



# YALE NATIONAL INITIATIVE

*to strengthen teaching in public schools®*

Curriculum Units by Fellows of the National Initiative  
2021 Volume I: U. S. Social Movements through Biography

---

## **Mobilizing Change: Lessons Learned from Obama's 2008 Campaign**

Guide for Curriculum Unit 21.01.04, published September 2021

by Sean Means

This unit is for History teachers. It should be applied by teachers who want to demonstrate how campaigns are assembled, organized, and run. The Obama campaign of 2008 was a lesson in how appropriate strategizing can lead to positive outcomes. The unit begins by surveying America before the 2008 election, it highlights the state of the economy, the national debt, and how America was fighting on a two-war front.

After providing context on the nation's current state, it moves to how Obama's team began to mobilize through a variety of entry points. It is important to understand that this unit is not primarily about the candidate's story, instead, it pays homage to the organization that paved the way for his presidency. The unit highlights how technology, fundraising, competent staffing, and the proper execution of well-planned tactics can lead to positive outcomes. Students should leave the lesson with a better understanding of the importance of civic duty and why proper preparation is essential to the execution and achievement of any goal they might set for themselves.

(Developed for Social Justice, grade 12; recommended for U. S. History, grade 11, Civics, grade 9, and Social Justice, grade 12)

---

<https://teachers.yale.edu>

©2023 by the Yale-New Haven Teachers Institute, Yale University, All Rights Reserved. Yale National Initiative®, Yale-New Haven Teachers Institute®, On Common Ground®, and League of Teachers Institutes® are registered trademarks of Yale University.

For terms of use visit [https://teachers.yale.edu/terms\\_of\\_use](https://teachers.yale.edu/terms_of_use)