



“Game Change” (Film, 2012) Clips and Guided Reflection Questions

Primary Debatable Issue of the Unit: What is the most important factor in being elected President in modern American politics?

Clip 1

8:45 – 11:10 (minutes) McCain campaign searches for a female VP prospect and finds little known Alaska Governor Sarah Palin

Guided reflection question: What are the qualities that most appeal to the McCain campaign team about Sarah Palin?

Clip 2

17:10 – 18:45 McCain campaign does its cursory vetting of Governor Palin before selecting her as Vice-President on the ticket

Guided reflection questions: Do Senator John McCain and his official vetters truly believe that Sarah Palin is or could soon be qualified to be President (should something happen to the President)? If so, why do they believe this? If not, why doesn't it matter to them?



Clip 3

25:50 – 28:00

Sarah Palin is introduced to the nation as John McCain’s Vice-Presidential running mate in the summer of 2008

Guided reflection question: How does Sarah Palin come across in her introductory statements to the country? What attributes does she demonstrate here that are relevant to her prospects as a candidate for President/Vice-President?

Clip 4

30:00 – 32:00

The media investigates Governor Palin’s record in Alaska and finds embarrassments, at a minimum, and possibly some things more scandalous

Guided reflection questions: What do the questions and scandals raised by the media suggest about Sarah Palin’s fitness for the presidency? What is the biggest strike against her coming out of this media coverage?

Clip 5

38:50 – 43:45

Sarah Palin gives her Vice-Presidential nomination speech at the Republican National Convention in August, 2008

Guided reflection questions: What are the specific positive qualities demonstrated and projected in Sarah Palin’s major acceptance speech? How are these related to the key factors that can get a candidate elected to the highest offices in the U.S.?

Clip 6

54:45 – 56:00

Sarah Palin is shown becoming disturbed and upset by the image of her that is being projected by the national media during the campaign



Guided reflection question: What function does the media play in the modern American presidential electoral process, according to this section of “Game Change”?

Clip 7

1:04:00 – 1:06:00 Sarah Palin is becoming distraught, having something of a melt-down, in the face of the pressure of the campaign

Guided reflection questions: What function does this section of the film have in the overall thematic point that it is making? Does it suggest that there is a possibly dangerous disconnect between private attributes and failings, and a candidate’s national projected image.

Clip 8

1:19:00 – 1:20:00 Sarah Palin is immersed in debate prep at Senator McCain’s estate in Arizona

Guided reflection question: What does Governor Palin’s preparation for the Vice-Presidential Debate tell us about her as a candidate and as a potential President?

Clip 9

1:25:30 – 1:30:30 The Vice-Presidential Debate between Sarah Palin and Joe Biden

Guided reflection questions: There is something complex and nuanced about the film’s portrayal of this pivotal moment in the 2008 presidential campaign. What does Sarah Palin do well in the debate? What is she not as good at?

Clip 10

1:35:00 – 1:36:30 Sarah Palin takes control inside the McCain campaign



Guided reflection questions: What do we make of Sarah Palin’s assertion of considerably more power and control within the campaign, as it moved closer to election day? What does this move tell us about the factors necessary to win the Presidency?

Clip 11

1:37:50 – 1:39:00 Senator McCain refuses to “go low” in the late stages of the 2008 presidential campaign

Guided reflection question: Senator McCain recently was heard telling supporters (in the context of his withdrawing his support for Donald Trump), “When I’ve done things for political reasons, I’ve always regretted it, but when I’ve made decisions regardless of the political costs, I’ve been glad I did.” How does this quote reflect on his decision not to raise Reverend Wright as an issue against Obama late in the campaign?

Clip 12

1:54:30 – 1:57:30 Campaign manager Steve Schmidt reflects on Sarah Palin and her selection for Vice-Presidential nominee

Guided reflection question: What do Steve Schmidt’s final reflections on Sarah Palin tell us about the factors necessary to win the Presidency?