



# **The Kid Who Ran for President**

**By Dan Gutman**

**Study Guide**

**The Magik Theatre 2008**

# SUMMARY

Some kids want to be President when they grow up. Twelve-year-old Judson Moon wants to be President right *now*! "Grown-ups have had a thousand years to mess up the world," Judson explains. "Now it's our turn." But running for President is hard. You have to kiss a zillion babies and shake a zillion hands, and say a zillion 'hellos'." There's the tough decision about which girl in your school you should ask to be First Babe. Also, selling 80 million cups of lemonade is a slow way to finance a campaign. And there's an unfair constitutional provision against kids running for President that needs to be changed.

Dan Gutman's entertaining account of Judson's quest for the White House slyly mixes lessons about U.S. history and government with a story full of unexpected twists.

## THREE BRANCHES OF GOVERNMENT

### LEGISLATIVE BRANCH

#### Senate and House of Representatives

The Legislative Branch writes laws. Often the populace suggests new rules that they feel need to be made into laws.

### EXECUTIVE BRANCH

#### The President

The President can ask for certain laws to be enacted, and he or she can veto laws the Legislative Branch has written.

### JUDICIAL BRANCH

#### The Supreme Court

The Supreme Court upholds laws and makes sure that people who do not follow laws are punished. The Supreme Court can also suggest a law be changed to better fit our Constitution.



States, counties, cities, and towns also have branches of government. The executive of a state is its **Governor**. States also have legislatures and courts. Local governments (like counties, cities, and towns) are led by an executive called a **Mayor**. Local laws are passed by a local council and are enforced by local courts.

[SS 113.2, 113.3, 113.4, 113.5, 113.6, 113.7]

# PRESIDENTIAL FACTS



Every four years the people of the United States choose a President. An election takes place on the first Tuesday after the first Monday in November. In 2008 America will go to the polls on November 4.

The President picks many of the people who help run the country including judges. He or she is in charge of the military. He or she represents the United States and decides how we work with other countries. The President suggests and signs laws. Sometimes he or she even rejects laws. He or she works to help other countries get along.

Not just anyone can be President. You have to be born in the United States and be at least 35 years old. You can only be elected President for two terms. The President can be a man or a woman of any race or any religion.

People vote during state primaries and caucuses. Those votes help each party decide who to choose as their candidate. The candidates try to get people to vote for them by giving speeches, shaking hands, giving interviews, and paying for ads on TV, radio, and in newspapers. The political parties choose candidates at their conventions. Each candidate then picks their Vice Presidential running mate.

On the first Tuesday after the first Monday in November, people all over the United States go to a polling location and vote their choice for President. You have to be at least 18 years old to vote, you must be a United States citizen, and you must be registered to vote. A person who is in jail or who is on probation for committing a felony cannot vote.

The candidate who gets the most votes in each state gets all the electoral votes for that state, except in Maine and Nebraska. Each state has a certain number of electoral votes. The more people who live in your state, the more electoral votes your state gets. (Can you see why candidates would spend a lot of time in California, New York, and Texas?) The first candidate to win 270 electoral votes becomes the President!

On January 20, the President is sworn in, in Washington, D.C. He recites an oath: "I do solemnly swear that I will faithfully execute the Office of President of the United States, and will, to the best of my ability, preserve, protect, and defend the Constitution of the United States."

The new President and his family move into the White House at 1600 Pennsylvania Avenue in Washington, D.C. They live and work there for the next four years.

