



# **WYOMUN IV**

**Kennedy vs. Nixon: the Trail to Presidency**  
**John F. Kennedy Background Guide**

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**Committee Chairs:** Margo D'Agostino, Glory Lee, and Victory Lee

**Crisis Directors:** Katherine Nocks and Sarah Sheerajin

**Director-General:** Isabel Coyle

**Chief of Staff:** Katherine Nocks

**Secretary-General:** Ben Haward

Hello Delegates!

My name is Margo D'Agostino and I could not be more excited to chair the Kennedy side of the 1960 JCC Election. It will be so interesting to see how you, as the delegates, potentially change the course of history within our committee room. I am currently a sophomore at Wyoming High School and have been participating in various Model United Nations conferences and events for four years. Alongside Model United Nations I am also co-editor of *Icarus*, Wyoming High School's literary magazine, as well as an avid reader and writer. I hope you both learn from and enjoy participating in one of the most influential election in US History. It is my sincerest wish that everyone enjoys WYOMUN IV. To quote Kennedy's campaign slogan, "This is a time for greatness!"

Best Regards,

Margo D'Agostino

Committee Chair

Kennedy vs Nixon: The Trail to the Presidency



Dear Delegates,

Hello! My name is Sarah Sheerajin, and I will be one of your crisis directors this year, along with Katherine Nocks. This will be my fourth year participating in Model UN, and I am thrilled to be a part of this lovely committee! We have spent these past few months working tirelessly, determined to make this year's WYOMUN a great experience for each delegate. I am very excited to be working with so many creative people on such an interesting topic; the outcomes of this election are endless!



If you happen to be wondering what I am like outside of this committee, I am a senior at Wyoming High School. Throughout my high school career, I have devoted my time to Wyoming's Drama Department as an art manager and a member of stage crew, along with being a member of Wyoming's Tennis Team and playing trumpet for marching band. As a senior, I have plans to become involved in more clubs and activities, including Academic Team, Yearbook, and Bowling, and I will continue to work backstage for Wyoming's theatre productions. Outside of school, I enjoy exploring my creative side by spending my free time taking pictures, painting, and playing music.

Although this is my first year at WYOMUN, I have always enjoyed Model UN; I look forward to working with this committee as a crisis director and am eager to see what WYOMUN IV has in store for everyone. I wish every delegate the best of luck!

Sarah Sheerajin  
Crisis Director  
Kennedy vs Nixon: the Trail to Presidency

Dear Delegates,

My name is Katherine Nocks and I am honored to be your crisis director for the JCC Election committee. I am excited to see how you work within this committee and bring what we all have been working on to life. The staff and I have been working hard on this conference and committee especially and hope you a great time. It is my sincere hope that you can learn from this committee about what it is like behind the scenes of an election staff.

I am currently a junior at Wyoming High school. This year will be my fourth year participating in WYOMUN. Outside of Model United Nations, I am co-stage manager in our theater productions, a competitive figure skater, and a flutist in our school marching band. I would just like to emphasize how excited I am to meet you all and watch you work within this committee.



Katherine Nocks

Crisis Director

Kennedy vs Nixon: the Trail to Presidency

## The Committee

The date is August 2, 1960, and the world is anticipating the results of the presidential debate to be televised across the nation. The candidates are eager to address the nation, once again, in hopes of gaining the support of Americans. As the days on the campaign trail pass, every decision is crucial to the success of the candidates. John Fitzgerald Kennedy has his hopes set on being the 35<sup>th</sup> president of the United States, and it is up to this committee to secure his success. It is the goal of this committee to run a campaign that will flourish in the face of any adversity thrown at it by way of the opposing candidate, US Republican candidate Richard Nixon.

