions, acknowledge other points of view, critique the opinions presented and support opinions with evidence.
To appreciate writing	Students respond to text in ways other than written answers to apply what they've learned in new contexts.
To appreciate use of media to communicate	Students respond to a variety of media formats (e.g., infographics, political cartoons, videos, etc.) and react to how the format supports the meaning of the message.

* Chart adapted from: A Guide to Effective Literacy Instruction, Grades 4-6, p. 11.



ASSESSMENT RUBRIC

This rubric may be helpful in providing students with formative, strength-based feedback and/or assessing students' responses holistically.

	Emerging	Developing	Proficient	Extending
Supports thinking	Answers or reflections are brief and include obvious facts/details/evidence.	Answers or reflections are general and supported with some relevant facts/details/evidence.	Answers or reflections are clearly supported with specific, relevant facts/details/evidence.	Answers or reflections are insightful and supported with specific, relevant facts/details/evidence.
Shows understanding	Responses show a basic understanding of the text, topic, issue or message.	Responses are thoughtful and show a general understanding of the text, topic, issue or message.	Responses are thoughtful and show a complete understanding of the text, topic, issue or message.	Responses are insightful and show a deep understanding of the text, topic, issue or message. May synthesize ideas or explain the 'so what'.
Thinks critically	Makes straightforward connections or inferences. Focuses on retelling.	Makes logical connections to self (T:S) and/or background knowledge (T:S). Inferences are logical.	Makes meaningful connections to self. Considers ideas between texts (T:T). Inferences are plausible.	Makes powerful connections that go between texts and/or beyond the text (T:W). Inferences are plausible and insightful.

Current Events, Clearly Explained



Students want to know what's happening in their world – but the news can be difficult and time-consuming to teach.

WE HAVE THE SOLUTION. (Five, actually.)

The Canadian Reader

PDF/Word resource

- ✓ Clearly written, leveled Canadian current events articles
- ✓ Literacy-based lesson plans
- ✓ Engaging, original illustrations
- ✓ Comics
- ✓ Map assignments

Product details: 8 issues. 38 pages. Available in English and in French for grades 3 and up (1 reading level).



What in the World?

- ✓ PDF/Word resource
- ✓ National and international news stories
- ✓ Key vocabulary
- ✓ Background information
- ✓ Varied assignments that build content-area knowledge and enhance critical thinking
- ✓ Maps and illustrations

Product details: 8 issues. 60 pages. Available in English and in French, and in 2 reading levels, for grades 5 and up.



Currents4Kids.com News4Youth.com

- ✓ **Online** and interactive
- ✓ Weekly
- ✓ Auto-graded quizzes
- ✓ Comment page for students to respond to the stories
- ✓ Links to relevant articles, resources, maps, photos and videos
- ✓ Extension activities

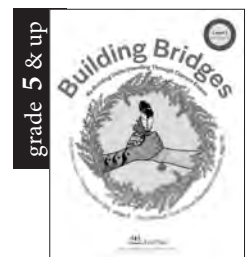
Product details: 40 issues. **One subscription** allows all teachers and students access from any Internet-connected device at any time. Available in English and in French.
Currents4Kids/Infos-Jeunes: Grades 3 and up (1 reading level).
News4Youth/Infos-Ados: Grades 5 and up (3 reading levels).



Building Bridges

- ✓ PDF/Word resource
- ✓ Builds understanding of current events that impact Indigenous Peoples and all Canadians
- ✓ Two theme-based articles and lesson plans
- ✓ Background information
- ✓ Consistent with First Peoples Principles of Learning
- ✓ Encourages a respectful, reflective, empathetic, and inquiring frame of mind

Product details: 5 issues. Variable page length. Available in English and in French, and in 2 reading levels, for grades 5 and up.



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Contact us for a sample copy or free demo.

