

My New President

I remember reading US history. I thought it was boring. Lots of facts. Lots of dates. Lots of names. Lots of maps. I liked the pictures. That was about it.

We had to take a Constitution test. I failed it. I didn't know which was which. I mixed up the executive branch and the legislative branch. I knew what the judicial branch did. It's got part of the word "judge" in it. So I knew it was about judging. I knew that the President was the head of the executive branch. But I didn't know what he did. It took me three times to pass that exam.

Then this year I paid attention. There was an election. I was proud. Someone like me was running for President. I didn't think he would be elected, though. I couldn't imagine that I could be President. There never was an African-American President.

My mother said, "Don't be too sure. It could happen. We once elected an African-American mayor of Chicago."

I thought about that. But I didn't expect Barack Obama would win. I hoped he would.

My mother said, "Nothing happens if you do nothing. Why don't you help with the election." I said, "How can I help? I am only 14."

"You can help get people registered to vote. You can help his campaign office. Go and ask."

So I did. I went to downtown Chicago that Saturday. The only other time I had been there was to go to museums or Niketown. This time I went to a building where there was a big office. It was very open, lots of people at desks on the phone. I said, "Can I help?"

A young man at the front desk said, "Yes you can, can you start now?" I said, sure. So he asked me to help with mailings. I put letters into envelopes. I must have stuffed at least 300 envelopes by the end of that day.

I went downtown every Saturday after that. I made phone calls. They showed me how to use the Internet. I logged emails. That means counting how many come in from different people.

I also watched the news and read the newspaper. I read about the election. I read what Barack Obama said. I went to a speech he gave in Chicago. I figured out that the Executive Branch does a lot. They are in charge of the army. They are in charge of a lot.

I got hopeful. I kept saying, "Yes we can" to myself. And we did. Now the head of the Executive Branch is My President. I am part of US history.

CCSS Anchor Reading Standard 1. **Read closely** to determine what the text says **explicitly** and to **make logical inferences** from it; **cite specific textual evidence** when writing or speaking to **support conclusions** drawn from the text.

1. Sequence: Which event happened first? Which happened last?
2. Character Traits: Name one character. What is one trait you infer that character has? Explain why you think that.
3. Motive: What is something that person does? Why do you think that person does that?
4. Summarize: Summarize the story in four sentences. Tell about the characters and what they do.
5. Main Idea: What do you think is the main idea of the story? Why?