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# **Words and Ballots**

A Textbook

2011

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# Introduction

This book contains materials and activities to be used in a course of English language for students of political science and international relations. It is meant to provide an introduction to the language used in making politics, both by the media and by politicians themselves. The central theme, which runs throughout the volume, is that of elections.

The aim of the book is to help students develop reading and listening skills. Materials consist of texts from the news media and public speeches by prominent political figures, and span the range of ten years, going from the aftermath of 9/11/2001 to the US midterm elections of 2010.

The book presupposes a B1 level at the very minimum, but it is also suitable for more advanced students who want to further their knowledge of English as it is used in and for politics. Students reading the book for self study are advised to use a good monolingual dictionary and to consult the references given at the end of the volume.

The first part of the volume focuses on reading activities based on news stories and opinion articles published around the time of elections. More specifically, the articles concern the US Presidential elections of 2008, the UK general election of 2010 and the US midterm elections of 2010. Some activities focus on a review of structural features of the English language, familiarity with which should enhance students' skills to decode written texts.

The second part focuses on listening activities, and is based in particular on speeches by two US presidents, George W. Bush and Barack Obama, and by the candidates for the office of Prime Minister in the 2010 UK general election. In order to do the activities in the second part, it is necessary to watch the videos of the speeches, which can be found in the DVD accompanying the volume.

On a grey background, infoboxes include readings that will give students a better understanding of the texts used in the activities, but which are not themselves associated with any specific task. These texts are mainly adapted from sources in the common domain, such as Wikipedia entries.

Different spelling conventions have been preserved in the original sources, and spelling has not otherwise been standardized, thus reflecting variety of use.

A key to all activities is also provided at the end of the volume.

The sources for the extracts from newspaper articles are listed in the reference section at the end of the volume. The reproduction of these extracts in this volume is believed to fall under fair-use conventions (see e.g. <http://jhepp.library.jhu.edu/drupal/fairuse>).