US Government - Formative Reading Skills Assessment

The purpose of this assessment is to measure how well you read documents that will be used in the US Government course. The documents include statistics, an infographic, a map, article, political cartoon, and graph. Read each carefully and answer the questions. You will not be graded on this assessment, however you will receive your results.

Document 1: Voter Turnout Among Citizens November 2000, 2004, 2008, 2012

Document 2: Infographic How to Become President

Document 3: Electoral College Map 2012

Document 4: Article on Republican Debate

Document 5: Political Cartoon on Republican Debate

Document 6: Polling Data Match Up Between Bush and Clinton

Document 1: Voter Turnout Among Citizens November 2000, 2004, 2008, 2012

Table 1: Voter Turnout Among Citizens November 2000, 2004, 2008, and 2012	2000	2004	2008	2012	Percentage Point Difference between 2008 and 2012
18-29	40%	49%	51%	45%	-6
30-44	59%	62%	62%	60%	-2
45-64	68%	70%	69%	68%	-1
65+	70%	71%	70%	72%	+2
All Ages	*60%*	*64%*	*64%*	*62%*	*-2*

Source: CIRCLE's tabulations from the CPS Nov. Voting and Registration Supplements, 1972-2012

Use Document 1: Voter Turnout Among Citizens November 2000, 2004, 2008, 2012 to answer questions 1- 5

1. In which year did 18-29 year olds have the highest voter turnout to vote?
   A. 2000
   B. 2004
   C. 2008
   D. 2012

2. What percentage of voters of all ages voted in 2004?
   A. 60%
   B. 64%
   C. 62%
   D. Not enough information

3. Between 2008 and 2012, which was the only group of voters to have a net increase in voting percentages?
   A. 18-29
   B. 30-44
   C. 45-64
   D. 65+

4. Which of the following generalizations is true about 18-29 year old voters?
   A. Younger voters vote in higher percentages than older voters.
   B. The 18 to 29 year old voters have increased their percentages in voting in each of their last four elections
   C. Over 60% of all 18-29 year olds vote in elections.
   D. The 18 to 29 year old voters were more motivated to vote in 2008 than in 2012.

5. Which of the following generalizations is true?
   A. Under half of all US eligible voters vote in elections.
   B. Older citizens are more likely to vote than younger citizens.
   C. In the US, almost everyone who is eligible votes.
   D. Voter participation of all ages has decreased since 2000.

Document 2: Infographic - How to Become President

HOW TO BECOME

★ PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES ☆

U.S. CONSTITUTION'S REQUIREMENTS FOR A PRESIDENTIAL CANDIDATE
- ✔ NATURAL BORN CITIZEN
- ✔ MINIMUM AGE 35 YEARS
- ✔ U.S. RESIDENT 14 YEARS

STEP 1 PRIMARIES AND CAUCUSES

THERE ARE MANY PEOPLE WHO WANT TO BE PRESIDENT, EACH WITH THEIR OWN IDEAS ABOUT HOW GOVERNMENT SHOULD WORK

PEOPLE WITH SIMILAR IDEAS BELONG TO THE SAME POLITICAL PARTY. THIS IS WHERE PRIMARIES AND CAUCUSES COME IN

CANDIDATES FROM EACH POLITICAL PARTY CAMPAIGN THROUGHOUT THE COUNTRY TO WIN THE FAVOR OF THEIR OWN PARTY MEMBERS

IN A PRIMARY
PARTY MEMBERS VOTE FOR THE BEST CANDIDATE THAT WILL REPRESENT THEM IN THE GENERAL ELECTION

IN A CAUCUS
PARTY MEMBERS SELECT THE BEST CANDIDATE THROUGH A SERIES OF DISCUSSIONS AND VOTES

NATIONAL CONVENTIONS STEP 2

EACH PARTY HOLDS A NATIONAL CONVENTION TO SELECT A FINAL PRESIDENTIAL NOMINEE

AT EACH CONVENTION, THE PRESIDENTIAL CANDIDATE CHOOSES A RUNNING MATE (VICE PRESIDENTIAL CANDIDATE)

