

America re-elects President Barack Obama

8th November, 2012



Americans voted to re-elect incumbent president Barack Obama on Tuesday in one of the closest contests in U.S. history.

President Obama saw off the challenge of Republican opponent Mitt Romney, who asked the nation to pray for Mr Obama in his goal to re-ignite the American economy. It was a nail-biting finish to what was a long, exhausting, bitter and expensive election campaign. Pre-election polls and TV stations said either man could have won the presidency. It all depended on several swing states, the winner of which would secure the 270 electoral votes needed to guarantee victory. Once the state of Ohio went to the Democrats, Obama knew he had another four years in the White House.

Many Americans felt relief that the election has now been decided. They had to endure dozens of nightly advertisements in what was the most expensive campaign in history. Most voters complained that the ads were overly negative and simply attacked the other side rather than outlining policy promises. Despite the poor state of the American economy, voters once again put their faith in Mr Obama. Many believe Obama won against all the odds. Thomas L Friedman of the New York Times wrote: "No one can know for sure what complex emotional chemistry tipped this election Obama's way...It came down to a majority of Americans believing that...Obama was trying his hardest to fix what ails the country."

Sources: BBC

Writing

It is the duty of everyone to vote in elections. Those who don't should be heavily fined. Discuss.

Chat

Talk about these words from the article.

Americans / voted / contests / challenge / opponent / nail-biting / campaign / victory / election / complained / negative ads / policy promises / against the odds / majority

True / False

- The election was one of the closest in U.S. history. T / F
- Mitt Romney asked Americans to pray Obama re-ignites. T / F
- Most opinion polls predicted Obama would win. T / F
- The winner needed 270 electoral votes to secure victory. T / F
- Americans ensured dozens of advertisements every night. T / F
- None of the parties spent a long time on their policies in their ads. T / F
- A New York journalist said Obama's emotional chemistry helped him. T / F
- The journalist said more people believed Obama could fix America. T / F

Synonym Match

- | | |
|----------------|----------------|
| 1. incumbent | a. rival |
| 2. opponent | b. guarantee |
| 3. nail-biting | c. complicated |
| 4. depended on | d. put up with |
| 5. secure | e. sitting |
| 6. endure | f. excessively |
| 7. overly | g. bulk |
| 8. faith | h. tense |
| 9. complex | i. belief |
| 10. majority | j. hinged on |

Discussion – Student A

- What springs to mind when you hear the name 'Barack Obama'?
- What do you think of Barack Obama?
- Are you happy with the U.S. election result?
- Who did you like better – Obama or Romney? Why?
- What do you think of America's democratic process?
- What do you think of two billion dollars being spent on the election?
- Do you think trust Obama?
- Where were you and what were you doing when you heard Obama had won the election?

Phrase Match

- | | |
|-------------------------------|----------------------------|
| 1. one of the closest | a. against all the odds |
| 2. Obama saw | b. on several swing states |
| 3. It was a nail- | c. Obama's way |
| 4. It all depended | d. victory |
| 5. guarantee | e. of Americans |
| 6. the ads were overly | f. ails the country |
| 7. Many believe Obama won | g. contests |
| 8. tipped this election | h. negative |
| 9. It came down to a majority | i. off the challenge |
| 10. fix what | j. biting finish |

Discussion – Student B

- What do you know about Barack Obama?
- Is it right for campaign ads to attack the other opponent?
- What do you know about Obama's plans for the next four years?
- Why do you think Obama won "against all the odds"?
- Do you think the rest of the world's view of Obama is different to the average American's?
- Is America's two-party system real democracy?
- What questions would you like to ask Barack Obama?
- What do you think his answers might be?

Spelling

- cnniubmte president Barack Obama
- one of the closest ntostesc in U.S. history
- It was a lina-ibignt finish
- a long, nsheaxuitg, bitter and expensive election
- It all dneeedpd on several swing states
- votes needed to gnutereaa victory
- Many Americans felt fleire
- They had to ndeure dozens of nightly advertisements
- the ads were yevolr negative
- unliongti policy promises
- complex emotional icsmerhyt
- It came down to a oiajymtr

Answers – Synonym Match

1. e	2. a	3. h	4. j	5. b
6. d	7. f	8. i	9. c	10. g

Role Play

Barack Obama - You are so happy you won the election. You know you can make all Americans richer and make America strong. Think of three things you will do. Remember that all of America's problems came about because of former president George W. Bush. You will help all Americans.

An unemployed American - You are fed up with Obama. Before he came to power you had a job. You lost it in the financial collapse. Think of three reasons why you do not want Obama as president. You believe nothing he says. You think he is nothing but a dreamer. He doesn't help the working American.

A recently arrived Mexican - You are Obama's biggest fan. The American dream has come true for you because of Obama. Think of three reasons why. You love Obama because he campaigns for all people - black, white, rich, poor, straight, gay, Christian, Muslim... You think unemployed people should try harder to find a job.

An angry Mitt Romney voter - You hate Barack Obama. He has made America weak in the world. Think of three examples why. His policies have not helped America - unemployment is high, prices are high, government gets in the way of business, etc. You think America will lose its superpower status with four more years under Obama.

Speaking

What's most important to you? Rank these and share your rankings with your partner. Put the best at the top. Change partners often and share your rankings.

- crime
- education
- health care
- jobs
- low taxes
- environment
- strong foreign policy
- human rights

Answers – True False

a	T	b	F	c	F	d	T	e	F	f	T	g	F	h	T
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Answers to Phrase Match and Spelling are in the text.