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**Teaching Oral Discourse Through American Politics:
A Language Workshop for High School Seniors**

by

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**TRABAJO DE TITULACIÓN
PARA OPTAR AL TÍTULO DE PROFESOR DE INGLÉS
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INTRODUCTION

The United States is – by number of voters – the second largest democracy in the world and in many ways, the most powerful and influential nation on earth - be it politically, economically or militarily. However, in many respects, its political system is unlike any other. There is a considerable number of people – American and non-American alike – who simply do not know or understand how the American political system works. While one could easily understand why a person outside the U.S. would know very little about this particular political system – one of many such systems in the world - the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) has found that the two worst subjects for American students are Civics and American History. One survey from the NAEP “found that only 7% of eighth graders (children aged 13-14) could describe the three branches of government” (Darlington, 2014, p.4).

Considering the enormous influence that the United States – arguably the most important nation in the world – has on Chilean policies, it has become increasingly relevant to learn and understand more of the political system that has, through its foreign policies and relations with Chile, shaped who we are as a nation in the 21st century. This is especially true in the case of high school students in Chile, who—as the future generation of lawyers, politicians, businessmen and diplomats—would greatly benefit from a more in-depth understanding of the workings of the American political system.

Important differences and similarities

In many ways, the Chilean political system shares many similarities with the American system. Both Chile and the United States are democratic presidential republics that divide their power into the executive, legislative and judicial branches of government. Both countries also share a two-party system, at least in practice. Though the Chilean political system is officially a multi-party system, it behaves like a two-party one due to binomialism, a concept based on the idea that a country is divided integrally into districts of lower-chamber representatives and circumscriptions of senators who

choose two representatives each. From a voting point of view, it is a multiple-winner method of proportional representation with open lists, where winning candidates are chosen through the voting process (Maira, 2001, p.94). This means that, although Chile has many political parties—unlike the U.S., which only has two relevant parties since the American Civil War—they essentially act like a two-party system because each of them is part of either the Alianza por Chile or Nueva Mayoría coalitions, sharing all of their individual votes among parties of the same coalition. Finally, both countries have and place great importance on their individual constitutions, allowing for specific amendments at certain points in their history—though the constitution of the United States is considerably shorter and more stable than the Chilean one.

Though the Chilean and American political systems share some similarities, they also have their fair share of important differences. First of all, the political system of the United States is divided into three distinct and independent branches of government: the executive branch, headed by the President and independent of the legislature; the legislative branch, whose power is vested in the two chambers of Congress, the Senate and the House of Representatives; and the judicial branch, which exercises judicial power and is composed of the Supreme Court and lower federal courts. The separation of power between the three branches of government of the United States is quite different from the power distribution in Chile, where both the executive and legislative power is exercised by the government, and only the judiciary acts independently from the other branches of government.

Other differences between the Chilean and American political system include greater power in the upper house of the legislature, a wider scope of power held by the Supreme Court, and the dominance of only two main parties in the United States, where third parties—such as the Libertarian Party, the Green Party, and the Constitution Party—have less political influence than similar smaller parties in Chile.

Perhaps the biggest difference between the two systems—and arguably the single most important reason so few people understand the workings of the American political system—is the electoral process. In Chile, people vote directly for the president, who can serve only for a 4-year term but can be reelected after the following president's term has finished. In the U.S., however, people do not vote directly for the president—who serves for a fixed term of four years and may serve a maximum of two terms; instead, they vote

for a member of the Electoral College who is known to support a certain presidential candidate. This electoral system “means that a candidate can win the largest number of votes nationwide but fail to win the largest number of votes in the Electoral College and therefore fail to become President” (Darlington, 2014, p. 5). In fact, this has happened three times in U.S. history, most recently in the 2000 presidential election between Al Gore and George W. Bush. Due to the complicated nature of the American electoral system, one can easily understand why Chileans (or even Americans, for that matter) would have a hard time comprehending the political system of the U.S. According to official government documents, the explanation for this indirect approach to voting is that the Founding Fathers—responsible for drafting the American Constitution—did not want to give too much power to the people and so they created a system that gives the ultimate power of electing the President to members of the Electoral College (“What is the Electoral College?”, 2012). Consequently, the United States is the only nation in the world where a president is elected in an indirect manner.

Relevance of learning about U.S. politics

Why, then, teach such a convoluted political system—one that is hardly understood by Americans and non-Americans alike—to Chilean students? The debate about the relevance of the U.S. political system in our own country is part of a wider debate about whether or not the United States’ influence is declining on the world stage. Luce (2012, p. 3) writes “Sometimes it seems Americans are engaged in some kind of collusion in which voters pretend to elect their lawmakers and lawmakers pretend to govern. This, in some ways, is America's core problem: the more America postpones any coherent response to the onset of relative decline, the more difficult the politics are likely to get.” It is perhaps for this very reason—the apparent decline of power and influence of the United States—that teaching this topic to our students is of such importance. If we are to understand how and why the United States influences us as a nation, and why it is perhaps slowly losing its grip, then it is of vital importance that we comprehend the very political system that brought America to life. After all, by focusing on American politics, teachers are effectively teaching American culture—since politics

and culture are so firmly intertwined—and, consequently, by teaching culture teachers are promoting the very language that brought that culture together.

What is culture?

In the field of social sciences, culture represents the customs and traditions of a society, including the language adopted by such society, its art, laws and religion. Though this definition might sound neutral, culture is, in fact, anything but neutral. According to Parenti (1999), much of what we consider our common culture is actually a range of carefully transmitted, class-dominated and often political values. Gramsci (1971, p. 238) expressed this same idea when he wrote about class hegemony, saying that “the state is only the outer ditch behind which there stands a powerful system of fortresses and earthworks, a network of cultural values and institutions not normally thought of as political” but political nonetheless.

In essence, what we define as culture is largely a reflection of existing social—i.e., political—arrangements, strongly favoring some interests over others. For example, a society built upon slave labor “swiftly develops a racist culture, replete with its own peculiar laws, science, and mythology, along with mechanisms of repression directed against both slaves and the critics of slavery. After slavery is abolished, racism continues to fortify the inequitable social relations” (Parenti, 1999, p. 31). Therefore, though culture might feel like an abstract array of concepts and ideas floating around us, it is, in fact, facilitated through a socio-political structure. We receive our culture from a system of social relations that involve primary groups of people such as family, friends, and other informal acquaintances inside our community or, to a larger degree, from more formal institutions, such as schools, media, churches, corporations, the military and the government. It is from this symbiotic relationship between politics and culture that the term *political culture* came to be, referring to that set of ideas which people of a certain community share about “who should govern, for what ends, and by what means.” (Dye, 2001, p. 17). Values are shared ideas about what is good and beliefs are shared ideas about what is true, the latter of which often acting as the foundation for the very values that define such community. Political culture can be described as a nation’s political

identity. It “encompasses the deep-rooted, well-established political traits that are characteristic of a society. Political culture takes into account the attitudes, values, and beliefs that people in a society have about the political system, including standard assumptions about the way that government works” (Paletz, Owen, & Cook, 2014).

Political culture

Though politics and culture are deeply related to one another, this relationship does not prove, in and of itself, that by teaching political culture teachers are promoting language learning in their students. According to Kramersch (1993, p. 8), teaching culture not only involves teaching how things are and have been, but also how they could have been or how else they could be. She states that “neither history nor ethnography provides this imaginative leap that will enable learners to imagine cultures different from their own”. Breaking down stereotypes through the teaching of language and culture means not only to realize that people are not the way we thought they were, or that deep down inside we are all the same, but also to understand that we are unmistakably unique and different, and that, given different circumstances, we could have ended up living a very different life indeed. Therefore, in addition to history, politics and social science, “culture is also literature, for it is literature that opens up reality beyond realism and that enables readers to live other lives” (Kramersch, 1993, p. 8)—thus making language and culture intrinsically linked to one another.

According to Paige, Jorstad, Siaya, Klein and Colby (1981), it is a well-known fact that culture manifests itself primarily through language, a language that continuously mediates, interprets and records the material culture of a society. It is for this very reason—the mediatory role of language—that culture is so essential to the language teacher. Culture is always a “linguistically mediated membership into a discourse community, that is both real and imagined” (Fairclough, 1989), and the language used to interact within such community plays an essential role in both the construction of culture and in the advent of cultural change. Of course, social change is a slow process, but when it does take place it is invariably at the hands of the prevailing cultural movement. This can also be applied to the change English teachers try to induce when

teaching students to use—in an effective and appropriate manner—an American citizen’s linguistic code in an American cultural context. When members of the Chilean community are taught how to talk and behave in the context of an English-speaking community, it potentially “changes the social and cultural equation of both communities, by subtly diversifying mainstream cultures” (Kramsch, 1993, p. 8). It is for this reason that it has become increasingly relevant to teach English through culture, providing the proper context that may help EFL students make the necessary cultural leap and internalize the linguistic code utilized by the target culture.