THE PRESIDENTIAL CANDIDATES CAMPAIGN THROUGHOUT THE COUNTRY TO WIN THE SUPPORT OF THE GENERAL POPULATION

STEP 3 GENERAL ELECTION

PEOPLE IN EVERY STATE ACROSS THE COUNTRY VOTE FOR ONE PRESIDENT AND VICE PRESIDENT

WHEN PEOPLE CAST THEIR VOTE, THEY ARE ACTUALLY VOTING FOR A GROUP OF PEOPLE KNOWN AS ELECTORS

STEP 4 ELECTORAL COLLEGE

IN THE ELECTORAL COLLEGE SYSTEM, EACH STATE GETS A CERTAIN NUMBER OF ELECTORS BASED ON ITS REPRESENTATION IN CONGRESS

EACH ELECTOR CASTS ONE VOTE FOLLOWING THE GENERAL ELECTION, AND THE CANDIDATE WHO GETS MORE THAN HALF (270) WINS

538 ELECTORAL VOTES

270 VOTES

Based on 2010 Census

THE NEWLY ELECTED PRESIDENT AND VICE PRESIDENT ARE INAUGURATED IN JANUARY

DEFINITIONS
Caucus: A meeting of the local members of a political party to select delegates to the national party convention. A caucus is a substitute for a primary election.
Delegate: A person authorized to represent others as an elected representative to a political party conference.
Election: A member of the electoral college.
Electoral College: The voters of each state, and the District of Columbia, vote for electors to be the authorized constitutional members in a presidential election.
Natural Born Citizen: Someone born with U.S. citizenship includes any child born "in" the United States, the children of United States citizens born abroad, and those born abroad of one citizen parent.
Primary: An election where voters select candidates for an upcoming general election. Winning candidates will have delegates sent to the national party convention as their party's U.S. presidential nominee.

START

AND I APPROVE THIS MESSAGE

VOTE

Use the infographic on how to become president to answer questions 6 - 10.

6. According to the infographic, which of the following is NOT a constitutional requirement to become President:
    A. Citizen
    B. 35 years or older
    C. Recent resident of 14 years
    D. Held political office before running for President

7. According to the infographic, which step in the election of a President is missing?

Primaries and Caucuses --> National Conventions --> _____ --> Electoral College
    A. Candidates campaign in each state
    B. General Election
    C. Candidate nominated by Party
    D. Electors cast their votes

8. According to the infographic, how many electors must a candidate win in order to be elected President?
    A. 538
    B. 270
    C. 100
    D. 55

9. According to the infographic, when is the new President inaugurated?
    A. January
    B. August
    C. November
    D. December

10. At which stage in the process does a Presidential nominee choose is vice presidential running mate?
    A. Primaries and Caucuses
    B. Party Convention
    C. General Election
    D. Electoral College

Document 3: Electoral College Map 2012

Map Key

White States = Majority of voters Democrats, voting for Barack Obama
Gray States = Majority of voters Republicans, voting for Mitt Romney

Use the 2012 Electoral College Map to answer questions 11-15.

11. According to the map, which candidate won the 55 electoral votes from California?
    A. Obama
    B. Romney
    C. Not enough information

12. According to the circle icon Romney/Ryan, how many electoral votes did Mitt Romney win?
    A. 100
    B. 206
    C. 270
    D. 332

13. On the map white states are those whose citizens voted in the majority for the Democratic Party and gray states are those whose citizens voted in the majority for the Republican Party. Which of the following generalizations is true?
    A. The southern states voted mainly for the Democratic Party.
    B. The north eastern states voted mainly for the Republican Party.
    C. The states with the most electoral votes all voted Republican.
    D. The western states voted mainly for the Democratic Party.

