



September 2008 News

Information Resource Center (IRC)

Public Affairs Section - U.S. Embassy

87, Ata Al-Ayoubi Street, Abou Rumaneh, Damascus

Tel.: 011-3391-4118/3391-4195

E-mail: ircdamas@state.gov/ircdamas@gmail.com

<http://damascus.usembassy.gov/irc.html>

A Look at the Information Resource Center (IRC)

The Information Resource Center is a specialized reference and research facility located in the American Cultural Center. Through a wide variety of online databases, we provide you with free, comprehensive and authoritative information on all aspects of the United States. We have access to documents on domestic and foreign policies, media issues, legislative developments, as well as social, economic and political issues.

The IRC is the place to access research and reference materials. The staff responds to inquiries for in-depth information from a diverse group of people including journalists, professors, authors, scientists, and business people. IRC staff can also provide individualized instruction for researchers, scholars and journalists, using the IRC's traditional and electronic resources.

IRC service:

Outreach Program: Our outreach program includes:

1. The creation of specialized information packages in response to institutional or individual inquiries.
2. Daily electronic distribution of news, articles and research papers on a wide range of topics such as political, economic, social and cultural issues. Interested Syrian professionals can join this service by contacting the IRC staff to enroll and start receiving materials in their chosen field of interest.
3. E-Docs alert service: provides an annotation and URL for reports, studies and papers. It includes documents from: (1) U.S. executive agencies and the Congressional branch; (2) think tanks; (3) professional associations; and (4) international organization. IRC will send you these annotations classified by themes, with the URL to access the full report. If it is inconvenient for you to print out long reports, IRC invites you to visit us and get the full text report in hard copy free of charge.

Internet Café: The IRC Internet Café has eleven computers with free Internet. The computers are available to the public from 12:00 - 4:30 pm Sunday through Thursday. If you are unfamiliar with the Internet, IRC staff can help with individualized training.

The IRC staff provides quick assistance and research using our resources. Queries are accepted by phone at 3391-4118/3391-4195, email at ircdamas@state.gov, or by appointment during working hours.

All IRC services are free of charge. A nominal fee per page is charged for printing from the IRC computers and for photocopying. The IRC is open to anyone age 18 and older. Entry to the Center requires a valid identification card for Syrians or a valid passport for non-Syrians.

Service Hours:

Sunday–Thursday

12:00 pm – 4:30 pm

During Ramadan: Sunday-Thursday, 10:30 am – 2:30 pm

Please note:

IRC has extended its hours and services till 6:00 pm on Wednesday nights. Stop by and see us on your way to the [Wednesday Night Movie!](#)

Online Databases:

The IRC offers you free access to the EBSCOhost online database. Access is only available through IRC computers. Research is free and you pay only 1 SP per printed page. Please contact us to learn more about this free service and arrange for an appointment.

EBSCOhost is a collection of online journal databases containing thousands of journal articles covering a wide variety of topics. This multi-disciplinary database provides full text for more than 4,500 journals, including full text for more than 3,700 peer-reviewed titles. PDF back files to 1975 or further are available for well over one hundred journals, and searchable cited references are provided for 1,000 titles.

If you need to find journal articles for a research paper or project, EBSCOhost is a great place to begin your search.

Become an IRC Fan!



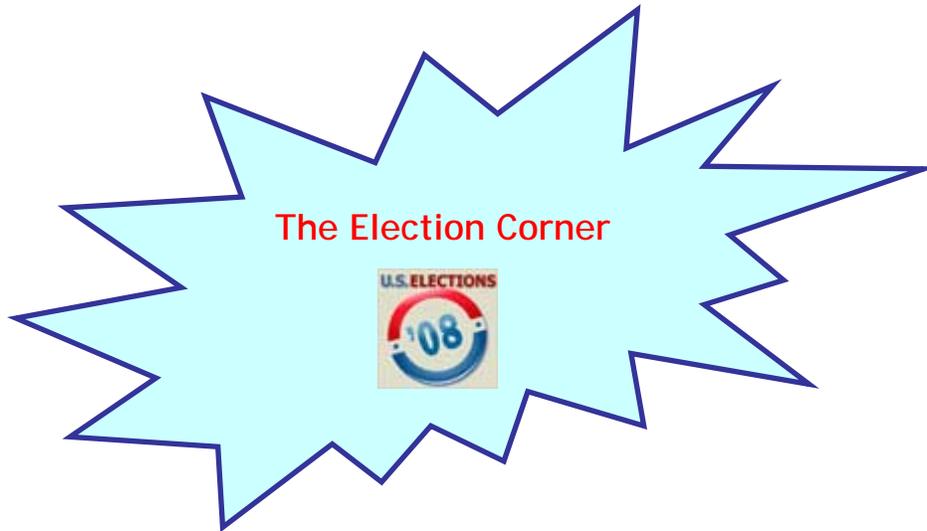
Visit our Facebook page and become one of our Fans!