## John F. Kennedy

### Childhood and Education

Born as the second child of two well off parents, both with lengthy political histories, John "Jack" Kennedy led a relatively sheltered life, quite unlike the way the rest of the world was living during the Great Depression. His father, Joseph P. Kennedy, was lucky enough to withdraw his fortune from the stock market before the crash in 1929, leaving his family to live luxuriously alongside his mother and eight siblings. Kennedy and his siblings were raised Roman Catholic and his brother, Joe, insisted he would be the first Catholic president. However pleasant his young life may seem, Kennedy found himself battling several potentially



life-threatening diseases throughout his childhood, the worst of which being the scarlet fever he came down with in February of 1920. Although he recovered, Kennedy was unable to remain healthy for long periods of time, as he was always sick with one ailment or another. He was provided with the best schooling all his childhood, attending private schools across the east coast. He applied to Princeton University but his illness forced him to drop out. He then went

Harvard, and in his junior year, traveled to Europe where he was able to closely examine the events that led to WWII. On this trip, he wrote his senior paper "Why England Slept," an analysis and critique of Britain's failure to take measures to prevent World War II, which was later turned into a national best selling book. After he graduated Harvard in 1940 majoring in both government and international relations, Kennedy enrolled at Stanford Business School for graduate school.

## Military Service

Following the start of World War II, Kennedy enlisted into the military but was not allowed to serve due to a recent back injury. After intensive therapy, he was deemed fit enough to serve and enlisted into the US Navy. He began as an intelligence officer in Washington DC, but, after the attack on Pearl Harbor, Kennedy requested active duty. He was assigned to captain a small boat known as the PT-109 in the South Pacific. It was up to Kennedy and his



twelve-man crew to stop Japanese destroyers from delivering supplies to their soldiers. On August 2, 1943, Kennedy's boat was split in two by a Japanese destroyer, and two of his men died on impact. Kennedy managed to rescue a severely burned crewmember. After the ordeal was over Kennedy was awarded for his bravery with the US Navy and Marine Corps Medal of Valor and the Purple Heart. At this time, Kennedy's brother, Joseph Jr., died during the war by a plane's explosion. As an aspiring politician, Joseph Jr. had been expected to succeed in Washington DC; after his death, John was expected

to assume his role in politics.

## Early Politics

In 1945, Kennedy began working as a reporter for Hearst Newspapers. As a reporter he covered several major international events, including the Potsdam Conference. A year later, Kennedy decided to run for House of Representatives for the state of Massachusetts at the young age of 29. He stayed in this position for three terms and began to earn a reputation of being a "conservative democrat". He would vote consistently pro-union and supported most social programs that benefited the working class. He worked on both the House Education and

labor committee along with the veterans affairs committee. With 6 years in congress under his belt he decided to try for one out of the two senate seats Massachusetts had. In his campaign he referred to himself as the next generation's leader and condemned Soviet Imperialism. He won and was then nominated to serve on the Committee of Improper activities in labor and management Field. In this position it was his job along with several others to hold public hearings to investigate corruption within labor positions. He also chaired a special committee who chose the "Senate's famous five," previous members of the senate who deserved a spot in the Senatorial "hall of fame". At a dinner party on September 12, 1953, Kennedy met Jacqueline Bouvier, the daughter of a rich New York banker, and within a year the two married. Together they had four children, Caroline, John Jr., Arabella, and Patrick. However, their son Patrick died as a still born. Kennedy was still plagued with a variety of diseases, and his Addison's Disease was considered terminal. He also suffered from severe back problems which prevented him from doing heavy lifting. Due to his health, he missed many Congressional meetings, and even received his last rites as he suffered with these critical health issues. In his time recovering he wrote another book, *Profiles in Courage*, which was a first hand look at politicians and officials who were willing to threaten their careers to pursue what they personally believed as just. Kennedy was not shy to show his strong Catholic devotion in the book, so it received a lot of criticism from political commentators.