American politics workshop

Taking into account the complex nature of politics and culture, a workshop has been created to address the lack of familiarity of Chilean students with the political culture of the United States. This workshop is divided into two main content areas: American politics (including government body and election process) and debates. The first part deals primarily with the political system of the United States and provides the necessary context for language production. Since this portion of the workshop relies on specific content to contextualize the English language, it follows a content-based syllabus. This type of syllabus has been proven to be an effective “way of providing a meaningful context for language instruction while at the same time providing a vehicle for reinforcing academic skills” (Curtain & Haas, 1995, p. 3).

The second part of the course will provide an overview of the most pressing, trending disputes involved in American presidential elections, and will offer students the opportunity to express their thoughts on such topics and discuss problems and solutions through a debate. Since this second half of the workshop follows a practical approach to learning and focuses on improving students oral production skills, a proportional syllabus is used, whose main purpose is to develop an overall competence—such as oral production—and a dynamic learning environment with ample opportunity for feedback and flexibility. Due to the multifaceted nature of the workshop and the fact that it requires students to analyze different social and political topics considered in American presidential elections (such as health care, immigration, the

economy and social rights/equality), synthesize coherent arguments on said topics and evaluate others' views, all the while defending their own positions in mock presidential debates, this course will be taught exclusively to high school seniors. According to the Mineduc Programs, argumentation is one of the last linguistic skills learned by students, which is why seniors will be better equipped to participate in class discussions and take full advantage of the course.

Based on these reflections, this workshop has been designed with the purpose of providing students the opportunity to construct their own arguments orally—based on US politics—and improve their oral production skills through class participation and discussions, all the while immersing themselves in the political culture of the United States and comparing it to the Chilean political culture.

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Needs Analysis

A needs analysis (see Appendix 1) was carried out to explore students' opinions about politics—specifically American politics—as well as about their own English language. Thirty senior high school students from Saint Paul's School participated in the survey, which contained sixteen questions. Seventy-seven percent of students consider English important in finding a good job in the future; such high percentage of agreement among students validates the need for an English workshop whose main objective is to improve students' oral proficiency in the English language.

Likewise, eighty percent of students affirm that by learning and talking about American politics, they will be able to develop their English language skills. Though only thirty-four percent of students consider themselves to have a good level of English, seventy-seven percent of them are interested in the English language, which makes a workshop based on the topic of American politics and on improving students English-speaking skills appear to be a good fit for this particular student group.

All previous figures refer to the English language in general; however, students' responses differed considerably when asked about politics itself and, specifically, their interest in American politics. As expected, not all students are interested in politics, and this statement is supported by questions oriented to that specific topic. Even though seventy-one percent of students agree with the importance of voting in order to become good citizens, only seventeen percent of students are actually interested in politics, and only thirteen percent of them are actively involved in Chilean politics. Similarly, the percentage decreases to three percent when students are asked about their familiarity with the political system of the United States.

Nevertheless, students' views changed in regards to their interest in U.S. politics, as well as the importance they think American politics have on the political decisions of the Chilean government. For example, fifty percent of the surveyed group believes that the United States has a direct effect on Chilean politics. Similarly, statistics show that fifty percent is interested in learning more about American politics.

Finally, seventy-three percent of the learners are likely to take part in a workshop based on American politics, and eighty-three percent of the group would like to participate in political debates in which they're able to discuss various political topics.

Rationale

The purpose of this graduation project is to take advantage of the complex nature of American politics to teach students how the U.S. government works, providing them with opportunities to learn about the American political system, discuss various political topics and practice their oral English/argumentative skills through various political debates.

The goal of this course is not only to further students' knowledge about American politics, but also to allow them to have the opportunity to openly discuss the sometimes controversial topics involved in an American presidential election and participate in the analysis and dissection of real political arguments, fostering their ability to create an argument of their own and defend it orally among their peers. For this reason, this project has been conceived as an elective course that follows a content-based syllabus.

Course Syllabus

Name of the course:	Teaching Oral Discourse Through American Politics
Duration:	12 sessions
Audience:	Senior high school students
Class hours:	90 minutes per session
Teacher:	Nicolas Reyes
Contact information:	nicolasreyesw@gmail.com

Course Description

This course is an elective workshop oriented to senior high school students with upper-intermediate English level. Through the study and analysis of the American political system and the open discussion of various sociopolitical topics, students will explore the governmental organization of the United States as well as the most relevant issues at the center of American political elections. Additionally, students will make use of the English language to articulate and defend their own positions on several topics, learning to construct a coherent argument and express their point of view in an effective manner. At the end of this workshop, students will be able to comprehend the inner workings of the American government and analyze the most pressing sociopolitical issues from different perspectives, which will in turn promote objectivity and critical thinking.

Course Organization

This workshop is organized around three learning units which will cover different subtopics related to the American political system. Each unit involves a different level of critical thinking, including class discussion, group and individual debates, analysis of others' points of view, etc; this means that students will constantly be asked to communicate in the target language. Finally, students will be exposed to authentic materials such as videos of presidential debates, transcripts, political propaganda, etc., that will be analyzed and discussed in class in order to further immerse students in the political culture of the United States.

Course Objectives

General Objective:

- Students will be able to construct their own arguments orally based on US politics.

Specific Objectives:

Unit 1: Law & order

- Class 1: To express the importance of studying and understanding American politics in today's interconnected world.
- Class 2: To analyze the structure and power distribution of the American government.
- Class 3: To compare and contrast the political systems of the United States and Chile.
- Class 4: To synthesize a coherent argument about the strengths of one political system over the other.

Unit 2: Every vote counts

- Class 5: To apply acquired vocabulary to conversations and presentations.
- Class 6: To describe and expand on political trivia after thorough research and analysis.
- Class 7: To analyze information related to U.S. presidential elections.
- Class 8: To construct and defend a political view in a group debate.

Unit 3: Left or right

- Class 9: To analyze the most important differences between Democrats and Republicans.
- Class 10: To evaluate different points of view and justify their own position.
- Class 11: To compare and contrast the democratic and republican stances on several controversial topics.
- Class 12: To defend their own position on several topics against an opponent in a mock presidential debate.

Course Calendar & Topics

Unit	Session	Content
1. Law & order	1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Welcome to the workshop Introduction to American politics Why is it relevant to learn about the U.S. political system?
	2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Structure and power distribution of American government Vocabulary related to <i>government</i> and <i>politics</i>
	3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Comparison of Chilean and U.S. political system Which is better? What constitutes an ideal society? Short-film <i>The Utopia Experiment</i>
	4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> How to construct a convincing argument Group debate – Which political system is the best? Chilean or American?
2. Every vote counts	5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Vocabulary related to political elections Short-film <i>Election Night</i> Analysis of film
	6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Al Gore vs. George Bush: U.S. presidential election of 2000 Analysis and description of political facts and trivia
	7	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Short-film <i>The Road We've Travelled</i> Analysis and group presentation of the process behind U.S. presidential

		elections
	8	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How to prepare effectively for a debate • Group debate – Nueva Mayoría vs. Alianza
3. Left or right	9	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Analysis of political propaganda • Comparison of Democrats and Republicans • Group activity – Political Flyers
	10	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Analysis of key issues in U.S. elections • Democrats and Republicans' views on key issues • Where do you stand?
	11	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • U.S. presidential debate 2012 • Analysis of each candidate's views • Who won?
	12	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How to win a debate • Individual debate – Stance on key issues • Workshop review – final thoughts

Course Evaluations

The course will be assessed with the following three criteria:

1. In-class participation	30%	As the course develops, students will be constantly asked to express their informal discussions. These class discussions will be assessed throughout the whole course.
2. Group debates	30%	Students will participate in a group debate during Units 1 and 2. Both debates will be assessed according to the students' individual analysis and knowledge of the issues.
3. Final debate	40%	At the end of the workshop, students will prepare for and take part in a mock presidential debate in which they will have to present and defend their individual views on certain topics.

Rubric: In-class Participation

Name: _____ Date: _____

Criteria	4	3	2	1	Points
Attendance/ Promptness	Student is always prompt and regularly attends class.	Student is late for class once every two weeks and regularly attends classes.	Student is late for class more than once every two weeks and regularly attends classes.	Student is late for class more than once a week and/or has poor attendance.	
Level of Engagement in Class	Student proactively contributes by offering ideas and asking questions more than once per class.	Student proactively contributes by offering ideas and asking questions once per class.	Student rarely contributes by offering ideas and asking questions.	Student never contributes by offering ideas and asking questions.	
Listening Skills	Student listens when others talk, both in groups and in class. Student incorporates or builds on the ideas of others.	Student listens when others talk, both in groups and in class.	Student does not listen when others talk, both in groups and in class.	Student does not listen when others talk, both in groups and in class. Student often interrupts when others talk.	
Behavior	Student almost never displays disruptive behavior during class.	Student rarely displays disruptive behavior during class.	Student occasionally displays disruptive behavior during class.	Student almost always displays disruptive behavior during class.	
Preparation	Students is almost always prepared for class with assignments and required class materials.	Students is usually prepared for class with assignments and required class materials.	Students is rarely prepared for class with assignments and required class materials.	Students is almost never prepared for class with assignments and required class materials.	

