

A VOTE FOR ME

A Political Satire Monologue

Suggested Ages: 14–18

Approx. Time: 6-8 minutes

Difficulty: Intermediate/Advanced

Character: Gender-flexible

Genre: Political Satire/Character Comedy

Props: Podium or lectern if available; optional campaign signs, flags, or other rally decorations.

Setting: A presidential campaign rally

Skills Practiced: Characterization, persuasive delivery, rhetorical speaking, vocal variety, pacing, purposeful pauses, repetition, escalation, status, subtext, audience awareness, comic timing, and maintaining sincerity while performing satire.

Character

THE CANDIDATE - A candidate for President of the United States who possesses enormous confidence, polished delivery, and very little concern about whether any promise can actually be fulfilled. The Candidate is pompous without realizing it, eloquent without necessarily saying anything meaningful, and completely comfortable promising contradictory or impossible things.

The Candidate should not be performed as an obvious clown. The comedy works best when the speech sounds persuasive. This is someone who knows how to pause for applause, lower the voice for sincerity, build toward an emotional crescendo, and make every person listening feel that their hopes, fears, frustrations, bank accounts, families, homes, and futures depend upon one very simple action: voting for The Candidate.

Skills Practiced

Characterization and sustained high-status performance. Persuasive and rhetorical speaking. Vocal variety, pacing, emphasis, and purposeful pauses. Repetition with changing intention. Escalation and building a speech toward a climax. Subtext and contrasting public confidence with private intention. Audience awareness and imagined audience reactions. Comic timing without signaling the joke. Using hope, fear, nostalgia, and reassurance as persuasive strategies

Performance Note

The satire is strongest when The Candidate appears capable, polished, and genuinely persuasive. Avoid playing the character as obviously foolish, dishonest, or incompetent. The actor understands that the promises are exaggerated; The Candidate behaves as though every promise is reasonable, achievable, and exactly what the audience needs to hear.

The Monologue

THE CANDIDATE steps to the podium and waits for the applause to settle.

My fellow Americans...

Tonight, I stand before you not merely as a candidate for President of the United States.

I stand before you as a candidate for your future.

For your family.

For your home.

For your paycheck.

For your children's paychecks.

And, someday, for the paychecks of their children.

Because this election is about more than two candidates.

It is about a choice.

A choice between prosperity and poverty.

Between security and fear.

Between happiness and misery.

Between the country we love...and whatever will be left of it if my opponent wins.

(Allows that thought to settle.)

I don't say that to frighten you.

I say it because you deserve the truth.

And the truth is simple.

A vote for me is a vote for your country.

A vote for me is a vote for your family.

A vote for me is a vote for tradition, prosperity, opportunity, security, independence, success, and the American Dream.

A vote for me puts money in your bank account.

Money in your wallet.

Money in your purse.

And money back into the pockets of the hardworking American people, where that money belonged before the government reached into those pockets and took it.

When I am President, that ends.

No more excessive taxes.

No more complicated tax forms.

No more spending your Saturday afternoon surrounded by receipts trying to remember whether you bought that printer for work or because your daughter needed it for a science project.

No more fear when you see an envelope from the Internal Revenue Service.

In fact—

(Beat.)

No more Internal Revenue Service.

(Waits for the reaction.)

I will abolish the income tax.

And some people will ask, "But how will the government pay for everything?"

That's the kind of thinking that got us into this mess.

My administration will find a better way.

A smarter way.

A way that does not involve taking your money.

And we will not stop there.

We will erase the national debt.

Every dollar.

Gone.

People have told us for generations that the national debt is simply something Americans must live with.

I reject that kind of defeatism.

You wouldn't tell your children, "That mess in your bedroom has been there for twenty years, so I suppose we'll just keep it."

You clean the room.

And when I become President, America is cleaning its room.

(Applause.)

We will once again become a truly free nation.

We will rebuild our roads.

We will rebuild our bridges.

We will rebuild our transportation systems.

