

Barack Obama Document Based Analysis

- *What are the different viewpoints of Barack Obama? What are the major reasons for these different viewpoints?*

Document 1

Barack Obama "Hope" Poster by artist Shepard Fairey 2008 for the 2008 presidential election.
(Note: other versions of this poster include the words "change" and "progress" in place of "hope")



Document 2

Excerpt from Barack Obama's Inaugural Speech in 2009 (Note an Inaugural speech is given by new presidents after they take the presidential oath of office.)

That we are in the midst of crisis is now well understood. Our nation is at war against a far-reaching network of violence and hatred. Our economy is badly weakened, a consequence of greed and irresponsibility on the part of some, but also our collective failure to make hard choices and prepare the nation for a new age. Homes have been lost, jobs shed, businesses shuttered. Our health care is too costly, our schools fail too many -- and each day brings further evidence that the ways we use energy strengthen our adversaries and threaten our planet.

These are the indicators of crisis, subject to data and statistics. Less measurable, but no less profound, is a sapping of confidence across our land; a nagging fear that America's decline is inevitable, that the next generation must lower its sights.

Today I say to you that the challenges we face are real. They are serious and they are many. They will not be met easily or in a short span of time. But know this America: They will be met

Document 3

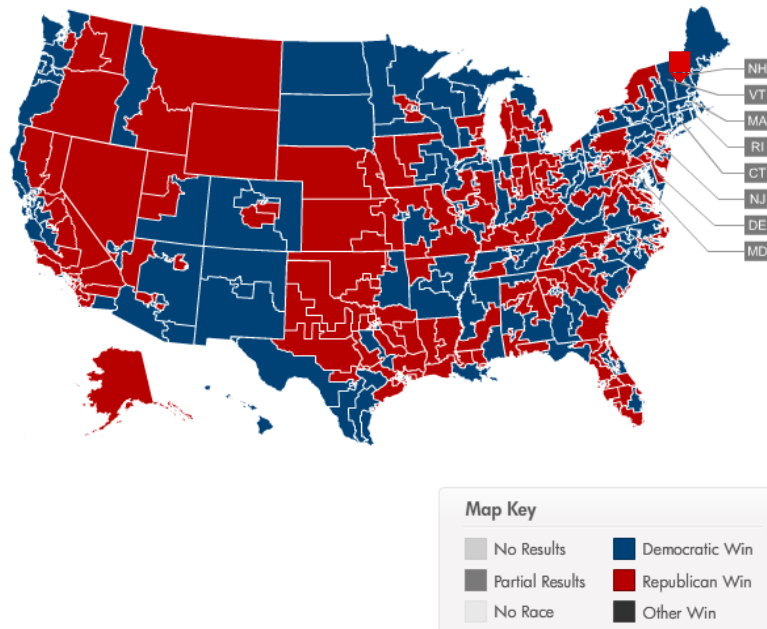
Political Cartoon: "The Two Modes of President Obama." Cartoon by Daniel Kutzman. (Note: Kutzman is a political writer who lives in Washington D.C.)



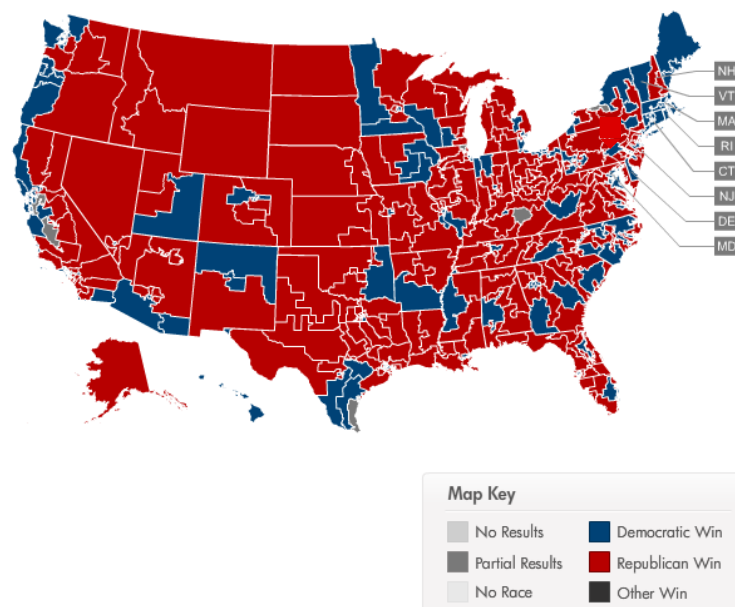
Document 4

Election maps showing results of the 2008 and 2010 elections for the House of Representatives.

2008 Election



2010 Midterm Elections.



Document 5

"Are You Better Off?" by William McGurn from the Wall Street Journal, June 21st 2011. (Note: William McGurn was a supporter and Chief speech writer for President George W. Bush.)