14. The numbers next to the electoral totals for each candidate are the popular vote totals that each candidate received. Which candidate won the popular vote in the 2012 Presidential election?
    A. Mitt Romney
    B. Barack Obama

15. In looking at the map, which would be the most accurate way to describe the outcome of the 2012 election.
    A. It was a very close election, with the Republicans edging out the Democrats in the Electoral College.
    B. It was a clear victory in the electoral college for Romney and the Republicans.
    C. It was a decisive electoral college victory for Obama and the Democrats.
    D. Not enough information to tell.
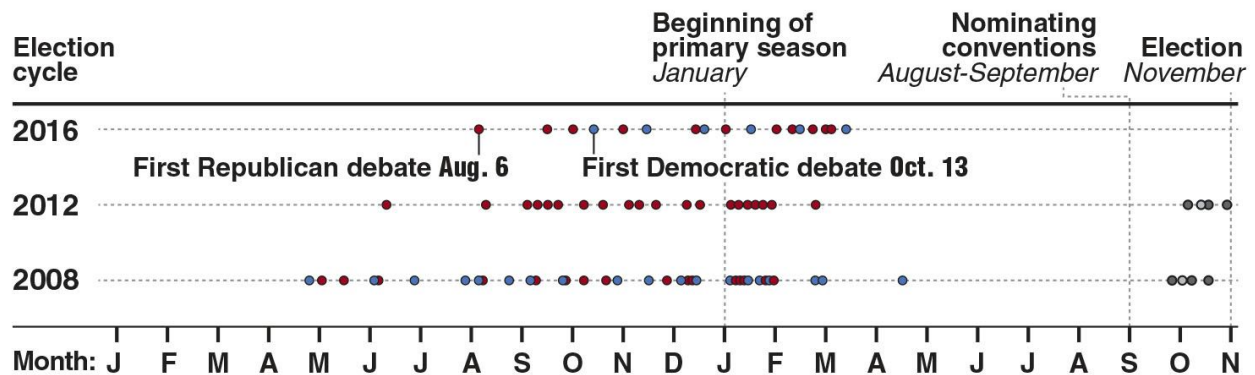
A GOP fray, with Trump at the center

By Michael A. Memoli, Seema Mehta and Lisa Mascaro, Tribune
08.12.15

CLEVELAND — The leading Republican presidential candidates used their first face-to-face encounter to accuse celebrity candidate Donald Trump — and one another — of diverging from conservative principles as they tried to reverse the surprising dominance of the billionaire and gain a foothold in the crowded race.

Presidential debates

- ● Democratic primary debate
- ● Republican primary debate
- ● Presidential debate
- ○ Vice presidential debate

Election cycle		Beginning of primary season *January*	Nominating conventions *August-September*	Election *November*
2016	First Republican debate Aug. 6	First Democratic debate Oct. 13		
2012				
2008				

Month: J F M A M J J A S O N D J F M A M J J A S O N

Source: American Presidency Project, Republican National Committee, Democratic National Committee   Graphic: Tribune News Service

Trump made news Thursday before even uttering a single word. When a moderator asked candidates whether they would pledge to support whomever ultimately won the party's nomination for president, as well as rule out an independent bid, Trump raised his hand to indicate he would not.

"I want to win as the Republican. I want to run as the Republican nominee," he said. But when pressed, he repeated: "I will not make the pledge at this time."

Sen. Rand Paul of Kentucky, who had promised to mix it up at the debate, was quick to attack Trump, saying he was "already hedging his bets because he's used to buying politicians."

Trump's surprise ascent has complicated an already unruly Republican field, and debate officials separated the 17 candidates into two tiers to provide some order to the lineup at Quicken Loans Arena, home of the NBA's Cleveland Cavaliers.

The top 10 candidates, ranked based on national polls, took the prime-time stage — with Trump at the center — before a crowd of 5,000. Seven others tangled earlier on the same stage for what some called a "happy hour" forum.

