

# Traits: elections and voters



Is it reasonable for voters to look at personality and character traits as a basis for judging candidates for public office? Elections place voters in an important decision making process. Whether it is a local election that is only community wide or a national election that could change the country, citizens must find a way to decide which candidate to vote for. Even for children under the age of 18 elections bring about a good way to learn about politics and the people and problems that affect the government.

Voters too often judge candidates by slogans, name recognition, and public image. Because the media plays such a huge role in society it is hard for voters to move past a candidate's image and to the inside of the candidate as an everyday person. However, this process is possible. Voters must simply decide what they are looking for in a candidate. Character traits play a huge role in how a candidate will do as an office holder.

When voters think of leadership qualities, they need to think about the characteristics an effective leader would possess; like intelligence, honesty and an ability to communicate. A candidate who is selfish, non-intelligent, and reserved may not make a very good office holder. Character traits are not the only things voters must look at while deciding which candidate to support. Voters should gather information about the candidates and collect any records they can find on them.

They should look at the candidates' background and their experience and determine how prepared the candidate is for the job. They must observe the candidates' campaigns and see if they give speeches to different groups, even those groups that may disagree with the candidates' views on issues.

After getting the information from campaigns and other sources, voters should learn what other people think about the candidates. Their opinions can help clarify the voters own views, but the voter must be careful to not discount their own informed judgments.

They need to learn what has shaped others' political opinions and should also look into campaign contributions to find out where the candidates get the funds to financetheir campaigns. Whether they use their ownmoneyor raise funds from a few wealthy donors, from many small contributors or from Political Action Committees. Voters should also take a look at polls. Polls reveal who is leading at a certain point in the race. This information can be crucial for a candidate because it can increase support and contributions from people who want to be on the winning team. There are numerous things voters must look at when deciding who to vote for in a public election.

Character traits are certainly one of the most important things to look at. Judging a candidate on his or her character is one of the few things that cannot be obtained by an invalid source because voters analyze character traits themselves. However, traits are certainly not the only thing to look at. Analyzing traits is just one of the many processes voters must go through when seriously trying to pick the best candidate for the job.