[SS 113.3, 113.4, 113.5, 113.6, 113.7]

# President Match Ups

- |   |                           |
|---|---------------------------|
| _____ First President of the United States  | A. Abraham Lincoln        |
| _____ Current President of the United States                                      | B. Thomas Jefferson       |
| _____ Assisted in writing the Declaration of Independence                         | C. William Henry Harrison |
| _____ Assassinated while in office  | D. John F Kennedy         |
| _____ Was the tallest President so far  | E. Theodore Roosevelt     |
| _____ Originally had a career as an actor   | F. George W Bush          |
| _____ Was the first president to resign while in office                           | G. George Washington      |
| _____ First President to die in office  | H. Richard Nixon          |
| _____ Was the first president to live in the White House                          | I. Ronald Regan           |
| _____ Our favorite stuffed friend, the teddy bear, was named after this president | J. John Adams             |

## MAKE YOUR OWN CAMPAIGN POSTER!

Imagine you're running for President. Do you have a slogan (a phrase that sums up your campaign)? What will you offer people? What will you stand for? What will you change about America, and what will you keep the same? Use pictures and/or words to create a campaign poster to share with your class. [AR 117.2, 117.5, 117.8, 117.11, 117.14, 117.17]

### Web Links:

[www.congressforkids.net](http://www.congressforkids.net)

[www.socialstudiesforkids.com](http://www.socialstudiesforkids.com)

[www.whitehouse.gov](http://www.whitehouse.gov)



# Discussion Questions

- 1) Who were the main characters in the play/story? How do you know?
- 2) The main character had a plan. Do you have a similar plan or is yours different?
- 3) What kinds of policies would you have as President?
- 4) Explain how the main character went about becoming President. What kinds of things did he have to do?
- 5) Do you think that a woman should be President? Why or why not?
- 6) Name some characteristics that a President should have.
- 7) Who in your classroom do you think would make the best President? What qualities does that person have that make you think so?

[EL 110.2, 110.3, 110.4, 110.5, 110.6, 110.7; SS 113.6, 113.7]

## *Check Out These Cool Books on Elections !*

*Voting and Elections* by Patricia J. Murphy

*The Presidency* by Patricia Ryon Quiri

*So, You Want to Be President* by Judith St. George, David Small (Illustrator)

*Presidential Elections and Other Cool Facts (2<sup>nd</sup> Edition)* by Syl Sobel, J.D.

**Several TEKS (117.4, 117.7, 117.10, 117.13, 117.16, 117.19) are covered just by attending a production at The Magik Theatre, including:**

The learner will

- identify appropriate audience behavior;
- respond to and evaluate dramatic activities;
- identify the use of music, creative movement and visual components in play; and
- observe the performance of artists and identify theatrical vocations.

## Quiz

- Who ran for President?
  - Judson Moon
  - Lane Brainard
  - Chelsea Daniels
  - Arthur Krantz
- Who did Judson choose to run for Vice President with him?
  - June Syers
  - Chelsea Daniels
  - Abby Goldstein
  - Lane Brainard
- Why did Judson change his parakeet's name?
  - He was afraid that her name would offend voters.
  - He didn't like her name.
  - His parents made him change the bird's name.
  - The name didn't fit on his campaign posters.
- How did Judson get his name on the ballot?
  - He got 2,000 signatures on a petition.
  - He wrote a letter to his Congressman.
  - He won a contest.
  - He paid a visit to the governor of Wisconsin.
- How did Judson first get the money for his campaign?
  - By running a lemonade stand
  - By doing chores around the house
  - By winning a contest
  - By borrowing money from his parents
- How was Judson able to run for President when he wasn't 35 years old?
  - Congress ratified an amendment to allow citizens of any age to run for office.
  - He never told his age and no one noticed.
  - He told everyone that he was really 35 years old.
  - The President of the United States gave him permission to run.
- What did Judson promise he would do if elected?
  - Abolish all homework
  - Give everyone recess all day
  - Let kids chew gum at school
  - Serve pizza every day at lunch
- Why did Judson act like a jerk during the debate?
  - He wanted to lose the election.
  - He decided it was the way to win the election.
  - His campaign manager thought it would be the best strategy.
  - He became angry about what the other candidates were saying.
- What did Judson do after the election was over?
  - He immediately resigned as President.
  - He began packing to move into the White House.
  - He congratulated the winner of the election.
  - He dropped out of school to become President.

[EL 110.2, 110.3, 110.4, 110.5, 110.6, 110.7]

TEKS Key: EL = English Language Arts/Reading, SS = Social Studies, AR = Art, TH = Theatre