## Kennedy's Policies

Kennedy firmly believes that America is currently at a standstill and needs to get moving again, both economically and with government actions; he is even under the impression that the nation is falling behind the Soviet Union, which is a frightening thought for everyone in America. In addition, Kennedy frequently states that America needs to refocus its attention to human rights within the United States and rest of the world. As an example, he has discussed the lack of a new civil rights legislation during Eisenhower's presidency. Kennedy supports the majority of Truman's domestic programs affecting social welfare, progressive taxation, and the regulation of business. He strongly believes that there needed to be changes among the labor force; his vision included higher wages and better working conditions. Kennedy is a strong supporter of

the arts, wanting a stronger national culture and central role of the arts. Lastly, he is against fighting in Korea or any place in Asia where the United States can not hold defense.

A major disagreement between Kennedy and Nixon concerns US relations with Cuba; with Fidel Castro's rise to power, tensions between Cuba and the United States have been less than ideal. In February, Cuba made a trade agreement with the Soviet Union. Cuba's refineries, all owned by American corporations, refused to process the Soviet Crude; Castro retaliated by nationalizing the refineries. The Eisenhower administration responded by reducing Cuba's sugar quota in American markets, which is one of Cuba's critical exports. This action lead to a message from Castro in April, threatening to nationalize all American owned properties in Cuba. While Nixon remains hopeful that the Cuban people will come to their senses about their freedom, Kennedy takes the opposite stance. He is known for claiming that the United States must do better; it was clear that Castro was a communist and that the Republicans had failed to limit his rise to power. He concludes that, due to the lack of action, "Cuba is lost for freedom".

## The Presidential Race

On July 28, 1960, John F. Kennedy was nominated by the Democratic party as the Presidential candidate. It is now your job as his election team to convince the American people that he is the best fit for the role. The first televised debate will convene in Chicago on September 26th. The topic of the debate will be domestic affairs. In this debate your candidate will answer several questions along with write opening and closing statements. These debates are a crucial part of the campaign and how the public perceive your candidate may make or break your campaign. There will be a second televised debate of the campaign trail on October 7, 1960, in Washington, D.C. You will need to establish your party's policies on several key problems that plague the United States and the world today. Over the next couple of months, challenges will be thrown at you as you and your election team's campaign for your candidate. The trail will not be easy; your team will have to face scandals, world events, and gain specific influential people's support. You and your election team must figure out where your candidate stands on the each of the following policy questions and have a plan ready by the next debate.

## The Election Process

Having already been chosen by their respected parties, the candidates have begun campaigning. They are both traveling across the nation, explaining their plans and beliefs to the voters. During the campaign, both candidates will participate in four televised debates, answering questions, defending their policies, and speaking directly to the opponent. On Tuesday, November 8th, the American people will cast their votes for the candidate they wish to see as president. However, the winner of the popular vote will not necessarily be next president; to win, the candidate must gain the majority of the electoral college votes. The electoral college is made up of electors from each state, the amount of electors per state determined by how many members of congress the state possesses. A candidate needs at least 270 electoral votes, more than half in order to win the election. Due to the electoral college system, states with the majority of electors from a single party are not a main focus during the candidates' campaigning, since they can be assumed to vote for the candidate belonging to said party. Those with an even division of electors among different parties are the candidates' priority and are referred to as swing states or battleground states. Specific swing states for this election are Texas, Delaware, Minnesota, New Jersey, New Mexico, Illinois, Hawaii, California, and Alaska and will, therefore, be candidates' first concern when campaigning.

## Questions to Consider

1. How can we react and quell the ever growing support for communism around the world ?
2. How can we gain the support the working class and minorities?
3. What strategies should be used to persuade voters and electors in swing states to vote for our candidate?

## Positions

**Co-Campaign Manager- Robert F. Kennedy:** "Bobby" is working tirelessly to see his older brother succeed and hopes that his endeavours will help secure him a place in his brother's presidential cabinet. He is a hard worker who tries and often fails at hiding his jealousy for his older brother's success.