For most Americans who have not immersed themselves in the machinations of an election still more than 15 months away, it was the best look yet at the Republicans hoping to prevent a third consecutive Democratic presidential term.

Mostly the contenders shared common promises to unravel many of President Barack Obama's signature accomplishments and push the country rightward. They vowed to stop the nuclear agreement with Iran, reverse Obama's immigration actions and be tougher on terrorism.

Former Florida Gov. Jeb Bush, who had been seen as the party's most likely nominee earlier in the campaign, sought to regain his footing after comments on immigration, women's health and the Iraq war made him a target for both the left and right.

"I governed as a conservative, and I govern effectively," he said. "We left the state better off because I applied conservative principles in a purple state the right way, and people rose up."

He also carefully broached the questions of Trump's ascent.

"Mr. Trump's language is divisive," Bush said. "We're going to win when we unite people with a hopeful, optimistic message."

Trump, though, made no apologies and doubled-down with an attitude that has become increasingly familiar on the campaign trail.

"We don't have time for tone. We have to go out and get the job done," Trump said.

With such a crowded field, the candidates tried to make the most of their few minutes in the spotlight, skipping over Trump, as Sen. Marco Rubio of Florida and Wisconsin Gov. Scott Walker did, to focus on their own messages.

"If this election is a resume competition, then Hillary Clinton's going to be the next president because she's been in office and in government longer than anybody else running here tonight,"

Rubio said. "This election better be about the future, not the past. It better be about the issues our nation and the world is facing today, not simply the issues we once faced."

Ohio Gov. John Kasich, who barely qualified for the main debate as the candidate in 10th place in national polling, said Trump had hit a nerve among Americans, and those "who want to just tune him out, they're making a mistake."

"Now, he's got his solutions. Some of us have other solutions," he said, before discussing his record as a governor and congressman.

Because Republican primary voters tend to be older and more conservative, the candidates did not shy from polarizing stances, particularly on social issues, pledging to defund Planned Parenthood and not give the Supreme Court the last word on gay marriage.

"A bottle of Wite-Out," is what former Texas Gov. Rick Perry, on the second-tier stage, promised to bring to his White House, to undo many of Obama's actions.

"I'm tired of the hyphenated Americans," said Louisiana Gov. Bobby Jindal. "Immigration without assimilation is an invasion."

The only woman on either stage, Carly Fiorina, the former Hewlett Packard chief executive who lost the 2010 race for the U.S. Senate in California and appeared in the preliminary debate, outshined her rivals with crisp attacks on Bush and Democrat Hillary Rodham Clinton.

"We need a nominee who is going to throw every punch, not pull punches, and someone who cannot stumble before he even gets into the ring," said Fiorina, a copy of whose remarks were found earlier in the day in a hotel printer.

Trump had tamped down expectations before his debut, saying he did not have as much experience debating as others. But his overbearing presence dominated the night, even when he wasn't on the stage.

"He's tapped into an anger that people feel. They're sick of politics as usual," Fiorina said. "Since he has changed his mind on amnesty, on health care and on abortion, I would just ask, what are the principles by which he will govern?"

In the prime-time debate, Trump sparred with moderator Megyn Kelly of Fox News Channel, who asked him whether his past comments calling women "fat pigs, dogs, slobs and disgusting animals" made him unelectable, particularly if he was pitted in the general election against Clinton.

"I frankly don't have time for total political correctness," he said. "It's fun, it's kidding, we have a good time.... If you don't like it, I'm sorry."

Paul and New Jersey Gov. Chris Christie engaged in perhaps the night's most bitter exchange, on whether Americans' civil liberties were violated by government surveillance programs, as the Kentucky senator believes.

When Paul said he wanted to collect records from terrorists, not innocent Americans, Christie called it a "ridiculous answer" and accused him of "just blowing hot air" on the issue for political convenience.

The back-to-back events are a product of the Republican National Committee's efforts to regain some measure of control over the debate process after 2012, when many in the party thought the endless string of televised events ultimately worked against it and the eventual nominee, former Massachusetts Gov. Mitt Romney.