(Taken from: <http://teachers.teach-nology.com/cgi-bin/classpar.cgi>)

Total score: _____

Grade: _____

Rubric: Group Debate - Left vs. Right

Name: _____ Date: _____

Criteria	4	3	2	1	Points
Preparation	Student has prepared for the debate very well.	Student shows a good level of preparation.	Student rarely shows that he/she is prepared for the debate.	Student is not prepared for the debate.	
Knowledge of the topic	Student demonstrates a deep knowledge of the topic and a constant understanding of the different arguments.	Student shows good knowledge of the topic and almost always demonstrates understanding of the different arguments.	Student demonstrates certain knowledge of the topic, yet does not seem to fully understand the different arguments.	Student is not well prepared in terms of the topic and understands very little of the different arguments.	
Listening Skills	Student shows that he/she is actively listening to other participants and offers follow-up to others' comments.	Student is actively listening to others, but does not offer follow-up to others' comments.	Student is not always listening to the discussion and this shows in his/her responses to others' comments.	Student does not listen to others and offers no commentary to further the discussion.	
Contributions	Student constantly expresses ideas as opportunities for new subtopics to be discussed.	Student occasionally contributes new ideas to the discussion.	Student rarely provides the discussion with new ideas.	Student never contributes ideas differently from others in the discussion.	

(Adapted from: <http://teachers.teach-nology.com/cgi-bin/classpar.cgi>)

Total score: _____

Grade: _____

Rubric: Final Debate- Presidential Candidates

Name: _____ Date: _____

Criteria	4	3	2	1	Points
Preparation	Student has prepared for the debate very well.	Student shows a good level of preparation.	Student rarely shows that he/she is prepared for the debate.	Student is not prepared for the debate.	
Knowledge of the topics	Student demonstrates a deep knowledge of the topics and a constant understanding of the different arguments.	Student shows good knowledge of the topics and almost always demonstrates understanding of the different arguments.	Student demonstrates certain knowledge of the topics, yet does not seem to fully understand the different arguments.	Student is not well prepared in terms of the topics and understands very little of the different arguments.	
Listening Skills	Student shows that he/she is actively listening to other participants and offers follow-up to others' comments.	Student is actively listening to others, but does not offer follow-up to others' comments.	Student is not always listening to the discussion and this shows in his/her responses to others' comments.	Student does not listen to others and offers no commentary to further the discussion.	
Argumentative Skills	Student defends his position effectively and provides sufficient evidence to support his arguments.	Student sometimes defends his position and provides some evidence to support his arguments.	Student rarely defends his position and does not provide enough evidence to support his arguments.	Student does not defend his position or provide evidence to support his arguments.	

(Adapted from: <http://teachers.teach-nology.com/cgi-bin/classpar.cgi>)

Total score: _____

Grade: _____

Sample Activities

Unit 1 – Class 2

The Political System of the United States of America

Before we start...

- 1) Think of everything you know about the United States as a country, specifically its type of democracy and international relations policies, and share what you know with the class.

- 2) Try to describe the following items related to the U.S.:
 - Branches of government
 - Constitution
 - Power distribution
 - Party system

- 3) Here is some **vocabulary** that is commonly used in the **political world**. Do you recognize these words? Study their meanings and then put them in context by filling in the gaps in the sentences below.



Vocabulary:

- **ballot** (n) - the piece of paper that is marked by somebody making a vote. (v) to vote by ballot.
- **branches of government** (n) - governmental entities with separate and independent powers and areas of responsibility so that the powers of one branch are not in conflict with the powers associated with the other branches.
- **campaign** (n) - a political party will have a campaign when they are fighting another political party in a vote or election. (v) to go on campaign.
- **constitution** (n) - a set of fundamental principles or established precedents according to which a state or other organization is governed.
- **coup** - (coup d'état) (n) - when a small active group, such as the military, quickly take control and replace the government.
- **democracy** (n) - a government run by the people, a free government that has people choosing politicians to represent them in elections.
- **democrat** (n) – a member of the Democratic Party.
- **election** (n) - the public vote for the person they want to represent them in government.
- **landslide** (n) - when one political party wins an election with a large majority of the votes. (v) to win an election by a large majority.
- **party system** (n) - a concept in comparative political science concerning the system of government by political parties in a democratic country.
- **politician** (n) - a person who is active in politics.
- **policy** (n) - the plan of course of action of a government or political party.
- **poll** (n) - the collection of opinions about a subject - for example who they are planning to vote for in an election. (v) to collect opinions.
- **president** (n) - the head of the government in democratic political systems.
- **republican** (n) – a member of the Republican Party.

Example sentences:

- During the next election many political parties will _____ by creating television, internet and newspaper advertisements.

- Barack Obama is the current _____ of the United States.
 - Please put your completed _____ paper in the box once you have finished voting.
 - Barack Obama won the 2008 American presidential _____.
 - Couples in China can only have one child since the government introduced a one child _____ in 1978.
 - The Labour politician won a _____ victory in Derby last week.
 - Arnold Schwarzenegger is a famous Hollywood action star who later became a _____.
 - The British political system is a parliamentary _____ that is followed by many countries throughout the world.
 - The most recent _____ in Thailand was in 2006, when the government was overthrown by a military group.
 - In the most recent opinion _____ the Democrats have a lead of 6% over the Republicans.
- 4) Imagine that you are a journalist from the United States and were asked to write an article about the next Chilean presidential election. Choose five words from the previous list and use them to write a short paragraph about the political system of Chile, so that Americans may understand it better.

Now...

Read the following text about the American political system, answer the questions, and discuss your answers with the class.

After reading...

- 1) Compare and contrast the political systems of Chile and the United States, specifically the constitution, branches of government and party system.

- 2) Are there any characteristics of the American political system that you would like Chile to adopt? Why?

Unit 2 – Class 5

Presidential Elections

Before we start...

- 1) Think of everything you know about U.S. presidential elections and share what you know with the rest of the class. Consider the following words to guide your thoughts:

- Running for president
- Campaign
- Voting
- Election

- 2) Take a look at some **vocabulary** that is commonly used when talking about **presidential elections**. Do you recognize these words? Which ones? How would you define them, in your own words?



Vocabulary:

A. = Adjective ADV. = Adverb IDM. = Idiom N. = Noun V. = Verb	
to abandon	V. to leave something behind; to give something up
to back	V. to give support to
a ballot	N. the piece of paper you write your vote on
to campaign	V. to advertise oneself (or someone else) as a candidate in an upcoming election; to work towards getting oneself (or someone else) elected
a campaign	N. 1) the process of trying to get oneself (or someone else) elected 2) an attempt or series of attempts to achieve a goal
to cast (a ballot)	V. to put (your ballot) in the ballot box
connections	N. social relationships which allow you certain opportunities; the people you know who can help you (get a job, raise money, gain power, etc.)
to debate	V. to have a structured, formal argument about a controversial topic
a debate	N. a structured, formal argument on a controversial topic
to elect	V. to choose someone to be a leader through a democratic vote
an election	N. the process of choosing a leader through a democratic vote
to run for president	V. to campaign to be president, to try to become president
to vote	V. to formally express one's choice in writing or by raising one's hand; to make one's choice in an election
a vote	N. the act of formally expressing one's choice in writing or by raising one's hand

Now...

- 1) Fill in all the gaps in the sample conversation using the new vocabulary.

abandoning **ballot** **campaign** **cast** **connections** **debates** **elect**
to back **to run for President** **vote**

Sharine: Tony, I have been hearing so much in the news about different presidential candidates. Can you tell me a little about how Americans their President?

Tony: Well, it's a long process. We start off by deciding who the official candidate for each political party will be. Usually, a person first announces that he or she wants . If you want to be your party's official candidate, you need to raise money and gather support from party members. Candidates usually to let people know what they represent. They give speeches, meet with community leaders, and participate in . This process lasts for several months, and then the party members to decide who they want in the election.

Sharine: Do you have to be rich to become President?

Tony: You don't really have to be rich to become President, but it helps. Usually rich people have more and can raise money more effectively. Most of our

Presidents in the past have been relatively rich men, but not all of them.

Sharine: So, how do you make the final decision?

Tony: After several months of television ads, interviews, speeches, and kissing babies, we have the presidential election. Citizens go to a voting center and their for the candidate of their choice.

Sharine: You sounded a little cynical when you said "kissing babies." What did you mean by that?

Tony: Well, it's quite common for politicians to have themselves photographed kissing babies. It's their way of trying to appear in touch with the average American, but it looks really phony. These days, becoming President is all about acting. The candidates try to appeal to so many different people that they end up their own opinions. Sometimes, it feels like the parties are all the same.

Sharine: How many parties are there?

Tony: We have many political parties in the United States, but most of them are quite small. There are really only two with significant power, the Democrats and the Republicans.

2) Good job! Now, fill in the gaps in the following sentences using the new vocabulary.

back **ballot** **campaign** **connections** **elect** **had abandoned** **have**
run for President **to cast** **to debate** **to vote**

1. If you want your ballot, the ballot box is over there near the voter information desk.

2. Women in the U.S., but not one has been elected.

3. Next month the presidential candidates are going health care and insurance issues in the United States.

4. That politician is absolutely ridiculous. I can't understand why the party would him. How could they possibly support such an ignorant person?

