6 Things You Need to Know About Election 2020

y Laura Anastasia

1. Who is running for president?

There are two major contenders: U.S. President Donald Trump, who is seeking reelection as a Republican, and former U.S. Vice President Joe Biden, who is running as a Democrat. Biden and Trump have sharply differing views of how to deal with everything from health care to immigration. Trump's running mate is Vice President Mike Pence. Biden's running mate is yet to be announced.

2. Who can vote?

Voters must be U.S. citizens, at least 18 years old on Election Day, and legal residents of the state in which they are voting. Most states also require voters to register. About half of states also require voters to have lived in their state for several weeks before Election Day.

3. How is this election different from presidential elections in the past?

Presidential races are typically front-page news throughout an election year. But Biden and Trump's campaigns took a backseat to the Covid-19 pandemic this past spring. In addition, social distancing guidelines necessary to slow the spread of the virus eliminated traditional campaign staples, such as handshakes, rallies, and selfies with supporters. Both presidential candidates have opted for virtual town halls instead of in-person campaign events. They are also using social media and the internet to reach potential voters.

4. Why do the candidates focus more attention on certain states?

Strategy! When it comes to voting, many states are predictable. Voters in some states primarily support Democrats. Voters in other states mostly support Republicans. Presidential candidates don't want to spend much time or money in states they are either sure to win or don't have any chance of winning. Instead, they focus on "swing states"—states where voters have flipped back and forth between the two parties in recent elections. In this election, most experts agree that Arizona, Florida, Michigan, North Carolina, and Wisconsin are the most "flippable" states.

5. How might the pandemic affect voting?

Traditional voting may still be an option, with limits on how many people can enter polling places at once. But experts predict many Americans will vote by mail-in or absentee ballot instead.

6. What other offices are up for election?

Some of the most closely watched races will be in Congress, where 35 Senate seats and all 435 seats in the House of Representatives will be up for grabs. Republicans currently hold a majority of seats in the Senate, and Democrats hold a majority in the House. But this election could shift that balance. That matters because the party with the most seats in each house gets the top leadership positions and can influence which bills are considered. In addition, presidents tend to have more success implementing policies when their party holds the majority in Congress. In addition to the congressional races, 11 states will vote for governor and dozens of cities will pick mayors.

Adapted from Scholastic – Election 2020 (By Laura Anastasia)

A. Vocabulary: *Match the words with their definitions*

A ballot - A bill - A swing or purple state - Absentee ballot - Running mate - To elect - To cast (a ballot) - To debate - To run for president

	a state which often changes the party it supports from election to election.
	A formal statement of a planned new law that is discussed before being voted on:
	A vote cast by someone who is unable or unwilling to attend the official polling station to which the voter is normally allocated.
	The person a presidential candidate picks to stand alongside them in their battle to be president.
	the piece of paper you write your vote on
	to advertise oneself (or someone else) as a candidate in an upcoming election
	to choose someone to be a leader through a democratic vote
	to have a structured, formal argument about a controversial topic
	to put (your ballot) in the ballot box

B. Global comprehension: *check your understanding*

→ Candidates:

Name		
Political party		
previous experience in politics		
Running mate		

→ To vote, voters must be:

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- ……………………………………………

- ……………………………………………..
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→ Changes due to the Covid-19 pandemic:

- ………………………………………………………………
- ………………………………………………………………

→ Offices up for election:

- ……………………………………………
- ……………………………………………

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