

## Using NewsHour Extra Feature Stories

### STORY

**Obama Makes History, Claims Democratic Nomination**, 06/04/08

[http://www.pbs.org/newshour/extra/features/us/jan-june08/election\\_6-04.html](http://www.pbs.org/newshour/extra/features/us/jan-june08/election_6-04.html)

Estimated Time: One 45-minute class period with possible extension

[Student Worksheet](#) (reading comprehension and discussion questions without answers)

### PROCEDURE

#### 1. WARM UP

Use initiating questions to introduce the topic and find out how much your students know.

#### 2. MAIN ACTIVITY

Have students read NewsHour Extra's feature story and answer the reading comprehension and discussion questions on the student handout.

#### 3. DISCUSSION

Use discussion questions to encourage students to think about how the issues outlined in the story affect their lives and express and debate different opinions.

### INITIATING QUESTIONS

1. **What is historical about the current presidential race?**

2. **How do you think it feels to lose an election?**

3. **Do you think the long Democratic primary will help or hurt their chances in the November general election?**

### READING COMPREHENSION QUESTIONS – [Student Worksheet](#)

1. **What significant event happened June 3 in the current presidential race?**

#### ANSWER

On the last day of the primary season, Senator Barack Obama won the support of enough delegates to claim the Democratic presidential nomination, making him the first black candidate of a major political party in U.S. history.

2. **How many delegate votes did the Democratic candidate need to secure the presidential nomination?**

#### ANSWER

Senator Obama secured enough delegate votes to bring him to the coveted 2,118 required to secure the Democratic bid.

3. **Generally, which Democratic candidates were appealing to which distinct voter groups?**

#### ANSWER

Obama and his rival, Senator Hillary Clinton, fought what is considered the tightest Democratic primary race in the modern era, with each candidate appealing to distinct voter groups. Clinton appealed to many white, working-class voters, women and Latinos while Obama appealed to many new, young voters and African Americans.

#### **4. How did Senator Clinton react to the news that Senator Obama had claimed the nomination?**

##### **ANSWER**

Clinton spoke to her own supporters in New York City Tuesday night without conceding the race to Obama.

"This has been a long campaign, and I will be making no decisions tonight," she said.

#### **5. What role must Clinton play in the general election if the Democrats are going to be successful, according to some political analysts?**

##### **ANSWER**

Political analysts agree that Obama will need the support of Clinton to unite the Democratic Party following the long and divisive nomination run.

"If Senator Clinton goes out and actively campaigns for Barack Obama, especially in places like Ohio, Michigan and Florida, I think she can really help him there, because ... these voters who are with Senator Clinton have a lot more in common ideologically and values-wise with Senator Obama than they do with Senator McCain. And to remind them of that is a very powerful message," Chris Cillizza of the WashingtonPost.com told the NewsHour.

#### **6. Who is Senator McCain and how did he respond to the news from the Democratic Party?**

##### **ANSWER**

Earlier in the evening, Senator McCain addressed a smaller crowd in Louisiana, outside New Orleans, stressing that he is the better, more experienced candidate for the presidency.

"He [Obama] is an impressive man, who makes a great first impression. But he hasn't been willing to make the tough calls, to challenge his party, to risk criticism from his supporters to bring real change to Washington. I have," McCain said.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS (more research might be needed)

**1. Senator Barack Obama's nomination victory makes him the first black candidate of a major political party in U.S. history. How does this make you feel about being an American? Do you think he can win the general election? What do you think this tells us about American society? How important do you think this event is in relation to your daily life?**

**2. What would you do now if you were Senator Hillary Clinton? There has been much speculation about what she will do now. Do you think she would rather be a Senate leader, vice president, Supreme Court justice, member of the Obama Cabinet? Why?**

**3. Much has been said in the news media about the reactions of the Democratic voters whose candidate did not win the nomination. Do you know any Democratic voters? Ask them how this historical event might impact how they will vote in November. Does anything about their reaction surprise you? Why or why not? In addition, ask Republican voters how this event might impact how they will vote in the general election? Is there anything surprising here?**

##### **Extension Activity**

Have students write a 300-500 word essay on this topic providing clear examples. Send your completed editorial to NewsHour Extra (extra@newshour.org). Exceptional essays might be published on our Web site.