When people vote, what is most important? / Is it facts, reason and logic? / Or is it emotion and personal stories? / In the case of America, / researcher and psychologist Drew Westen believes the latter has the most importance.

In Westen’s words: ‘The political brain is an emotional brain. / It is not a dispassionate, calculating machine, / objectively searching for the right facts, figures, and policies to make a reasoned decision.’

There are three things which determine how people vote: / their feelings toward the political parties, / their feelings toward the candidates, / and, if they haven’t decided by then, / their feelings toward the candidates’ policy positions.

Throughout the last fifty years of American election history, / it seems that the Republican Party has understood this better than the Democratic Party has. / Westen argues that politicians like George Bush and Ronald Reagan knew how to appeal to people’s emotions, / while Democrat politicians like John Kerry and Michael Dukakis didn’t. / However, it seems that the Democratic Party has learnt this lesson. / The new President, Barack Obama joins John F Kennedy and Bill Clinton as a speaker who has been supremely effective at winning the public over emotionally.

Note: ‘/’ indicates where the speaker should pause to allow students to catch up.