As the GOP candidates traded barbs, Clinton was in California, where she participated in a Los Angeles roundtable discussion on healthcare and in fundraisers in L.A. and San Francisco. Democrats announced their first debate would be held Oct. 13 in Las Vegas.

Thursday's debate was among a dozen in the run-up to next year's primary elections, and Steve Duprey, chairman of the Republican Party's debate committee, expects the complications will smooth in the months ahead.

"I wouldn't be a bit surprised by the next debate if some of the folks who aren't in the main debate now are, and vice versa," he said. "I think it's going to evolve."

Use the article on the Republican debate to answer questions 16 - 20.

16. According to the article, which of the seventeen Republican candidates running for President is currently leading among Republicans?

    A. Donald Trump
    B. Jeb Bush
    C. Marco Rubio
    D. John Kasich

17. Read the sentence from the beginning of the article. "*When a moderator asked candidates whether they would pledge to support whomever ultimately won the party's nomination for president, as well as rule out an independent bid, Trump raised his hand to indicate he would not.*" Which of the following can be inferred from the sentence above?

    A. If Trump won the Republican nomination, he would likely gain support from independent voters.
    B. If Trump won the Republican nomination, he would be likely to win the presidency.
    C. If another candidate won the Republican nomination, Trump would be unlikely to support that candidate.
    D. If another candidate won the Republican nomination, Trump would be unlikely to run for president in the future.

18. Look at the chart in the article. According to the information on the chart in the article, which of the following is accurate?
    A. The presidential election for 2016 will be held in August or September
    B. Republicans held their first debate before Democrats
    C. The primary season begins in November
    D. Each Party's nominating convention occurs before the primary elections
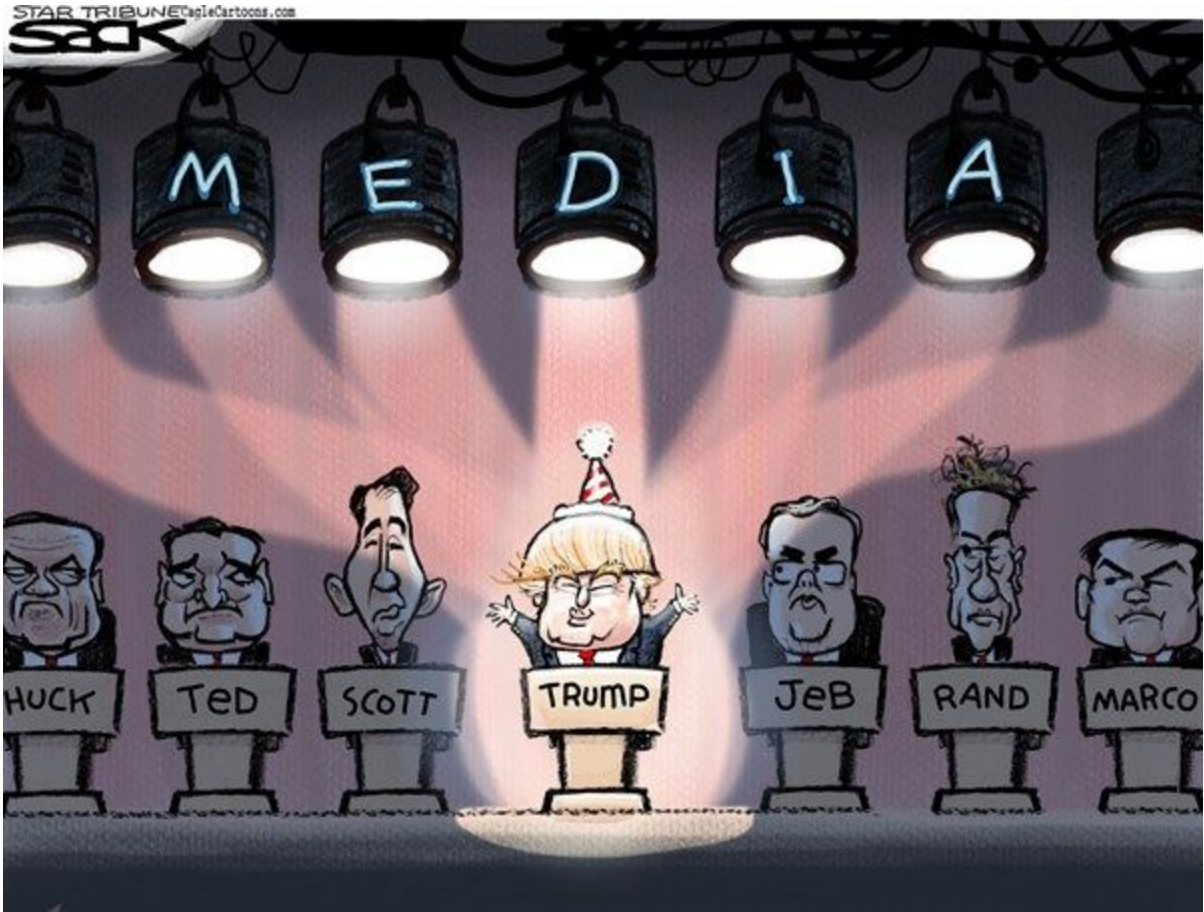
19. According to the article, in the debate the most talked about Democratic Party candidate in 2016 presidential election is:

    A. Carly Fiorina
    B. Hillary Clinton
    C. Barack Obama
    D. Jeb Bush

20. Which of the field of Republicans at the debate opposed government surveillance programs as a violation of the privacy rights of Americans?

    A. Jeb Bush
    B. Chris Christie
    C. Rand Paul
    D. Carly Fiorina

Document 5: Political Cartoon on Republican Debate

Look at the following political cartoon about the recent Republican debate and answer the questions 21 - 23.

21. According to this political cartoon, which of the Republican candidate is getting most of the media attention?
   A. Trump
   B. Jeb
   C. Rand
   D. Marco

22. The spotlights labeled Media represents:
   A. The Republican voters
   B. The Television Stations and News Organizations
   C. The Democratic Party
   D. The voting public

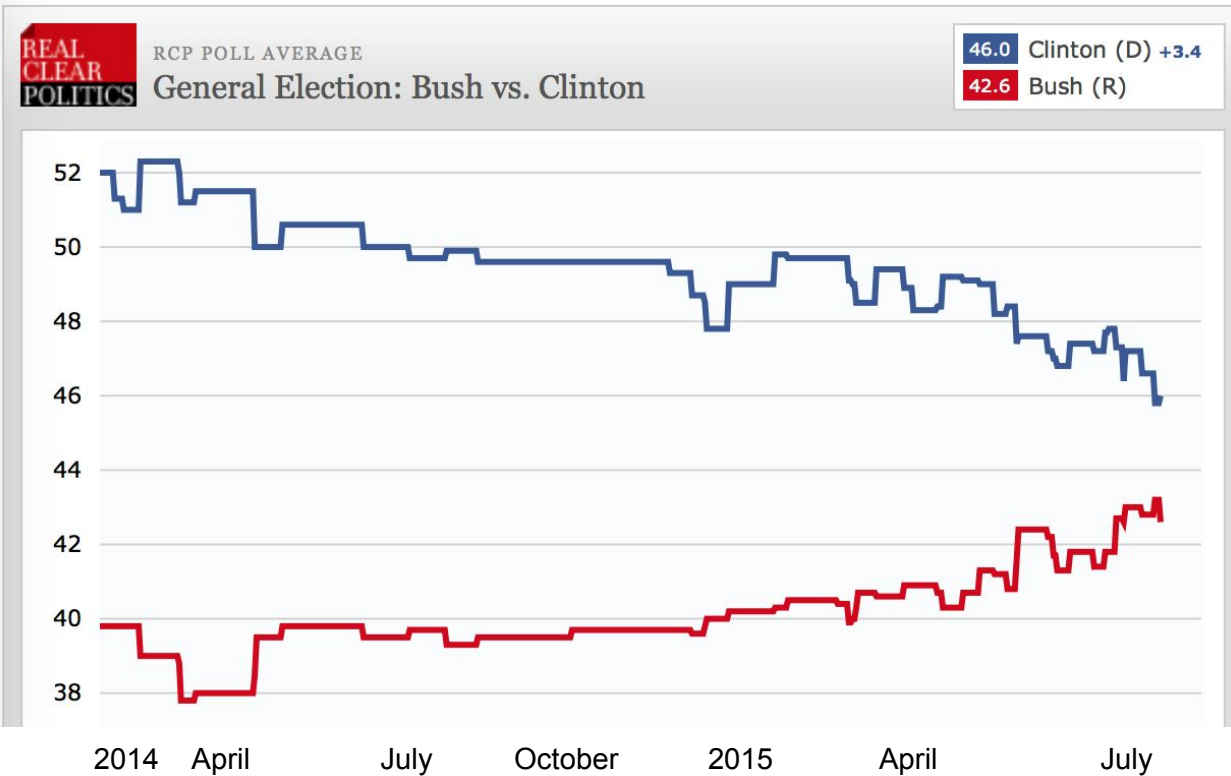23. According to the political cartoon, other candidates are drawn in the shadows. This represents:
   A. The other Republican candidates did poorly in the debate
   B. The other Republican candidates do not have strong ideas
   C. The other Republican candidates are not getting the same media attention as Trump
   D. The other Republican candidates are not as qualified as Trump

Document 6: Real Clear Politics Polling Data - Match Up Between Bush and Clinton

Look at the following polling data from Real Clear Politics regarding a potential matchup between Democratic candidate Hillary Clinton and Republican candidate Jeb Bush in a general election.

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Polling Data						
