

## Tested by Fire

For this assignment, you will need the following articles:

- ["Barack Obama, Forever Sizing Up"](#) by Jodi Kantor
- ["John McCain, Flexible Aggression"](#) by David D. Kirkpatrick

Each author composes a character study of what a presidency might be like under each potential president. Your job is to use what you know about American history to imagine these presidents, as presented in the articles, in various national crises that preceded their nominations (and, in some cases, lifetimes).

Your assignment:

1. Read the articles. They're not short, but they're interesting.
2. Choose a historical event below.
3. Write a short essay including the following:
  - a. **What actually happened:** a brief overview of the historical event
  - b. **Obama's approach:** How might an Obama presidency react? What would be the potential outcome?
  - c. **McCain's approach:** How might a McCain presidency react? What would be the potential outcome?
  - d. **Imagining 2008:** Had that potential outcome been the result, how would our world be different today?

You can earn **up to four bonus points** for each event that you analyze. There are no right or wrong answers, but you'll be graded on your understanding of the events and the plausibility of your arguments.

You may respond to as many as four of the crises below as you wish. You can earn a ridiculous 16 bonus points if you do the work, but it's a lot of work.

If you only want to cover McCain or Obama, that's fine; each response would then be worth two points. If you respond to more than one crisis, one "Imagining 2008" at the end can cover multiple outcomes.

Have fun with this, and get it to me no later than Wednesday, October 29.

Choose from:

- October 29, 1929: A day after the stock market crashes, banks begin to fail as frightened customers pull out all their money.
- October 4, 1957: The Soviet Union launches the first man-made satellite, *Sputnik 1*, into orbit.
- October 16, 1962: President Kennedy is shown aerial photographs of Soviet ballistic missiles in Cuba.
- September 11, 2001: Al Qaeda operatives fly four commercial airliners toward civilian targets in Pennsylvania, New York, and Washington.