5. Who are you going for in the next election?

6. The candidate's presidential received a great deal of attention from the media.

7. It helps to have if you want to get a good job. Unfortunately, it's not what you know, it's who you know!

8. When we realized that the presidential candidate all of his principles, we decided not to vote for him.

9. They carefully check your identification when you vote because they want to make sure you only cast one . Otherwise, people might vote two or three times.

10. I hope the people a president with some common sense. We need to choose a president who can govern intelligently. Big words and smiling faces are not enough to keep a country going.

-
- 3) In groups, choose five words from the vocabulary list and describe what you've learned about U.S. presidential elections using your chosen words.



- 4) Watch the short film *Election Night* and, in groups, describe to the class the most important aspects of the film. Would you compromise **your** values to be elected?

Unit 3 – Class 9

Democrats & Republicans

Before we start...

- 1) Have you ever heard the term “political propaganda”? What does it refer to? Do you agree with the use of political propaganda in presidential elections?
- 2) Take a look at the following political flyers and try to infer what each candidate stands for.

a) Barack Obama: Democrat

BARACK OBAMA SPENT THREE YEARS WORKING AS A COMMUNITY ORGANIZER IN AN IMPOVERISHED CHICAGO NEIGHBORHOOD DEVASTATED BY STEEL LAYOFFS. AFTER GRADUATING FROM HARVARD LAW SCHOOL, WHERE HE WAS ELECTED AS THE FIRST AFRICAN-AMERICAN PRESIDENT OF THE HARVARD LAW REVIEW, BARACK OBAMA CHOSE A LIFE OF PUBLIC SERVICE. DURING HIS EIGHT YEARS IN THE ILLINOIS STATE LEGISLATURE BARACK OBAMA WORKED ACROSS PARTY LINES TO EXPAND HEALTH CARE TO MORE THAN 150,000 PARENTS AND CHILDREN AND GAVE \$100 MILLION IN TAX BREAKS TO WORKING FAMILIES. IN THE US SENATE, HE HELPED PASS THE STRONGEST ETHNICS REFORM IN 25 YEARS.

CHANGE
WE CAN BELIEVE IN.

BARACK OBAMA *for* PRESIDENT

IT'S ABOUT WHETHER THIS NATION IS GOING TO LIVE UP TO ITS FOUNDRING PROMISE OF EQUALITY BY TREATING ALL ITS CITIZENS WITH THE SAME DIGNITY AND RESPECT.

OBAMA PRIDE
PRIDE.BARACKOBAMA.COM


"AMONG ALL THE CANDIDATES IN THIS RACE, ONLY BARACK OBAMA INCLUDED GAYS AND LESBIANS AS PARTICIPANTS IN THE AMERICAN DREAM. WHEN ANNOUNCING HIS DECISION TO RUN FOR PRESIDENT, ONLY BARACK HAS REGULARLY TALKED ABOUT LGBT EQUALITY ON THE CAMPAIGN TRAIL, EVEN WHEN THE AUDIENCE WAS NOT LGBT-FRIENDLY. BARACK HAS BEEN CHANGING HEARTS AND MINDS, AND THE VISIBILITY HE HAS GIVEN TO LGBT EQUALITY IS UNPRECEDENTED."

*Lee Bush, CEO
of the GLBTQ Community Center*

TO FIND OUT MORE
WWW.BARACKOBAMA.COM

PAID FOR BY OBAMA FOR AMERICA

VOTE *for* OBAMA



b) Mitt Romney: Republican

Mitt Romney

**The strongest Republican
to beat Barack Obama
and protect our values.**

- **Pro-life**

Mitt Romney believes that life begins at conception and opposes abortion.

- **Pro-marriage**

As governor, Mitt Romney fought against gay marriage in Massachusetts. He supports a federal amendment to define marriage as between one man and one woman.

- **Pro-family**


Mitt Romney lives his values. He has been married to Ann for 42 years, with five sons and daughters-in-law and sixteen grandchildren, and he has been a member of the same church his entire life.

At the caucuses on Tuesday, January 3, support the Republican who lives his values and shares yours.

www.MittRomney.com/States/Iowa



c) George W. Bush: Republican



America decided long ago that *every child deserves an equal opportunity for a quality education.*

Opportunity for every child

President George W. Bush believes that education is the key to opportunity and America's best tool in an increasingly competitive global economy.

More options for parents

Through local control and greater flexibility, parents and educators who know best what our children need will be given the power to take children out of low-performing schools.

Increased funding and accountability

President Bush's education reform plan ties increased funding to more accountability for our tax dollars and sets higher academic standards for students.



**President George W. Bush
Real Education Reforms. Real Results.**

John Kerry opposes equal opportunity in education and has repeatedly voted against giving parents more choices.



John Kerry has a "thin record" on education.¹

"However, on education and health care, two of the most important domestic battlegrounds between Democrats and Republicans, Kerry has a thin record."²

Kerry repeatedly voted to keep low-income kids trapped in failing and unsafe schools.

Kerry has consistently denied parents and children the opportunity to escape failing schools.³

Kerry wants to roll back accountability and standards.

"Kerry's clear intent is to loosen the standard so that fewer schools are identified as needing improvement, even if student test scores fail to rise. It's easy to see why teachers and administrators worried about their public image like that idea. It's more difficult to see how it helps parents or children."⁴

¹ Congressional Quarterly Weekly, 8/2/01
² Congressional Quarterly Weekly, 8/24/01
³ 107th Congress, 1st Session, S. 1, 10/11/00; 108th Congress, 1st Session, H.R. 2, 2/26/04; 109th Congress, 1st Session, S. 1, 10/11/05
⁴ Los Angeles Times, April 7, 2000

Regardless of race, regardless of income, regardless of community...
No matter what, **All Children Matter.**

d) John Kerry: Democrat

Kerry Edwards

JOHNKERRY.COM

The Kerry-Edwards Plan

A NEW DIRECTION FOR AMERICA

A Stronger America Begins at Home

- Create good jobs by cutting taxes for companies that add jobs in the U.S. Abolish tax breaks for companies who ship jobs overseas.
- Increase family incomes by reducing healthcare premiums by up to \$1,000; providing new tax credits for healthcare, childcare and college. Increase the minimum wage.
- Healthcare coverage for more Americans—including all children. Lower-cost prescription drugs. Expand stem cell research.
- Reduce the federal deficit by 50% by restoring fiscal discipline and closing corporate tax loopholes.

Safer at Home, Respected in the World

- A more effective war on terror, through a new era of stronger alliances.
- Win the war on terror by strengthening the military and implementing the 9/11 Commission recommendations for stronger intelligence gathering and law enforcement.
- Increased funds for police and firefighters and for better inspections of airports, railways, seaports and chemical and nuclear plants.

The Bush-Cheney Record

WRONG CHOICES, WRONG DIRECTION

Hurting Middle Class and Working Families

- The only President in 72 years to lose jobs. 1.6 million jobs lost in the private sector.
- A decline in median family income by \$1,535 at the same time that costs climb for healthcare (up 50%), college (up 35%), gasoline (up 20%) and Medicare (up 56%).
- Increase in healthcare premiums of \$2,630 per family. Five million more Americans without health insurance.
- Highest federal deficit in history (\$422 billion) while supporting tax breaks for the wealthiest Americans.

Less Secure at Home

Less Respected in the World

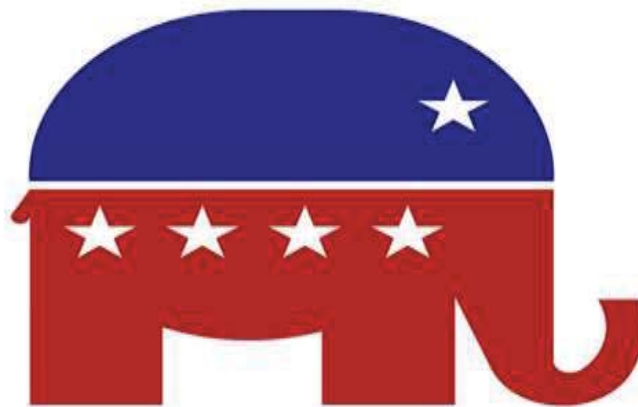
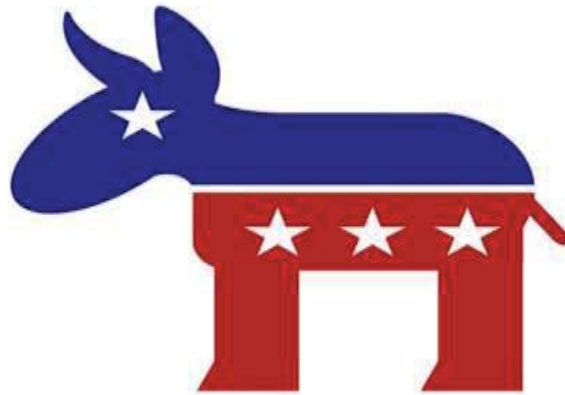
- A go-it-alone invasion of Iraq that cost America \$200 billion and weakened the war on terror by diverting forces from destroying the terrorists in Afghanistan.
- Rushed to war in Iraq based on faulty intelligence, false assurances Iraq was involved in the 9/11 attack and with no plan to win the peace.
- Inadequate funding for homeland security at seaports, railways, airports, chemical and nuclear plants and for police and firefighters.

