

# Republicans choose Romney for US presidential race

Mitt Romney has beaten off conservative rivals to become the official presidential candidate of the US Republican Party. By the end of the year, he could be the most powerful man on the planet.



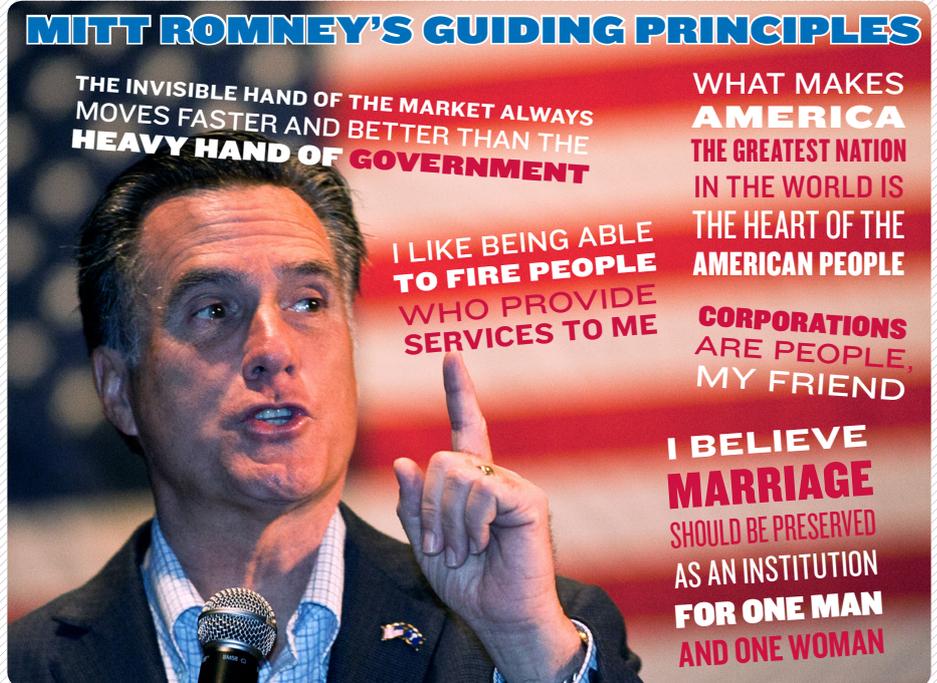
RELIGIOUS STUDIES  
HISTORY & POLITICS

**A**fter a long and bruising primary campaign, the US conservative politician Mitt Romney has finally secured enough support to become the official presidential candidate of America's Republican Party. In November, he will take on his rival from the Democrat Party, President Barack Obama, in the 2012 presidential elections. If he wins, he will become leader of the United States – making him probably the single most powerful man in the world.

It will be a tight contest. At the moment, opinion polls put Romney and Obama nearly neck and neck.

So who is the man who could soon be the 45th President of the United States? As a candidate for America's highest office, he will be subjected to intense examination over the coming six months. He will be hoping that voters like what they see.

Attention will focus on three areas: Romney's record as a leader, his char-



acter as a family man, and his spiritual values. In each area, his allies and his enemies will be doing their best to spin the facts to their own advantage.

Romney's proudest achievement as a leader is his time in charge of a private equity firm called Bain Capital. Under Romney's leadership, the company became one of the top financial businesses in America. Romney was ruthless, cautious and effective, and made millions of dollars for himself and his shareholders.

His personal life fits closely with the American ideal: he has been married to the same woman for more than forty years, and has five grown-up children. And if Democrats point to evidence of misbehaviour in Romney's youth, Republicans can say the same thing about Barack Obama.

But the most important thing in the election will be what voters think about Romney's fundamental values. His enemies say Romney has no real princi-

ples, and will do whatever it takes to win the election. They accuse him of pandering to the right wing of his party – telling extreme conservatives things he does not really believe in order to win their votes.

His friends, on the other hand, say he has deep and important values, based on his religious faith. Romney is a practising Mormon – a member of a minority Christian group. Allies say that at heart he is guided by his spiritual side: he believes America is uniquely blessed; he prays before making big decisions; he follows his path because he believes it is the will of God.

## POLICY OR PERSONALITY?

Some serious political commentators think that all this analysis of Romney's personality is just a distraction. Do not focus on the man, they say. Focus on his policies and economic plans.

Others think the opposite is true. Policies can change. What does not change, they say, is a person's character.

## Q & A

**Q Why does Romney matter if he isn't even president yet?**

**A** Romney's chances of becoming president in November are probably around fifty-fifty. As President of the USA, Romney could shape the future of the world.

**Q Really? He's just one man.**

**A** Even so, the USA is still the world's only superpower. American troops are stationed all over the world, and countries from Europe to Japan depend on American support for their security. What America does on the world stage matters for everyone.

**Q And is there any real difference between Romney and Obama?**

**A** Romney seems more optimistic about

American power. He is more confrontational with nations he sees as hostile, like China, Russia or Iran. Obama is more cautious, and prefers to reach out and negotiate.

## SOME PEOPLE SAY...

**'A bad family man could still be an excellent national leader.'**

WHAT DO YOU THINK?

## ► Republicans choose Romney for US presidential race

### WORD WATCH

**Secured enough support** – In the US election system, each of the two parties (Republican on the right and Democrat on the left) must nominate one person to be their presidential candidate. Romney was competing against other Republicans to be the nominee. He has been in the lead for some time, but has only just gained enough support to make victory in this ‘primary contest’ inevitable.

**Opinion polls** – Opinion polls take a random sample of people and ask them which candidate they support. The idea is that if, for example, 40% of a random group of 2,000 people support Obama – that means 40% of all people in the country would support Obama in a real election.

**Misbehaviour** – Both Obama and Romney are accused of behaving badly as teenagers. Romney is alleged to have bullied a gay classmate. Obama is known to

have used marijuana, and possibly a small amount of cocaine.

**Mormon** – The Church of Jesus Christ of the Latter Day Saints, often called the Mormon Church, after the name of its holy book, is a Christian denomination founded in the USA during the 19th Century. Mormon belief differs significantly from more mainstream Christian belief – to the extent that some other branches of Christianity refuse to recognise Mormons as Christian at all.

### YOU DECIDE

1. Is a business career good preparation for running a country?
2. Is it important to know about a presidential candidate’s religious beliefs?

### ACTIVITIES

1. Imagine you were running for office, and tell your own life story in a way that would make people want to vote for you.
2. Watch a political advertisement from the US presidential race. As a class, try to pick out and list the tricks the advert uses to convince you to support one or other of the candidates.

 **BECOME AN EXPERT** Check our website for a selection of useful links to videos and further reading.

 **NOTES**

