

Presidential Debates

With its keen observations, diligent research, and insider revelations, Alan Schroeder's popular, big-picture history explores the phenomenon of American presidential debates like no other volume. From pundits to political operatives, debate moderators to the viewing public, Schroeder examines how the various stakeholders make and experience this powerful event. For this third edition, Schroeder analyzes the 2008 and 2012 presidential debates and the role of social media and contemporary news outlets in shaping their design and reception. He also expands his coverage of previous campaigns, including the landmark 1960 meeting between John F. Kennedy and Richard Nixon. Second only to the Super Bowl in viewers, presidential debates are must-see TV, yet their conception and execution largely remain a mystery to the public even to journalists. Schroeder details the key phases of the debate: anticipation, in which campaigns negotiate rules, formulate strategy, prepare answers, and steer press coverage; execution, in which the candidates, moderators, panelists, and television professionals create and project the event; and reaction, in which commentators, spin doctors, and the public evaluate the performance and move storylines in new directions. New chapters focus on real-time debate responses and the extent to which post-debate news coverage influences voter decision making and candidate behavior.

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