3) What do you think are the biggest differences between Democrats and Republicans?

Now...

1) Analyze the following comparison chart between democrats and republicans and explain to the class which political party you agree with the most. Justify your selection.

Democrat vs. Republican



This comparison examines the differences between the policies and political positions of the **Democratic** and **Republican** parties on major issues such as taxes, the role of government, entitlements (Social Security, Medicare), gun control, immigration, healthcare, abortion and

gay rights. These two parties dominate America's political landscape but differ greatly in their philosophies and ideals.

Comparison chart

	<u>Democrat</u>	<u>Republican</u>
Philosophy	<u>Liberal, left-leaning.</u>	<u>Conservative, right-leaning.</u>
Economic Ideas	Minimum wages and progressive <u>taxation</u> , i.e., higher tax rates for higher income brackets. Born out of <u>anti-federalist</u> ideals but evolved over time to favor more government regulation.	Believe taxes shouldn't be increased for anyone (including the wealthy) and that wages should be set by the free market.
Social and human ideas	Based on community and social responsibility	Based on individual rights and justice
Stance on Military issues	Decreased spending	Increased spending
Stance on Gay Marriage	Support (some Democrats disagree)	Oppose (some Republicans disagree)
Stance on Abortion	Should not be made illegal; support <u>Roe v. Wade</u> (some Democrats disagree)	Should not be legal; oppose Roe v. Wade (some Republicans disagree)
Stance on Death Penalty	While support for the death penalty is strong among Democrats, opponents of the death penalty are a substantial	A large majority of Republicans support the death penalty.

	<u>Democrat</u>	<u>Republican</u>
	fraction of the Democratic base.	
Stance on Taxes	Progressive (high income earners should be taxed at a higher rate). Generally not opposed to raising taxes to fund government.	Tend to favor a "flat tax" (same tax rate regardless of income). Generally opposed to raising taxes.
Stance on Government Regulation	Government regulations are needed to protect consumers.	Government regulations hinder free market capitalism and job growth.
Healthcare Policy	Support universal healthcare; strong support of government involvement in healthcare, including Medicare and Medicaid . Generally support Obamacare.	Private companies can provide healthcare services more efficiently than government-run programs. Oppose Obamacare provisions like (1) requirement for individuals to buy health insurance or pay a fine, (2) required coverage of contraceptives.
Traditionally strong in states	California, Massachusetts, New York	Oklahoma, Kansas, Texas
Symbol	Donkey	Elephant
Color	Blue	Red
Founded in	1824	1854
Website	www.democrats.org	www.gop.com

	<u>Democrat</u>	<u>Republican</u>
Senate Leader	Harry Reid	Mitch McConnell
Chairperson	Debbie Wasserman Schultz	Reince Priebus
Famous Presidents	Franklin Roosevelt (FDR), John F. Kennedy, Bill Clinton, Woodrow Wilson, Jimmy Carter, Barack Obama	Abraham Lincoln , Teddy Roosevelt, Ronald Reagan, George Bush, Richard Nixon

(Taken from [http://www.diffen.com/difference/Democrat vs Republican](http://www.diffen.com/difference/Democrat_vs_Republican))

- 2) What is the actual meaning of “liberal” and “conservative”? How do you think these two philosophies reflect on the different views that Democrats and Republicans have on key topics such as abortion, health care and gay marriage?
- 3) In your opinion, what are the most fundamental “individual rights” that a person should have? Would your answer be the same regardless of your nationality?
- 4) In groups, choose a political party (Democrat or Republican) and create a political flyer that summarizes your stance on at least two key issues. Share with the class. Take notes of other students’ arguments.
- 5) In groups of four, have two students argue for and two against one of the following topics:
 - Abortion
 - Gay marriage
 - Death penalty

Unit 3 – Class 12

Final Debate

Before we start...

Imagine that you are a presidential candidate in an American election. Your job is to defend your position on several key topics against other candidates who are also running for president. Prepare a coherent argument on the following topics and remember to analyze the opposing view on these topics to prepare for audience questions and counter arguments:

- Abortion
- Gay Marriage
- Death Penalty
- Health care

Now...

1) In groups of six, listen to the moderator's instructions and take turns to present and defend your arguments on the previous topics. Remember to respect other students' turn and listen to their arguments.

2) Present your counter arguments and challenge other candidates' views with either statements or questions, following the moderator's instructions.

3) Answer audience questions to the best of your ability.

4) In a piece of paper, vote for the candidate that you believe better represents your views.

APPENDIX 1

American Politics Survey

The purpose of this survey is to gather information about your interest in and knowledge of American politics. This information will be used to create an English language workshop based on the political system of the United States.

Please answer as truthfully as you can by marking the alternative that you most agree with.

1) I am interested in politics.

a) I agree b) I somewhat agree c) I disagree

2) I would like to vote.

a) I agree b) I somewhat agree c) I disagree

3) I am very involved in Chilean politics and have strong political opinions.

a) I agree b) I somewhat agree c) I disagree

4) By being involved in Chilean politics, I can become a better citizen.

a) I agree b) I somewhat agree c) I disagree

5) I am familiar with the political system of the United States.

a) I agree b) I somewhat agree c) I disagree

6) I am interested in learning more about U.S. politics.

a) I agree b) I somewhat agree c) I disagree

7) U.S. politics have a direct effect on the political decisions of the Chilean government.

a) I agree b) I somewhat agree c) I disagree

8) By learning and talking about American politics, I will be able to improve my English skills.

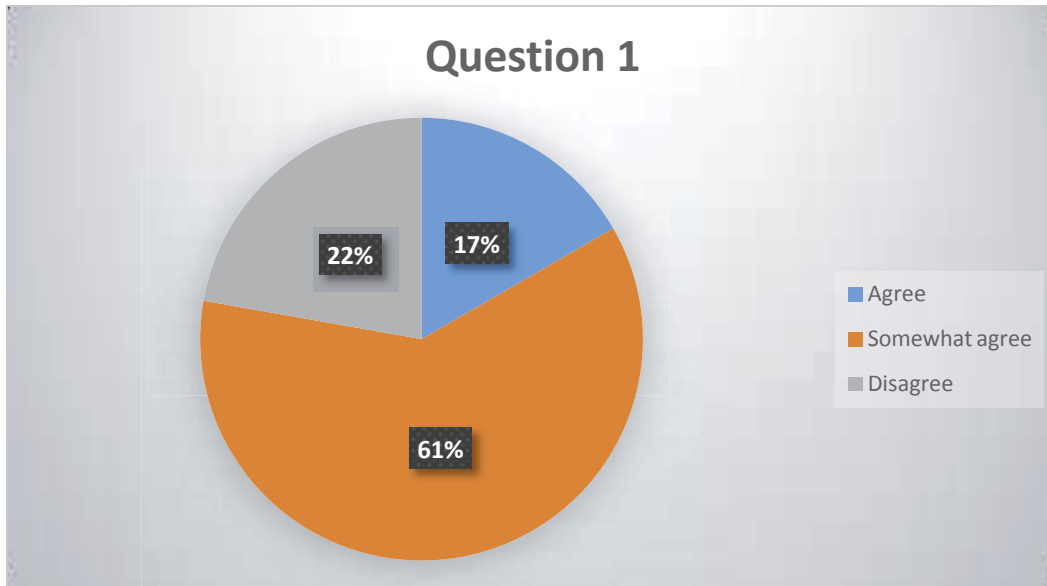
- a) I agree b) I somewhat agree c) I disagree
- 9) I am interested in the English language.
- a) I agree b) I somewhat agree c) I disagree
- 10) I have a good level of English.
- a) I agree b) I somewhat agree c) I disagree
- 11) I am very comfortable reading in English.
- a) I agree b) I somewhat agree c) I disagree
- 12) I am very comfortable listening to English.
- a) I agree b) I somewhat agree c) I disagree
- 13) I am very comfortable writing in English.
- b) I agree b) I somewhat agree c) I disagree
- 14) I am very comfortable speaking in English.
- c) I agree b) I somewhat agree c) I disagree
- 15) By improving my English skills, I will be able to get a job more easily.
- d) I agree b) I somewhat agree c) I disagree

APPENDIX 2

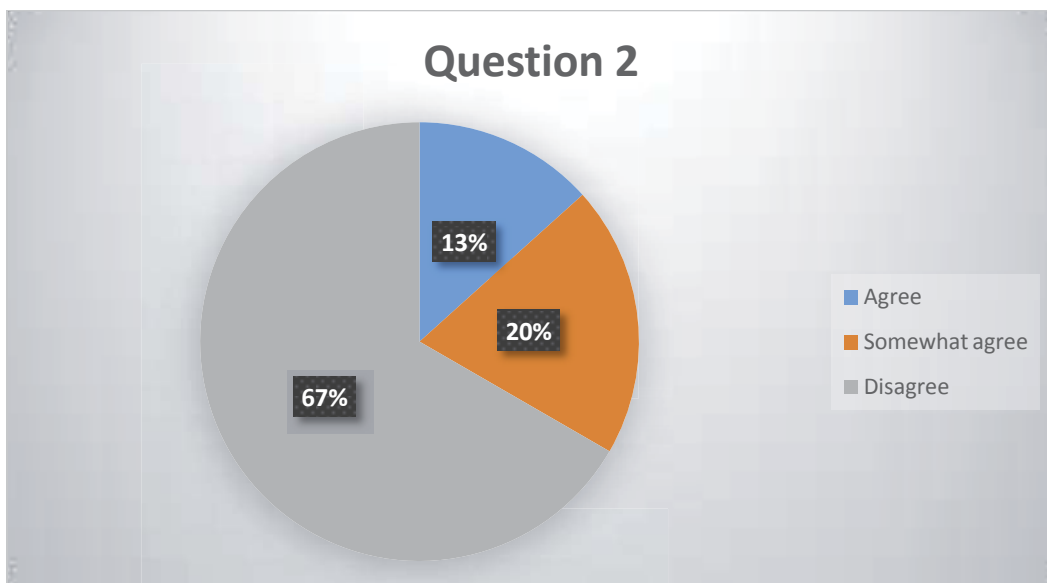
Survey Findings

This survey was applied to 30 senior high school students (18 men, 12 women).