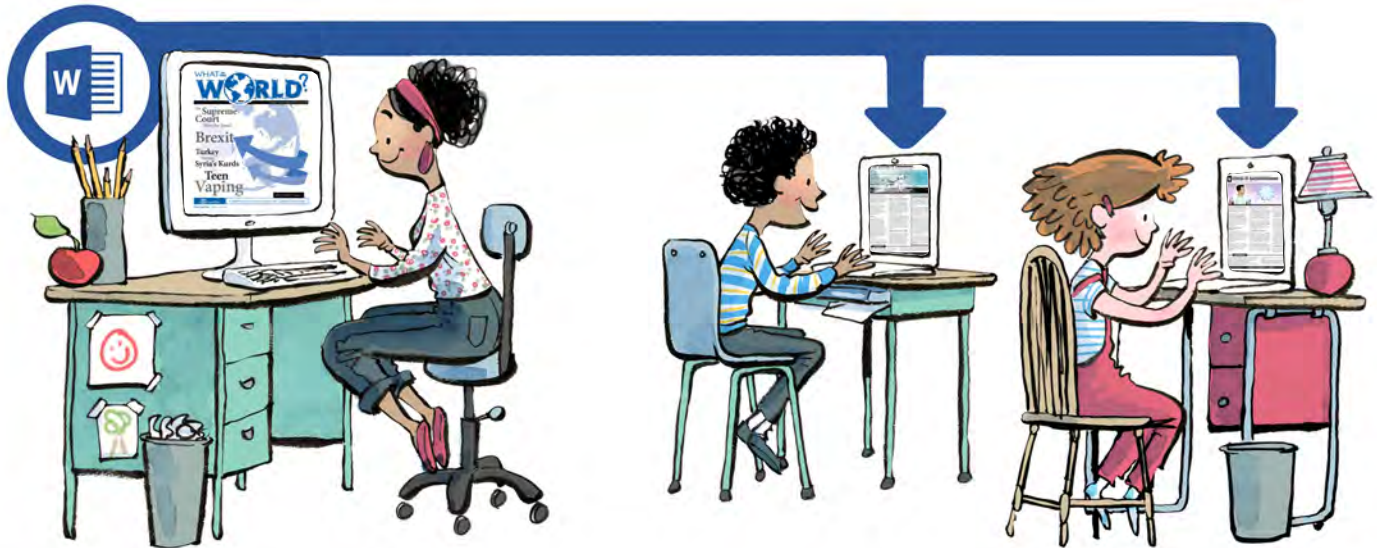
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Students Can Work In Word/Google Docs...



Did you know...

... that each issue of *What In The World?* includes a PDF file (complete document) and a Word file (articles and questions only).

Students can complete assignments directly in the Word file. Teachers can email the file to students or post it on the Internet. The Word file also allows teachers to:

- easily modify and format content including changing **fonts** and **text sizes**
- create a PDF document and use **Adobe Reader's** 'Read Out Loud Mode'
- save paper and copying costs and help protect the environment
- promote and encourage students' computer skills

Data in the Word file

There are **three** ways to access data from a Word file:

- 1) Select the data you wish to **Copy** and then **Paste** it into any word processing program. Use **Select All** to copy the entire document.
- 2) Import the entire **Word** file into **LibreOffice** (or another similar program) and then save as a new file.
- 3) Create a new file in a different format. Use the **Word Save As** command to choose: 1) plain text, 2) rich text format (RTF), 3) Web page (.htm), 4) PDF, etc.

Google Docs and LibreOffice

- You can easily upload the **Word** file to **Google Docs** and share it with students or other teachers.
- You can translate a **Google Docs** file into another language (see *Tools>Translate document*) but you will need to edit the document to suit your requirements. **Google Docs** can translate into over 100 languages including Spanish, Mandarin, and German.
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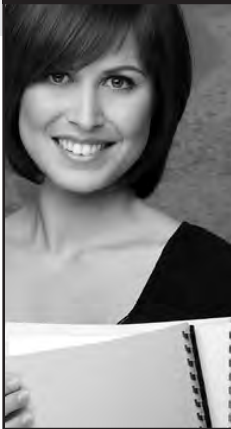


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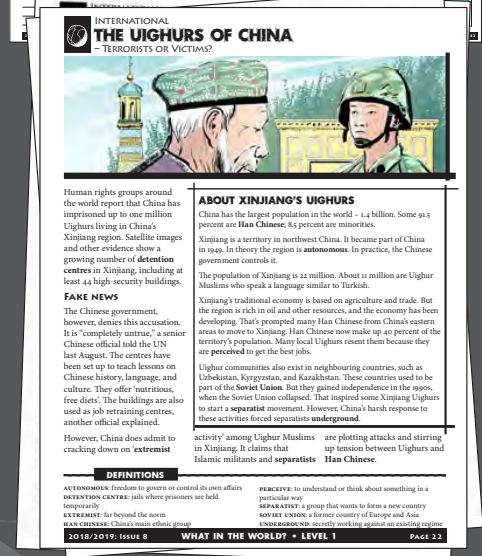
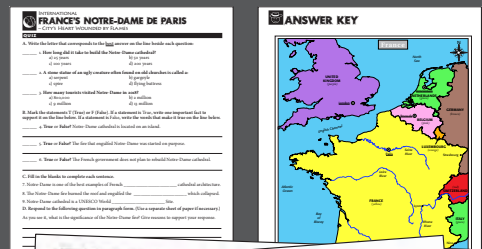
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