**Wife- Jacqueline “Jackie” Kennedy Onassis:** Jacqueline has become a popular media icon as Kennedy’s loving wife. She has and continues to accompany JFK to campaign events such as whistle-stops and dinners. Despite being pregnant, she always offers to help in anyway she can, using her extensive writing skills and knowledge of the Italian, French, and Spanish language.

**Co-Campaign Manager- Abraham A. Ribicoff:** Ribicoff is a good friend of Kennedy’s; since he joined the House of Representatives, he is often seen as Kennedy’s right hand man. This causes jealousy from Robert F. Kennedy, JFK’s brother, who sees himself as a better fit to boost JFK’s campaign. He is a Jewish immigrant who worked his way up from the bottom, a hard worker who does not take no for an answer.

**Campaign/ Financial Strategist- Stephen Edward Smith:** JFK’s brother-in-law, his impressive financial tactics were key in helping Kennedy defeat the opposing Democratic nominee, Hubert Humphrey. Kennedy hopes his skills will come in handy once again in this election.

**Foreign Affairs Advisors- C. Douglas Dillion:** Before joining this campaign, Dillion was Director of the United States and Foreign Securities Corporation and the International Securities Corporation, along with being the United States ambassador to France. He is a strong believer in the need for growth of international trade and peaceful relation.

**Viva Kennedy Manager-Carlos McCormick:** The Viva Kennedy campaign is an outreach program created to register Mexican-American voters and spread pro-Kennedy messages across the South West. Carlos tries to draw parallels between Kennedy’s life and traditional Mexican customs so they can connect to Kennedy.

**Legal Advisor- Dean Rusk:** He has previously worked for the United States Department of State in 1945 and as the Assistant Secretary of State for Far Eastern Affairs in 1950. He is a firm believer in “dignified diplomacy” and he emphasizes civility and communication between the United States and the Soviet Union.

**Press-Secretary-Robert S. McNamara:** He helped Henry Ford’s money-losing company reform its chaotic administration through modern planning, organization, and management

control systems with several other people; the group he worked with became known as the whiz kids. His organizational skills are key for ease of the campaign.

**Speechwriter-Ted Sorenson:** Sorenson is one of John F. Kennedy's closest advisers. President Kennedy once called him his "intellectual blood bank" for his intelligence. He played a crucial role in writing Kennedy's book, Profiles of Courage. Before joining Kennedy on his trail to presidency, he was a successful lawyer.

**Civil Rights- Manager- Harris Wofford:** Wofford's political career has just recently begun; Kennedy has asked him to join his presidential campaign and work with Sargent Shriver to help win over the African American vote.

**Advisor to Kennedy- Archibald Cox Jr.:** Cox was Senator JFK's labor advisor in connection with the senator's single major legislative project. He is the head of the Kennedy presidential campaign's brain trust which is a group of trusted people who advises Kennedy. In addition, he works to recruit intellectuals and coordinate policy research and speech-writing.

**Foreign Policy Advisor- Chester Bowles:** Bowles has close connections with the Roosevelts working as an administrator for the Office of Price Administration. He also served as an assistant to UN Secretary General Trygve Lie in 1947 and 1948. He is known for his liberal policies and beliefs.

## Further Reading:

Although this background guide is a great starting point for research, additional investigation is necessary for further understanding of the committee and the topics to be discussed. Below are a few sources to help delegates begin this process. That being said, delegates are strongly encouraged to look for sources beyond those listed here, especially when researching topics specific to particular positions. Taking these actions will ensure a successful committee experience for all delegates.

### Nixon-Kennedy Presidential Debates:

- (1) <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gbrcRKqLSRw&t=590s>

- (2) <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=z-4VeDta7Mo&t=1s>
- (3) <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8SdDhojNT2o&t=44s>
- (4) <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LN8F1FGZfzA>

**Cold War:**

- (1) <http://www.history.com/topics/cold-war/cold-war-history>
- (2) <http://www.history.com/topics/cold-war/fidel-castro>

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