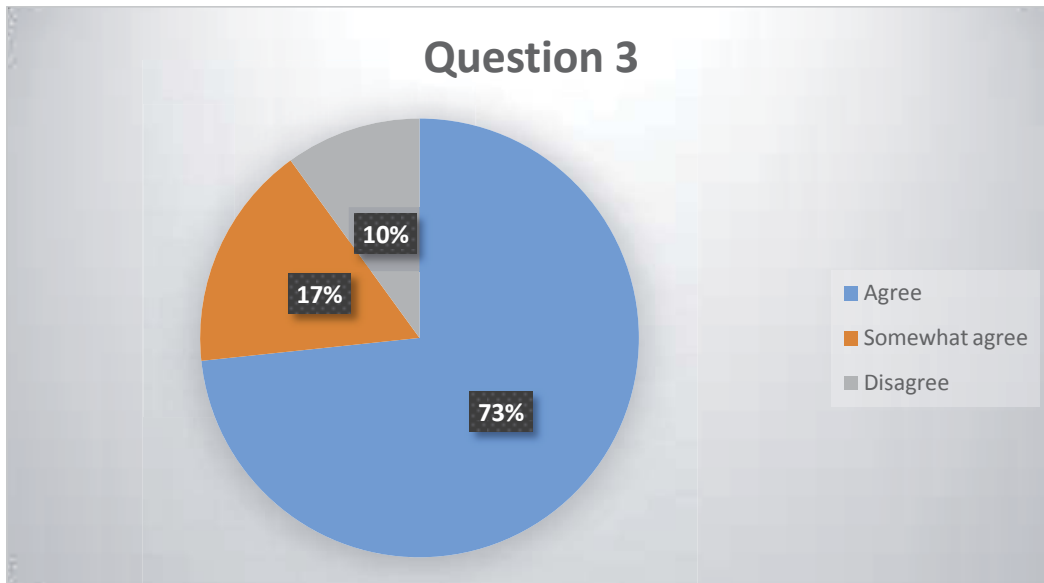
- 1) I am interested in politics.



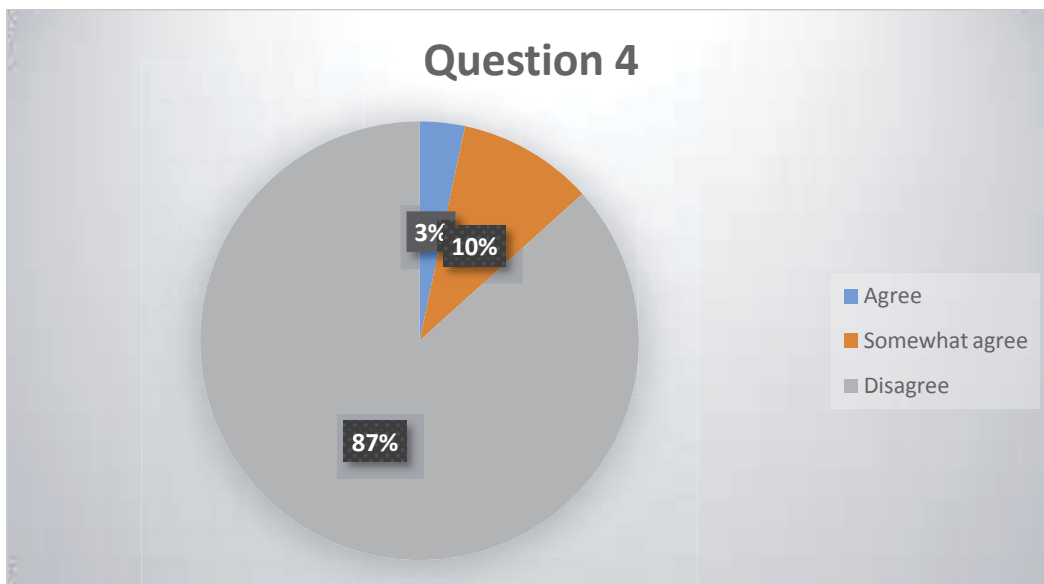
- 2) I am very involved in Chilean politics and have strong political opinions.



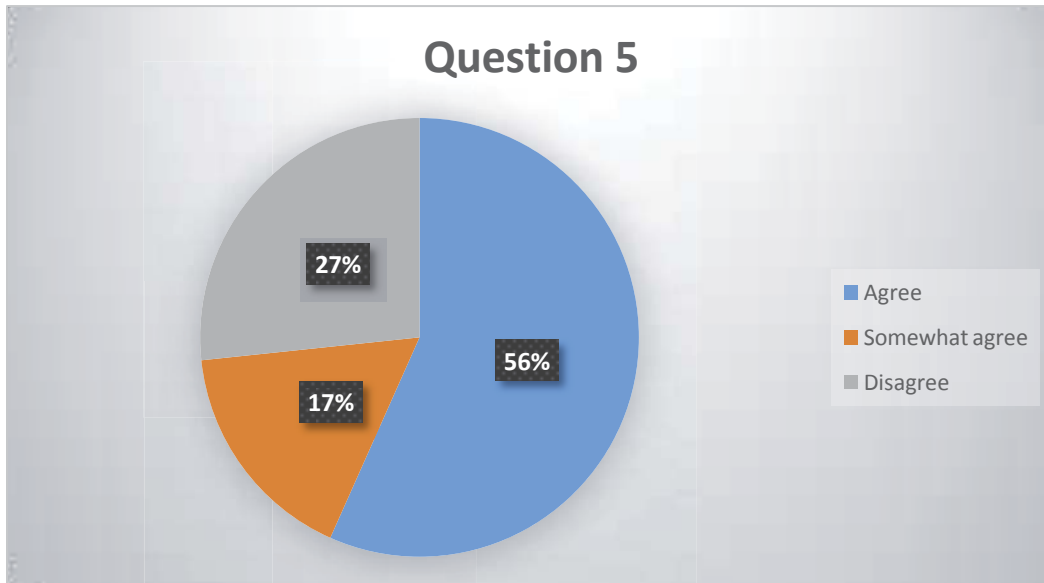
3) By being involved in Chilean elections, I can become a better citizen.



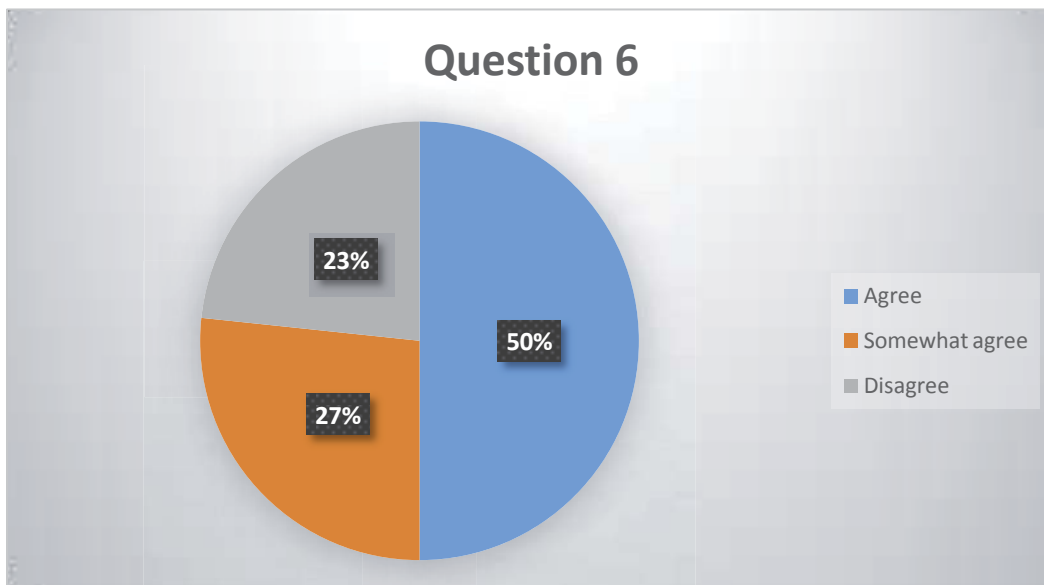
4) I am familiar with the political system of the United States.