Poll	**Date**	**Sample**	**MoE**	**Clinton (D)**	**Bush (R)**	**Spread**
RCP Average	**7/20 - 8/16**	**--**	**--**	**46.0**	**42.6**	**Clinton +3.4**
CNN/ORC	8/13 - 8/16	897 RV	3.5	52	43	Clinton +9
FOX News	8/11 - 8/13	1008 RV	3.0	42	44	Bush +2
Quinnipiac	7/23 - 7/28	1644 RV	2.4	41	42	Bush +1
McClatchy/Marist	7/22 - 7/28	964 RV	3.2	49	43	Clinton +6
PPP (D)	7/20 - 7/21	1087 RV	3.0	46	41	Clinton +5

All General Election: Bush vs. Clinton Polling Data

REAL CLEAR POLITICS — RCP POLL AVERAGE
General Election: Bush vs. Clinton

46.0 Clinton (D) +3.4
42.6 Bush (R)

Look at the polling data from Real Clear Politics to answer questions 24 - 28.

24. According to the line graph, in July of 2015 approximately what percentage of voters would vote for Democrat Hillary Clinton if she were matched up against Republican Jeb Bush?
    A. 50%
    B. 48%
    C. 46%
    D. 43%

25. According to the line graph, which candidate has increased in popularity over the last year?
    A. Hillary Clinton
    B. Jeb Bush
    C. Both
    D. Neither

26. If the election were held today, according to the polls which of the two candidates would be elected President?

    A. Hillary Clinton
    B. Jeb Bush

27. Looking at the chart above the graph, which of the following media outlets has polling data showing Jeb Bush in the lead?
    A. CNN
    B. Fox
    C. McClatchy-Marist
    D. PPP (D)

28. According to the Real Clear Politics Polling Data, how many average percentage points does Hillary Clinton currently lead Jeb Bush?
    A. 3.4%
    B. 9%
    C. 2%
    D. 1%