Be the first to be invited to our cultural events, learn more about studying in USA, read our news and announcements, join our discussion board, send us questions and queries, and write on our wall.

IRC Damascus on Facebook:

<http://www.facebook.com/pages/Damascus-Syria/IRC-Damascus/19451965179>

SEE YOU AT THE IRC!



The Election Corner

This feature will allow those of you interested in the 2008 U.S. Elections to get updated information, look at related governmental and non-governmental websites, get statistical resources, and help you learn more about the U.S. Elections process.

Foreign Policy and Political Nominating Conventions

Author: Joanna Klonsky, Campaign 2008 Staff
Council on Foreign Relations
August 21, 2008

Website: <http://www.cfr.org/publication/16992>

Introduction: Every four years, Republican and Democratic delegates gather to appoint presidential nominees and formulate their party's platform for the general election. Until the middle of the twentieth century, conventions offered great drama in the choosing of presidential candidates and in some cases, they exposed intra-party differences over foreign policy and other issues. For the past couple of decades, though, there has been little suspense over the choice of candidates. The results of the presidential primary contests earlier this year were confirmed in late August 2008 when the Democratic gathering in Denver nominated Sen. [Barack Obama](#) (D-IL), and the Republican convention in Minneapolis-St. Paul endorsed Sen. [John McCain](#) (R-AZ) to be the GOP's presidential standard-bearer. Some experts say the significance of conventions has decreased in recent years as platforms are increasingly dictated by the campaigns of the presumptive nominees. Still, conventions have served to draw national attention to candidates and this year could showcase sharp differences over issues such as the Iraq war, energy expansion, and free trade.

[Click here to read the rest of this article, and see answers to questions such as:](#)

- Why do political parties hold conventions?
- What is the significance of party platforms?
- What role has foreign policy played in crafting platforms?
- Will foreign policy issues be contentious at conventions this year?
- How important are the convention speeches?

More related election articles can be found using these links:

GOING FOR THE BRONZE: Third parties to have an impact in '08?

When political reporters run low on topics to write about, they often turn their attention to third parties -- the "lovable losers" of American politics. They never win at the presidential level but often are called upon to add color to campaigns that are sometimes badly in need of it.

Getting More Out of the Polls:

Political observers have become more sophisticated in their reading of polls in recent years. They know enough now not to read too much into summer polls. Poll leaders in June are not any more likely to win than their opponents who trail them in the summer polls. By the time of the conventions, though, polls become more meaningful.

Conventional Wisdom: Your handy guide to America's political conventions both past and present.

WHAT AN ELECTION! Two tickets full of history, one headed by the first African-American in position to become president, the other with a woman situated to become the nation's first female vice president. Could it be that, in this increasingly diverse nation, we have seen the last of the all-white male party offerings that have characterized every presidential election in American history until 2008?

Daily Presidential Tracking Poll

Gallup Daily Tracking Poll

Official 2008 Republican Platform

Renewing America's Promise: Report of the democratic platform committee



Upcoming Webchats

Web chats are online, text-based discussions that allow audiences outside the United States to interact with American citizens on a wide range of topics. U.S. government and private sector subject experts, academics, journalists, and everyday citizens are brought on as guests to do web chats on USINFO.

To participate, you only need a computer with Internet access and a browser. There is no special software to be downloaded.

For more information, please see the link below:

<http://usinfo.state.gov/usinfo/Products/Webchats/faq.html>

Date: August 25 – September 8, 2008

Topic: Live from the 2008 Political Conventions



The 2008 Democratic and Republican party conventions represent the culmination of months of party primaries and caucuses, resulting in the selection of two official candidates for the U.S. presidency. Please join our daily webchats & webcasts, coming to you live from the convention sites in Denver and Minneapolis. Our 2008 political convention webchats & webcasts will feature a wide array of guests, from delegates attending the events to political pundits and analysts -- from across the political spectrum - - providing their take on each day's events.

