

Sarah had lived in the same small town her whole life, attending the same small neighborhood school and wishing she could think of a way to stand out from the crowd. Now it was the year before she went off to high school, and Sarah knew that it was time she left her mark on the world. She longed to be president of her eighth grade class. She had been planning her election campaign since she started middle school two years before. She had many ideas about how to make her school a better place. For starters, she wanted to create team-building activities and add new, interesting electives. Sarah knew she would be a great class president. She had been thinking about essential improvements to school for years, and she was extremely enthusiastic about her ability to take charge.

Unfortunately, most of the eighth grade class didn't take school politics as seriously as Sarah. In fact, her opponent, Joshua, hoped to win votes by giving out free candy at recess and promising less homework. Sarah was disgusted by his campaign strategies. When rumors spread that some students were going to vote for Joshua because they hated homework, Sarah's friends suggested she bake cookies to win her classmates over. But Sarah refused. As much as she wanted to be president, she wanted to win because she was committed to improving her school. Bribery was not something she wanted to be a part of.

The day before the election, Sarah and Joshua had to give speeches to the entire class. Everyone gathered in the gym to listen to the two candidates share their ideas. Sarah stuck to her values and confidently shared her thoughts about school improvement. She talked about plans to reduce the trash left in the courtyard after recess. She discussed ways her classmates could earn money to sponsor a really great dance to celebrate graduation. Joshua didn't have much to say, especially since his English teacher had already announced that there was no way he was going to eliminate homework. When the votes came in the next day, Sarah won by a landslide.