We will create jobs rebuilding the roads, bridges, and transportation systems that previous administrations promised to rebuild while apparently waiting for somebody else to find the shovels.

Our cities will prosper.

Our towns will prosper.

Our farms will prosper.

Our businesses will prosper.

Your families will prosper.

You will prosper.

Prosperity will prosper.

(Brief pause. The Candidate realizes that sounded excellent.)

And the American Dream will no longer be something you hear about from your grandparents.

It will belong to you.

A vote for me is a vote for private home ownership.

Every hardworking American who dreams of owning a home should have the opportunity to own one.

Not someday.

Not eventually.

Not after forty years of rent increases.

You deserve a front door that belongs to you.

A yard that belongs to you.

A kitchen that belongs to you.

A roof that belongs to you—

and, under my administration, a roof that does not require a thirty-year financial relationship with a bank just to keep it over your head.

We will restore the American Dream.

And we will restore freedom from debt.

For too long, credit card companies have trapped hardworking Americans beneath never-ending interest payments.

You buy a television for eight hundred dollars, and somehow, six years later, you've paid seventeen hundred dollars and still owe them two hundred and forty-three dollars.

That ends.

Student loans?

Gone.

Our young people should graduate from college ready to work hard, build careers, raise families, buy homes, and contribute to this great nation - not spend the next twenty years sending half their paycheck to a loan company because they had the audacity to get an education.

Car leases?

Gone.

If you're going to make payments on a car for years, eventually you should get to keep the car.

I don't think that's radical.

I think that's common sense.

My opponent disagrees.

Of course, my opponent disagrees with a great many things.

My opponent has plans.

There are always plans.

Plans for your taxes.

Plans for your paycheck.

Plans for your neighborhood.

Plans for your children's education.

Plans for your home.

Plans for your future.

And isn't it interesting how every one of those plans requires more of something from you?

More money.

More sacrifice.

More patience.

More trust.

I am asking for only one thing.

Your vote.

(Warm smile.)

And in return, I am promising you everything.

(Beat.)

Everything this country should already have given you.

Because consider the alternative.

If my opponent is elected, we know what will happen.

Taxes will rise.

Debt will rise.

Crime will rise.

Prices will rise.

Fear will rise.

Riots will spread through our cities.

Businesses will close.

Families will struggle.

The American Dream will become something future generations study in history books under a chapter titled, "Things People Used to Have."

My opponent will tell you that these claims are exaggerated.

Of course my opponent will say that.

What else could my opponent say?

"Yes, that's exactly what I'm planning"?

(Small laugh, then immediately serious again.)

This election is a choice between freedom and control.

Between prosperity and decline.

Between an America that belongs to its people and an America buried beneath debt, bureaucracy, foreign influence, and ideas that have failed everywhere they have ever been tried.

If you vote for the other side, you are not simply voting for another candidate.

You are casting a vote against the country you know.

Against the institutions generations of Americans built.

Against the peace our soldiers fought and bled to preserve.

You are gambling with your children's future.

Your family's future.

Our country's future.

And I ask you:

Why gamble?

Why risk everything you love when the alternative is standing right here?

(The Candidate opens both arms.)

I offer security.

I offer peace.

I offer independence.

I offer prosperity.

I offer safety.

I offer opportunity.

I offer jobs.

I offer affordable homes.

I offer better roads.

Better schools.

Safer neighborhoods.

Stronger families.

Higher paychecks.

Lower prices.

Lower debt.

Lower taxes.

Actually—

(Beat.)

No taxes.

I almost forgot.

(Returns immediately to presidential seriousness.)

I offer you the happiness of yesterday and the happiness of tomorrow.

I offer you an America where hard work leads somewhere.

Where success is rewarded.

Where families can afford homes.

Where students can afford education.

Where workers keep what they earn.

Where parents can look at their children and know that the future waiting for them will be better than the present we inherited.

Can every one of these things happen overnight?

(Beat.)

Yes.

(Lets the applause come.)

Because pessimists have been telling Americans what cannot be done for far too long.