To join the video web casts: <http://www.cpcwebcast.com/state/>

To join the web chats:

<http://departmentofstate.acrobat.com/conventions08>

Click link to download the full schedule of elections Webcasts & Webchats:

http://www.america.gov/media/pdf/webchats/iip_convention_schedule.pdf

See also:

[U.S. Elections](#)

[America.gov's Elections Blog: Campaign Trail Talk](#)

[The Candidates](#)

[The Issues](#)

Date: Tuesday, September 9
Time: 21:00 in Syria
Topic: English Roundtable



Join us as we explore the ins and outs of English in our next **English Roundtable on September 9 at 9:00 pm in Syria**, click http://www.america.gov/multimedia/askamerica.html#english_roundtable_2008

This month's topic: **Emotions in Learning**. Traditionally, emotion and cognition have been viewed as polar opposites. Many of the learning theories we know and have followed have incorporated this view. Plato regarded emotions as "irrational urges that needed to be controlled through the use of reason," and Descartes thought "If I am because I think, then I am undone if I feel," and Kant thought that emotion was an illness of the mind. So, learning theories have treated emotion and cognition as separate entities with cognitive processes having the primary focus and place in the learning process. These are issues we would like to discuss during our next English roundtable web chat.

[Transcript of our July 8 Roundtable \(PDF\)](#)
[Transcript of our June 3 Roundtable \(PDF\)](#)
[Transcript of our May 13 Roundtable \(PDF\)](#)

Past Web Chats

If you are looking for past web chats, please click here:
http://www.america.gov/multimedia/askamerica.html#askamericagov_elections_2008

Blogs at America.gov

Welcome to the new "Blogs at America.gov"

Welcome to the new Blogs at America.gov. This new site offers readers a place to join in conversation on variety of topics with experts from the United States and around the world. We encourage you to share your thoughts with our bloggers and fellow readers in the comments section of each post.

Our Blogs

We are launching with three blogs on issues that have been at the forefront of recent news. Several more blogs will follow in the future.

Campaign Trail Talk

Campaign Trail Talk is your best source of information on the 2008 elections. We'll keep you posted on news, rumors and political chatter surrounding thousands of political races. Have questions about the electoral process? Or comments about the candidates? Let us know what you think - you decide what we talk about here.

Democracy Roundtable

This conversation is about the challenges facing democratic governance around the world. Join experts from internationally respected nongovernmental organizations in talking about established, emerging and aspiring democracies – looking at progress and setbacks in individual nations with an eye on how a nation's unique history and culture influence the shape and face of its democracy.

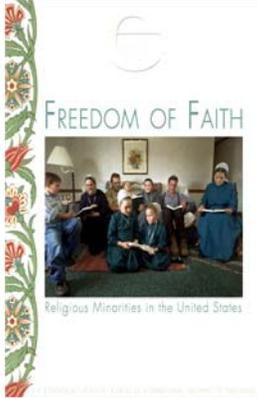
Rumors, Myths and Fabrications

Todd Leventhal, a State Department expert on rumors and conspiracy theories, talks about false stories in the press and on the Internet.



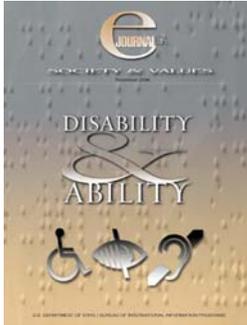
Electronic Journals

Freedom of Faith



<http://www.america.gov/publications/ejournalusa.html>

The principle of religious freedom is a cherished right in the United States, one that has historical roots older than the formation of the nation itself. In the 21st century, the United States pulses with a unique cultural chemistry brought on by a wave of immigration which has brought followers of more diverse faiths to many communities. This edition of E-journal USA examines how the nation adjusts to these demographic changes to remain true to the principles of freedom of faith.



Disability and Ability

<http://www.america.gov/publications/ejournalusa.html#1106>

With support, people can overcome even severe disabilities while maximizing their abilities and lead fulfilling and productive lives. We hope you will enjoy reading about the Americans with Disabilities law and about the programs underway to help turn disabilities into abilities, from accommodation to technology and medical research. Opening opportunities and removing barriers to people with disabilities is a work in progress, but the results can be truly inspiring.