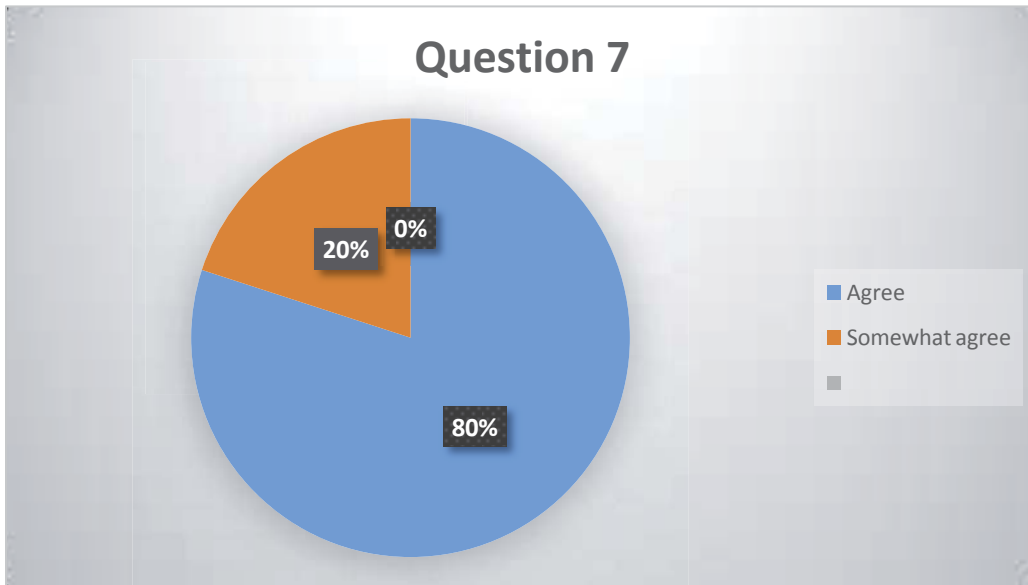
5) I am interested in learning more about U.S. politics.



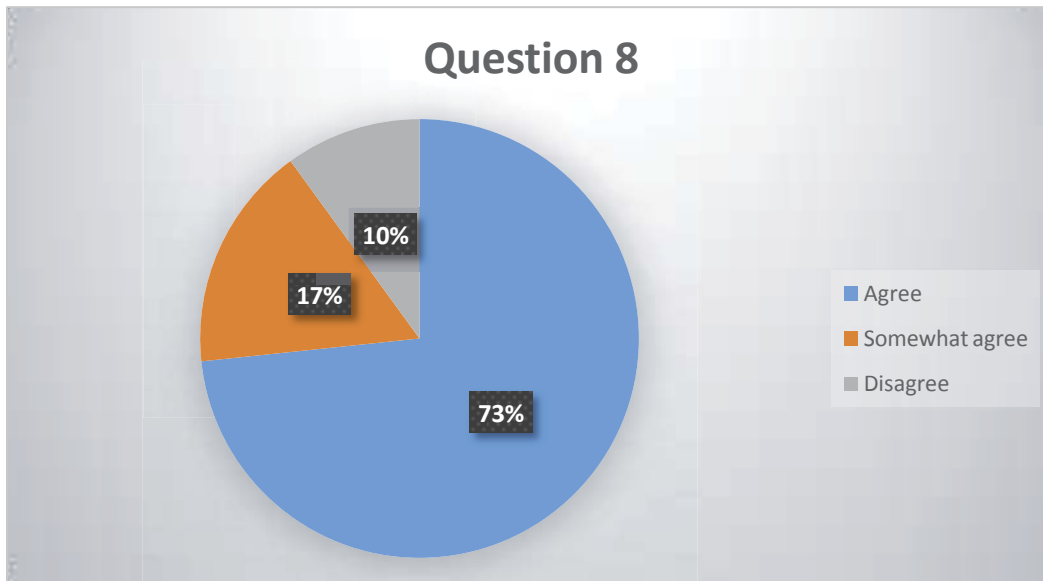
6) U.S. politics have a direct effect on the political decisions of the Chilean government.



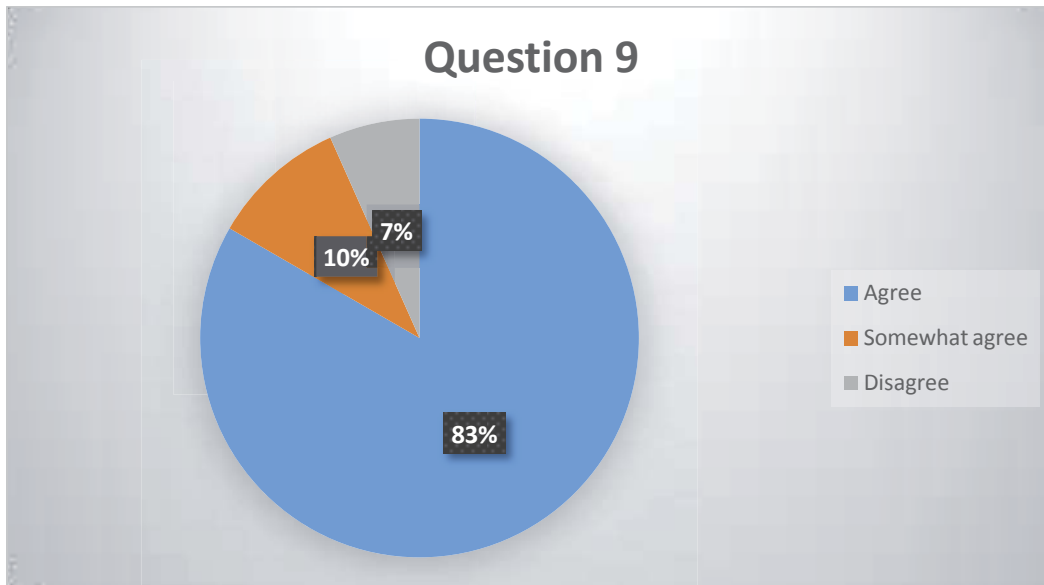
7) By learning and talking about American politics, I will be able to improve my English skills.



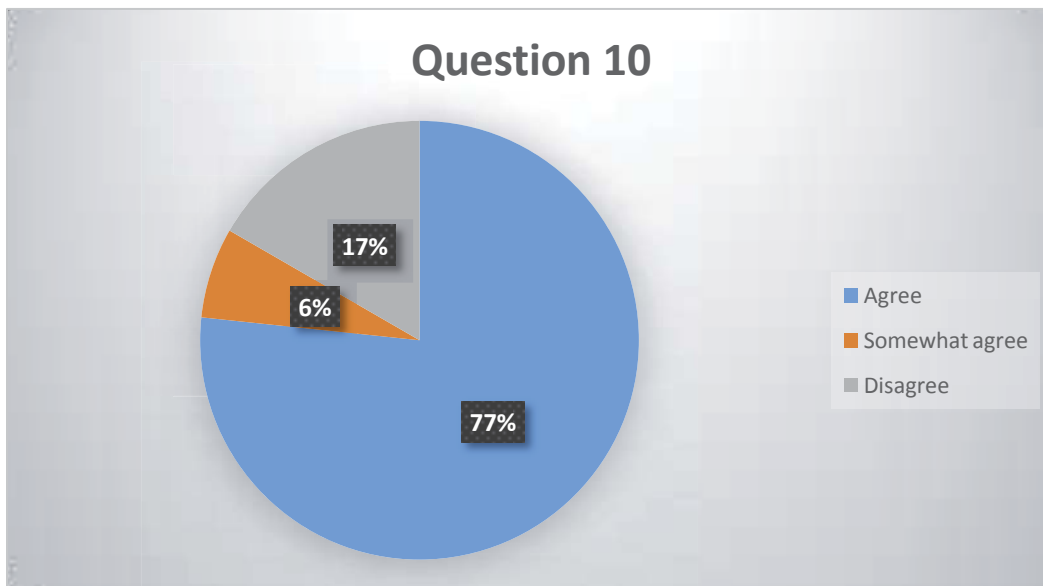
8) I would like to participate in an English workshop focused on American politics.



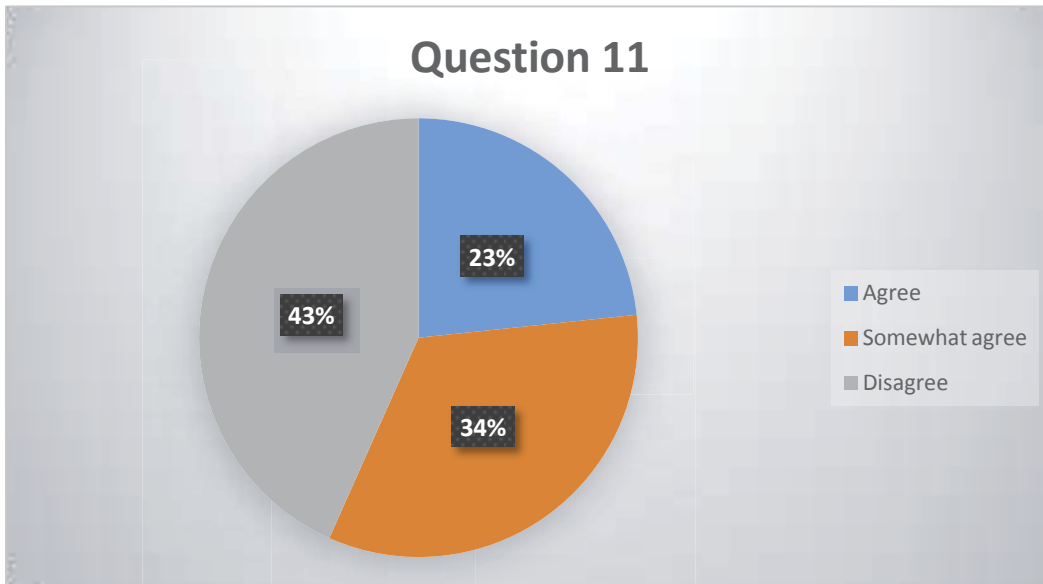
9) I would like to take part in debates and discuss various political topics with my classmates.



