

Barack Obama

Quick Facts

Do you know these facts?
If not, use the reading on page 2 to help you.

Name:	Bara ___ Hussein ___ ama
President #:	__4
Nationality:	Amer _____
Quote:	Yes, we _____!



Pre-Reading

A. Warm-Up Questions

1. Who is Barack Obama?
2. What state is Barack Obama from?
3. Name three English *adjectives* that describe Barack Obama.
(Remember: *Adjectives* are describing words.)

B. Vocabulary Preview

Match the words on the left with the correct meanings on the right.

- | | | |
|---------------|-------------------------------|--|
| <u> b </u> | 1. nickname (<i>noun</i>) | a) the large connected country, not the islands |
| <u> </u> | 2. divorce (<i>verb</i>) | b) a fun or short name, not your real name |
| <u> a </u> | 3. mainland (<i>noun</i>) | c) something you learn or know how to do |
| <u> c </u> | 4. skill (<i>noun</i>) | d) a competition to become a leader |
| <u> </u> | 5. election (<i>noun</i>) | e) soldiers on the ground |
| <u> </u> | 6. government (<i>noun</i>) | f) to move something in a certain direction (past tense = <i>brought</i>) |
| <u> </u> | 7. bring (<i>verb</i>) | g) a nation's wealth |
| <u> </u> | 8. troops (<i>noun</i>) | h) to end a marriage |
| <u> </u> | 9. improve (<i>verb</i>) | i) to make better |
| <u> </u> | 10. economy (<i>noun</i>) | j) the people who run the country or region |

Reading

1. Barack Obama was the first African American president. He was born in Hawaii in 1961. His **nickname** was *Barry*. His mother was from Kansas, and his father was from Kenya. After his parents **divorced**, he lived with his grandparents.
2. After high school, Barack Obama moved to the US **mainland**. He went to Harvard Law School. He met his wife, Michelle, in a law office. They had two daughters, Malia and Natasha (*Sasha*).
3. Obama had strong speaking and writing **skills**. In 2004, he joined the US Senate. Four years later, Barack Obama ran for president. He told Americans, "Yes, we can!", and he won the **election**.
4. On January 20, 2009, Barack Obama became the 44th president of the United States. Obama's **government** made important changes for America. They **brought** American **troops** home from Iraq and Afghanistan. They also **improved** the health care system and the **economy**. In 2012, Obama told Americans, "It begins with us." He won the election again.



Look and Find

The type of reading above is a *biography*. A biography describes the main events in a person's life. Read the biography again. Look for the following:

1. **Family Words:**

Examples: *mother, father*

2. **Proper Nouns:**

Examples: *Hawaii, Kansas*

Note:

A proper noun needs a capital letter. It refers to a specific (not general) person, place, or thing. In general, a mother is not a proper noun. When used as a name (e.g., I asked Mother to call us tonight), it is a proper noun. When used with a pronoun, (e.g., I'll call my mother), it is not a proper noun.

Comprehension

A. True, False, or Not Mentioned?

Read the biography again, or listen to a recording. Write T if the statement is true. Write F if the statement is false. Write NM if the fact is not mentioned.

- _____ 1. Barack Obama is from Kenya.
- _____ 2. Barack Obama met his wife in Hawaii.
- _____ 3. Natasha's nickname is Sasha.
- _____ 4. Barack Obama became president in 2009.
- _____ 5. Michelle Obama is American.

B. Timeline

Now, put the timeline in the correct order.

- _____ Barack Obama was born.
- _____ Barack Obama's parents divorced.
- _____ Barack Obama became president.
- _____ Barack Obama joined the US Senate.
- _____ Barack Obama lived with his grandparents.
- _____ Barack Obama won the election again.
- _____ Barack Obama moved to the mainland.

Pronunciation Practice

A. How to Say Years

Work with a partner. Practice saying these years from the reading. Make sure that your tongue is between your teeth for the /th/ in *thousand*. Note that the /d/ in *thousand* and *and* are usually reduced or silent.

Year	What to Say
1961	Nineteen sixty-one
2004	Two thousand an four
2008	Two thousand an eight
2009	Two thousand an nine
2012	Two thousand twelve / Twenty-twelve (UK) / Two thousand an twelve

B. What Happened That Year?

Make sentences about the topics below. Take turns saying your sentences out loud with your partner.

1. **Topic:** Barack Obama
Years: 1961, 2004, 2008, 2009, 2012
Example: *Barack Obama was born in 1961.*
2. **Topic:** your life
Years: important years in your life
Example: *I was born in 1975.*
(nineteen seventy-five)

Vocabulary Review

A. Complete the Sentences

Circle the correct word to complete each sentence.

- | | | |
|--|---|---|
| <p>1. Hawaii is not part of the US _____ .</p> <p>a) country
b) state
c) mainland</p> | <p>3. Writing and speaking are two of Obama's _____ .</p> <p>a) books
b) laws
c) skills</p> | <p>5. Obama's government improved _____ .</p> <p>a) troops
b) the economy
c) law school</p> |
| <p>2. Malia and Sasha are Barack Obama's _____ .</p> <p>a) wives
b) sisters
c) daughters</p> | <p>4. Barack Obama's parents were _____ .</p> <p>a) divorced
b) African
c) American</p> | <p>6. Barack Obama won the...</p> <p>a) election
b) law school
c) Senate</p> |

B. Word Forms

Are the following word groupings **nouns** or **verbs**? Remember, *nouns* are people, places, things, and ideas. *Verbs* are usually actions or states of being.

Hint: The verbs in the groupings are in the simple past tense.

- | | |
|--------------------------------|-------|
| 1. grandfather, daughter, wife | _____ |
| 2. believed, improved, brought | _____ |
| 3. mainland, nickname, troops | _____ |
| 4. Afghanistan, Iraq, America | _____ |
| 5. used, moved, lived | _____ |
| 6. agreed, improved, became | _____ |

In My Country – Yes, I Can!

Think about the laws in your country. Listen to your teacher say the following statements. Answer with *Yes, I can* or *No, I can't*.

- | | |
|-----------------------------------|--|
| 1. I can vote for the government. | 5. I can wear any clothing. |
| 2. I can steal a car. | 6. I can believe in any God. |
| 3. I can buy a house. | 7. I can write anything I want to write. |
| 4. I can drive a car. | 8. I can say anything I want to say. |

Listening

A. Gap Fill

Listen to a recording of this reading.
Fill in the gaps. Listen again and check your answers.

(Audio: <http://blog.esllibrary.com/2015/02/18/podcast-obama-low-int/>)

1. Barack Obama was the first African American president. He was born in Hawaii in 1961. His **nickname** was *Barry*. His mo____ was from Kansas, and his _____er was from Kenya. After his parents **divorced**, he lived with his grandparents.
2. After high school, Barack Obama moved to the US **mainland**. He went to Harvard Law School He met his _____e, Michelle, in a law office. They had two _____ght _____s, Malia and Natasha (*Sasha*).
3. Obama had strong speaking and writing **skills**. In 2004, he joined the US Senate. Four years later, Barack Obama ran for _____ . He told Americans, "Yes, we can!", and he won the **election**.
4. On January 20, 2009, Barack Obama became the 44th president of the United States. Obama's **government** made important changes for America. They **brought** American **troops** home from Iraq and Afghanistan. They also **improved** the _____ care system and the **economy**. In 2012, Obama told _____ , "It begins with us." He won the election again.



B. Extra Practice

Do you want more listening practice? After you fill in the gaps in Part A, listen to the recording a few more times. Underline all of the past tense verbs.