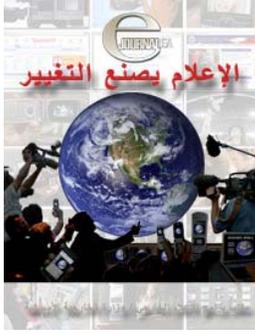


مهاجرون ينضمون إلى التيار العام

<http://usinfo.state.gov/ar/img/assets/4756/immigrants.pdf>

طرح المزارع المهاجر الفرنسي هكتور سانت جون دي كريفكور في 1781 السؤال الشهير التالي: من هو الأميركي؟ وكان الجواب الشائع لدى الأميركيين منذ ذلك التاريخ: هو ان كون المرء أميركيا لا يعتمد على من أين جاء أسلافه. وفي الولايات المتحدة يعتمد من هو الأميركي على، وقبل كل شيء، القبول ببعض

المثل العليا الأساسية الأميركية مثل الحكومة الممثلة للشعب، وسيادة القانون وحرية الفرد.



الإعلام يصنع التغيير

<http://usinfo.state.gov/journals/itgic/1207/ijga/ijga1207.pdf>

تمنح تكنولوجيا وسائل الإعلام الجديدة المواطن العادي القدرة على الوصول إلى كمية هائلة من المعلومات وشبكات واسعة من الناس. ويمكن للناس استخدام هذه الأدوات لتحقيق برامج اجتماعية وسياسية يضعونها بأنفسهم. ويتناول هذا العدد من مجلة إي جورنال يو إس إيه E-journal USA كيفية تأثير هذا التمكين الجديد على الدول في مختلف أنحاء العالم.

Photo Gallery and Videos

Telling America's story with photos and videos.

Offering an audio-visual tour of the stories and issues shaping our world, the photo gallery and videos are two of many invaluable services "America.gov" site offers for its audience. Both, the gallery and videos can be browsed by the following subjects: Foreign Policy, U.S. Politics, American Life, Democracy, Science and Health.

Photo Gallery: Please visit the below galleries or go to the photo gallery direct link to see more photo collections.

<http://www.america.gov/multimedia/photogallery.html#7a78bf28-e356-4d21-a311-0c218ec8f6f8>

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|---|---|---|---|
| <p>Science & Health:</p>  <p>The Modern Oil Era</p> | <p>American Life:</p>  <p>American Icons - Entertainers and Artists</p> | <p>American Life:</p>  <p>The American Religious Landscape</p> | <p>Science & Health:</p>  <p>Exploring Mars</p> |
|---|---|---|---|

Videos: Please point the mouse on any picture then use "Ctrl" key and click on the link to take you the video you want to watch or go to the link below to see all the video collection.

<http://www.america.gov/multimedia/video.html?playerId=1475282956>



[The Electoral College in US Elections](#)

2 min. 19 sec.



[The Arab International Festival](#)

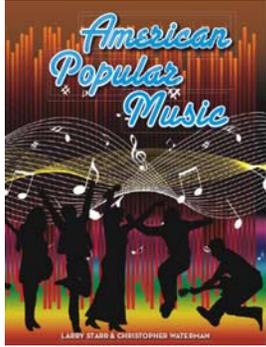
3 min. 54 sec.

Websites of Interest

Below are selections of U.S. government websites which will help you find basic information:

1. <http://govengine.com>
2. <http://govspot.com>
3. Official U.S. Government search engines: www.usa.gov and <http://america.gov>
4. Selected congressional research service reports on the u.s. congress and its procedures: <http://www.llsdc.net/sourcebook/crscongress.htm>
5. How to find current U.S. legislation being considered by the U.S Congress: <http://thomas.loc.gov/>
6. Subject guide to U.S. government documents: maintained by professional librarians: <http://www.browsetopics.gov/>

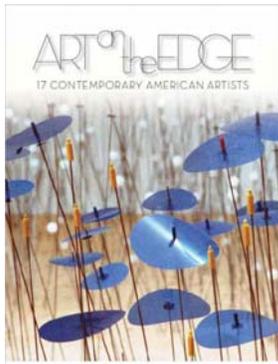
Publications



American Popular Music

American popular music is a kaleidoscopic mélange of styles and dreams. Its vibrancy reflects the mating of cultural diversity to artistic and creative freedom. The stories in this book illustrate how Americans, borrowing from diverse musical traditions, have contributed to humanity's universal language.

<http://www.america.gov/publications/books.html>



Art on the Edge

This joint publication of the State Department's ART in Embassies Program and its Bureau of International Information Programs showcases the work of 17 contemporary American artists. All have made their art available in U.S. ambassador's residences in countries around the world. As a group, these up-and-comers exemplify such bedrock American values as innovation, diversity, freedom, individualism, and competitive excellence.

http://www.america.gov/publications/books.html#art_edge

Hard copies of these publications are available at the Information Resource Center. Please visit us for a free copy.