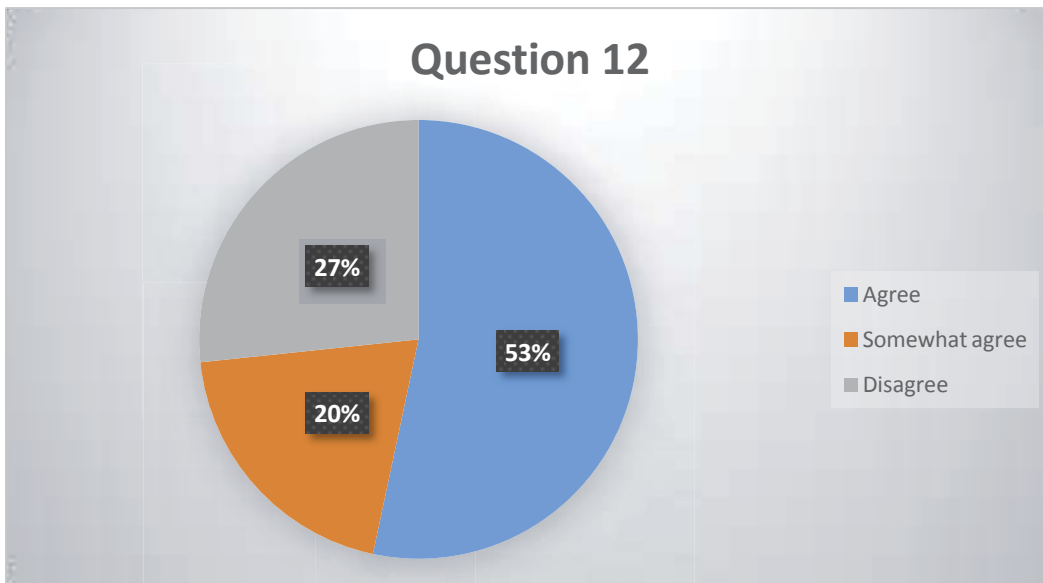
10) I am interested in the English language.



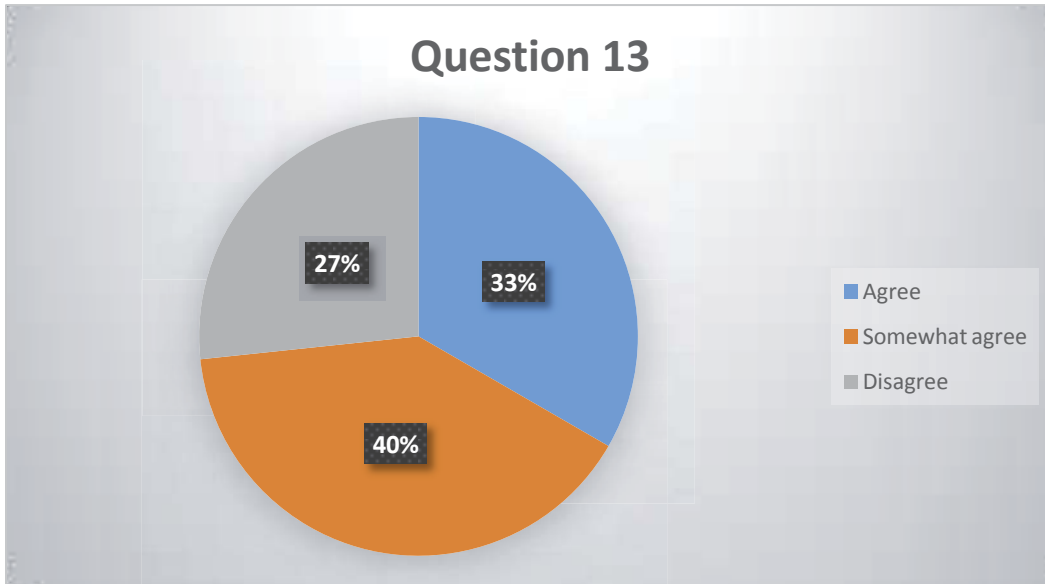
11) I have a good level of English.



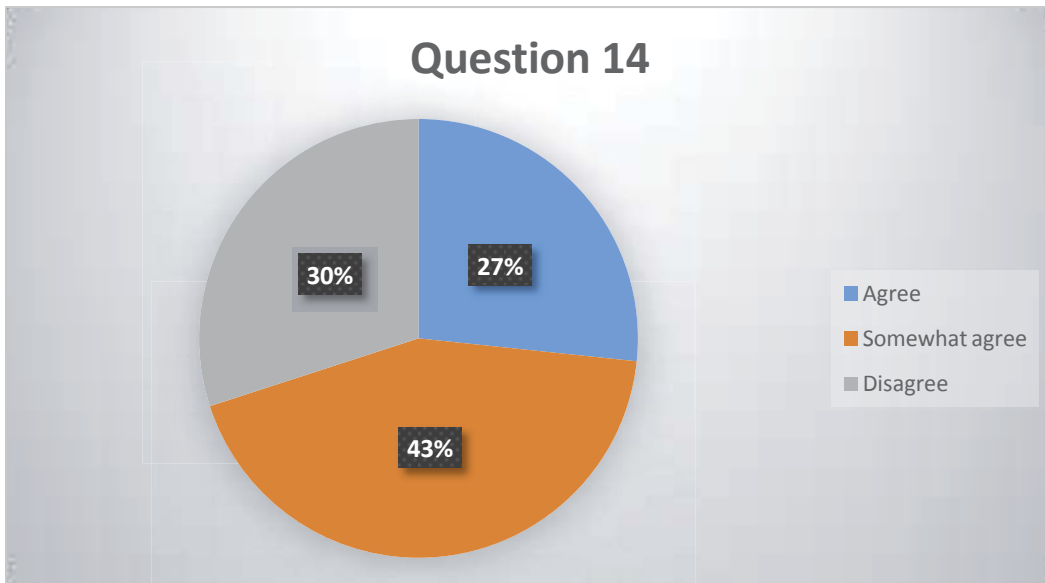
12) I am very comfortable reading in English.



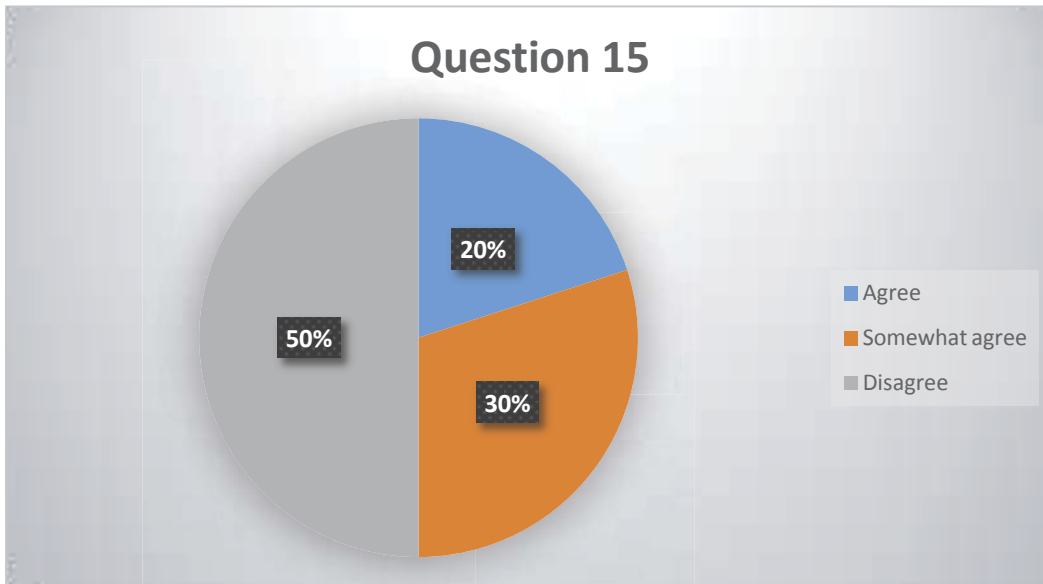
13) I am very comfortable listening to English.



14) I am very comfortable writing in English.



15) I am very comfortable speaking in English.



16) By improving my English skills, I will be able to get a job more easily.

