



# 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 do Presidents really do?

Guide for Curriculum Unit 12.03.11, published September 2012

by Ellen Shackelford

This unit is written for a 5<sup>th</sup> grade Social Studies class in Delaware. I'm sure it would be equally appropriate for most other states and could work for 4<sup>th</sup> through 6<sup>th</sup> grades. The unit explores the job of the United States president through classroom simulation. Students should also develop a better understanding of the entire United States' government as it works together with the president. Students will examine the U.S. Constitution as well as laws and actual practices employed by current presidents to determine the extent of the president's job. After gaining a better understanding of the president's job, students will engage in a decision making process to choose a candidate. In addition, students will use writing to reflect their own individual choices and to express their opinion for their chosen presidential candidate. The opinion paper the students write will coincide with the Writing Common Core Standards. The unit can be used particularly in presidential election years, but may be adapted for nonelection years as well. The unit may be used with one classroom or in tandem with 1-3 other classes as well, comprising about 15-20 class periods of 45 minutes.

(Developed for Social Studies, grade 5; recommended for Social Studies, grades 4-6)

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