In 2008, Mr. Obama was the man of the future, the candidate of change who declared that his nomination would mark the moment "when the rise of oceans began to slow and our planet began to heal." Alas, instead of assuring us that a brighter future is just ahead, these days the president seems focused on painting the past in ever darker colors.

From his first days in office, of course, President Obama has made "the worst economic crisis since the Great Depression" a standard talking point. More recently, however, he added that he "did not realize the magnitude, because most economists didn't realize the magnitude, until fairly far into it."

Document 6

***"The Situation Room" An official White House photograph taken by Pete Souza May 1, 2011
About the Photo: This photograph was taken in the situation room of the White House during the raid by U.S. Special forces on Osama Bin Laden's compound in Pakistan. In this photo you can see President Obama, Vice President Joe Biden, Secretary of State Hillary Clinton, Defense Secretary Robert Gates along with other members of the National Security team.***



Document 7

"Judging Obama As A Leader" by Norm Smallwood September 4th 2009. Forbes Magazine

Does he have all the fundamental attributes that set great ones apart?

With less than a year as president under his belt, polls are showing that people have widely varying views of President Barack Obama's leadership. He's a good leader because he has taken on critical issues concerning the economy, the war and health care. He's a bad leader because of what he's done with the economy, the war and health care. Other than judging his success or failure according to our political leanings, how can we keep score?

One approach to assessing leaders is to think of what they do in two parts, their attributes and the results they get. To understand this perspective, look at how Jimmy Carter and Bill Clinton compare as presidential leaders. Generally, most would agree that Carter had extremely high levels of integrity and character (attributes), while he delivered relatively poor results (for instance on the economy). Clinton scores virtually the opposite, high on economic results but low on character attributes. It's still very early to judge Obama on his results, but it's not too early to look at his leadership attributes and how they are likely to shape his results over the next few years.

A great deal has been written about the essential attributes of leadership, and there is a huge variety of opinion about what really counts. To combat this lack of consensus, my colleagues Dave Ulrich, Kate Sweetman and I synthesized the most important leadership research of the past four decades and identified five dimensions that are essential to world-class leadership. We call them the Leadership Code and describe them in our book, [*The Leadership Code*](#). Using the code to analyze Obama's leadership attributes, we find that he's got all the right tools.

Rule 1: Shape the future. Obama clearly is a visionary with a new approach to politics. He has proclaimed a strategy for moving the country forward that is vastly different from his predecessor's, proposing shifts in our relationship with the rest of the world and in our relationships with one another. In his campaign, he built on the grassroots strategy that Howard Dean had started and threw in a lot of ideas of his own. As president he continues to provide clear views on the economic crisis, the Iraq War, health care reform, climate change and the U.S.' role as a global citizen.

Rule 2: Make things happen. It is easier to describe a bright new future than to make one happen. Obama's task is to turn what he wants into what is done, using his party's majority status in Congress as well as his bully pulpit as a world leader to cajole, collaborate, persuade and counsel others to deliver. His early results are promising. His stimulus bill seems to have pulled the economy out of its nosedive and saved us from an economic collapse. He has extended health insurance to 4 million middle-class children. He has secured the Environmental Protection Administration's authority to limit climate-warming pollution under the Clean Air Act.

Rule 3: Engage today's talent. Leaders who engage the best talent get short-term hard work done while maintaining high esprit de corps. Obama has mastered this skill. He doesn't do things alone, and he doesn't pretend to. To get elected, he created a national network of organizers and led that talent not just by inspiring support or cooperation but by building a rabidly devoted fan base that would put its lives on hold for the sake of his mission. In office, he took a team-of-rivals approach for selecting his Cabinet, and today he has high levels of support and engagement among his team.

Rule 4: Build the next generation. When leaders build the next generation, they pay attention to building

the skills necessary not just for the short term but for the longer future. Obama is laying the groundwork for next-generation skills, pushing ahead on climate change, health care, infrastructure development and in a host of other areas.

Rule 5: Invest in yourself. The core of effectiveness at implementing the first four rules is personal proficiency. Leaders must invest steadily in their intellectual, spiritual, emotional and physical improvement to be able to deal with the demands of leadership. Obama himself is a story of leadership as change. Anyone who has read his 1994 autobiography has been introduced to a person always willing to ask: Who am I? What do I stand for? Why? How do I get continually better at delivering on my own promises to myself?

President Obama has every one of the Leadership Code attributes to do his job in a superior manner. But can he also deliver results? That remains to be seen.

Today, those who agree with Obama's policies score his leadership attributes high and also believe that his policies will lead to the right results. Those who disagree with his policies and are skeptical of his results shouldn't throw out the baby with the bath water. Don't give Obama's leadership competencies short shrift.

At this point in his presidency, skeptics can place Obama on a leadership par with Jimmy Carter--having good attributes but unproven results. To move up the leadership list and get closer to Lincoln, Washington and Franklin Roosevelt, he will have to aim his impressive set of attributes at the right set of policies--and deliver.