They tell us we cannot eliminate taxes and eliminate the national debt.

They tell us we cannot increase government investment while reducing government spending.

They tell us we cannot lower prices while raising wages.

They tell us we cannot guarantee prosperity.

They tell us we cannot promise happiness.

Maybe they can't.

I can.

And I just did.

(Smiles.)

My opponent offers you limitations.

I offer possibilities.

My opponent tells you government cannot solve every problem.

I tell you—

under the right President, you won't have problems.

(Pause for applause.)

Imagine waking tomorrow morning knowing your job is secure.

Your home is secure.

Your savings are secure.

Your streets are safe.

Your children are receiving the finest education in the world.

Your country owes nothing.

Your paycheck belongs to you.

Your credit cards no longer control you.

Your student loans are gone.

Your car belongs to you.

Your future belongs to you.

That is not fantasy.

That is not an impossible promise.

That is a choice.

And that choice will be printed on your ballot.

(The Candidate becomes quieter and more intimate.)

When you enter that voting booth, remember what is at stake.

Don't think of me.

Think of your children.

Think of your parents.

Think of the home you want to own.

Think of the business you want to build.

Think of the future you deserve.

Think of the soldiers who fought for this nation.

Think of everyone who came before us and everyone who will come after us.

And then ask yourself one simple question:

What kind of America do I want?

Because a vote for my opponent is a vote for uncertainty.

A vote for decline.

A vote for debt.

A vote for broken promises.

A vote for shattered hopes.

A vote for a future in which the America we love may become something we no longer recognize.

But a vote for me—

(The Candidate smiles.)

—is a vote for your country.

A vote for me is a vote for your family.

A vote for me is a vote for prosperity.

For security.

For tradition.

For independence.

For private home ownership.

For opportunity.

For success.

For happiness.

For the American Dream.

A vote for me is a vote for the happiness of yesterday...

and the happiness of tomorrow.

A vote for me is a vote for your future.

Your family's future.

Our country's future.

A vote for me...

is a vote for the United States of America.

(The Candidate raises a hand to the cheering crowd, smiling with absolute confidence.)

And unlike my opponent—

I promise you can trust my promises.

(Blackout.)

Teacher Notes & Performance Guidance

Do Not Play the Candidate as an Obvious Fool

The most important acting choice is to avoid signaling that The Candidate is ridiculous. The Candidate believes this is an excellent speech and expects the audience to respond enthusiastically. The performer should sound smooth, confident, presidential, and persuasive even when the promises become impossible or contradictory. The growing distance between the polished delivery and the substance of the promises creates the satire.

Persuasion Versus Truth

The Candidate's immediate objective is not to prove that every statement is realistic. The objective is to win the audience's vote. Different sections attempt to create different reactions: hope, financial frustration, patriotism, nostalgia, fear of the opponent, reassurance, and confidence in the future. Students can mark the speech according to what The Candidate wants the audience to feel at each moment.

Using Repetition Without Becoming Repetitive

The phrase "A vote for me..." returns throughout the monologue, but every repetition should not sound identical. At different moments it can reassure, inspire, warn, build momentum, or create an emotional climax. Experiment with pace, volume, emphasis, eye contact, physical stillness, and the length of pauses while keeping the words unchanged.

Building the Speech

The performer should not begin at maximum volume or intensity. The opening establishes confidence. The promises grow larger, the opponent becomes increasingly dangerous, and the speech builds toward an emotional conclusion involving family, country, prosperity, security, freedom, and the American Dream. Dividing the speech into beats helps the actor avoid giving every sentence the same weight.

Status & Commanding an Audience

The Candidate expects people to listen. Encourage the performer to use stillness, deliberate eye contact, and controlled pauses rather than constant movement. A high-status character does not need to rush to hold attention. One purposeful gesture can be more effective than continuous gesturing.

