



# YALE NATIONAL INITIATIVE

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Curriculum Units by Fellows of the National Initiative  
2012 Volume III: The American Presidency

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## **What the Founders could not have Known**

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by Adam J. Canning

This unit is designed to teach how the media has changed the original intent of the presidential office. The media has been used in presidential campaigning since the beginning of the office; this unit will look at how the use of media has changed with technology. The framers of the Constitution were wary of the development of political parties and rhetorical presidents. The unit will show the developments of the executive branch by going over the Declaration of Independence and the Articles of Confederation to see why the branch was created the way it was. By going through historical elections such as those of 1828, 1960, and 2008, this unit will show the evolution of the media and how the presidential office has changed in response. It is important for students to learn how to view the media and formulate their own opinions, especially with the dominance of social media today. However, the ultimate goal of this unit is for the students to become more informed citizens and improve their critical thinking. The audience is an eighth grade civics and economic class, but the unit could be adapted for use with elementary social studies students as well as senior government students.

(Developed for Civics and Economics, grade 8; recommended for Civics, grades 7-8, and U. S. Government, High School grades)

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