The Imagined Campaign Audience

Although only one actor speaks, The Candidate is addressing a crowd. The performer should decide where the audience applauds, laughs, cheers, becomes quiet, or reacts with agreement. Those imagined responses affect timing. A pause becomes a moment in which The Candidate is listening to and using the crowd's reaction.

Fear & Hope as Contrasting Strategies

The speech repeatedly alternates between an extraordinary future if The Candidate wins and a frightening future if the opponent wins. The hopeful sections may feel expansive, warm, and optimistic; the warnings may become more controlled and urgent. The Candidate remains polished throughout even as the persuasive strategy changes.

Finding the Satire

Students should avoid treating every exaggerated statement as a punchline. Some promises should almost sound reasonable until the audience considers what was actually said. The contradictions are stronger when The Candidate does not acknowledge them. The audience should be allowed to recognize the absurdity for itself.

Teacher Exercise: Find the Objective

Divide the monologue into sections. For each section, ask the student to complete: "I want the audience to..."

- trust me
- feel hopeful
- feel financially frustrated
- believe change will be easy
- become afraid of my opponent
- feel patriotic
- imagine a better future
- believe that voting for me is the only safe choice

The student should then perform each section while pursuing the objective rather than concentrating primarily on sounding like a politician.

Teacher Exercise: The Applause Map

Ask the student to mark every place where the imagined campaign audience might react. Use different markings for applause, laughter, cheering, agreement, and silence. Perform the monologue while allowing time for those reactions, then change several reaction points and discuss how the imagined crowd affects pacing, confidence, eye contact, and rhythm.

Teacher Exercise: One Speech, Two Performances

Perform part of the monologue twice. In the first version, The Candidate sincerely believes every promise. In the second, The Candidate privately knows that many promises are impossible but believes saying them is necessary to win. Keep the words exactly the same. Discuss how pauses, eye contact, emphasis, and subtext change.

Teacher Exercise: Change the Persuasive Strategy

Select one paragraph and perform it several times using different objectives:

- Reassure the audience.
- Inspire the audience.
- Frighten the audience.
- Make the audience feel personally understood.
- Make the audience angry.
- Make the audience believe victory is inevitable.

Teacher Exercise: Remove the Political Voice

Ask the student to perform a section conversationally, as though speaking to ten people in a small room rather than thousands at a rally. Remove the stereotypical "politician voice" while keeping the character's objective. Then gradually rebuild the larger campaign delivery while preserving the natural thought process discovered in the quieter version.

Discussion Questions

- What does The Candidate ultimately want from the audience?
- Which promises initially sound believable?
- At what point do the promises become clearly unrealistic?
- Why might an audience still respond positively to an unrealistic promise?
- How does repetition make certain ideas easier to remember?
- How does The Candidate use hope? How does The Candidate use fear?
- How does the speech create an emotional connection to family, home, country, and the future?
- Why is the opponent never named?
- What assumptions does The Candidate encourage the audience to make about the opponent?
- Which statements appeal primarily to emotion rather than evidence?
- How does the performer communicate confidence without simply increasing volume?
- Where should the performer pause for an imagined audience reaction?
- How can the same repeated phrase have a different intention each time?
- Is The Candidate deliberately lying, sincerely convinced, or somewhere between those possibilities?
- How would each interpretation change the performance?
- Why might playing The Candidate as an obvious fool weaken the satire?
- What is the difference between persuading an audience and proving that a statement is true?
- Which parts of the speech are funniest when delivered completely seriously?
- What does the monologue suggest about the relationship between political promises and what an audience wants to hear?

Performance & Classroom Note

A Vote for Me is a fictional political satire designed for acting instruction and performance. The Candidate and opponent are intentionally unnamed and are not identified with any real political party, candidate, administration, or election. The monologue focuses on exaggerated campaign promises, persuasive rhetoric, fear appeals, audience manipulation, and the performance skills involved in delivering a political speech.

Teachers can use the monologue primarily as an acting exercise or, with older students, as an opportunity to discuss how rhetoric, repetition, emotional appeals, status, and audience awareness influence persuasive speaking.

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