



UNIT

3

# Political Parties and Interest Groups



Hearing-impaired students  
rally at Gallaudet University,  
Washington, D.C.

★ **Chapter 9** Political Parties and Politics

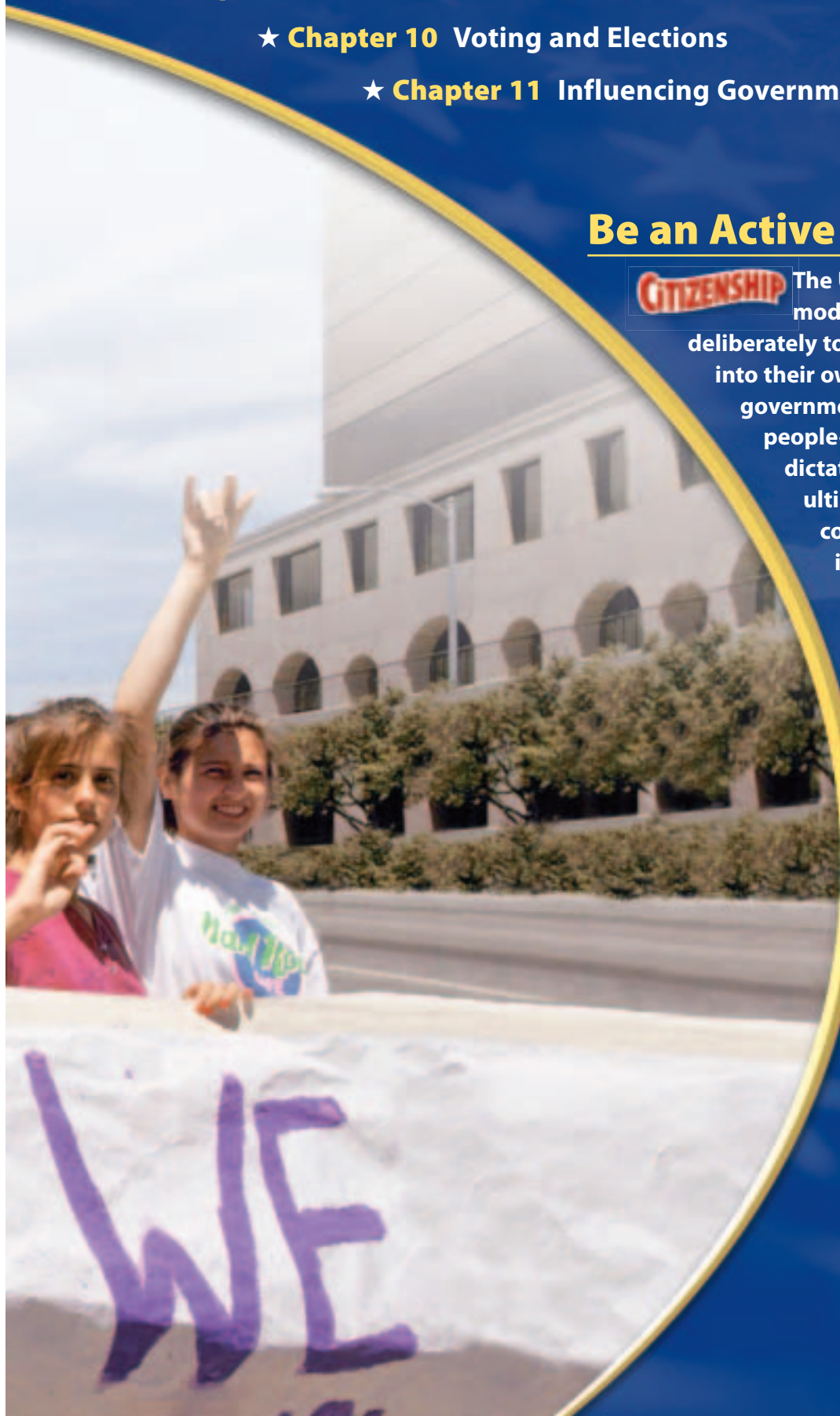
★ **Chapter 10** Voting and Elections

★ **Chapter 11** Influencing Government

## Be an Active Citizen

### CITIZENSHIP

The United States is the first modern nation in which citizens deliberately took governmental power into their own hands. They created a governmental system in which the people—rather than a monarch, a dictator, or ruling party—have ultimate power. To ensure the continuation of democracy in this country, Americans must constantly involve themselves in their government.





# Reading Social Studies

## Summarizing Information

### 1 Learn It!

Summarizing is an important skill that helps you clarify text and understand key points, especially if the text is difficult.

- Read the paragraph below. What are the key points in the paragraph?
- In your mind, summarize the key points in complete thoughts.

The Progressive Party promoted the direct primary to allow the people a more direct role in government. Two other Progressive ideas—the initiative and referendum—were intended to give voters more power to make laws. Although the Populists and the Progressives never won the presidency, the Democratic and Republican Parties adopted many of their ideas.

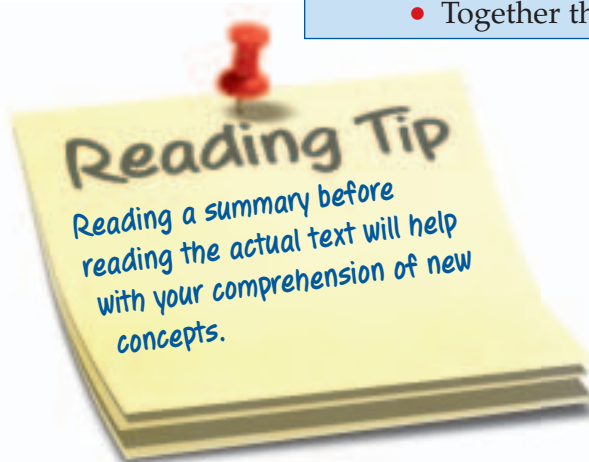
—from page 275

### Graphic Organizer

A graphic organizer can help to organize key points to summarize.

#### Key Points

- There are two major parties: Republican and Democratic
- Both parties have millions of supporters.
- Since 1860, one or the other has always held the presidency.
- Together they have held most seats in Congress.



#### Summary

The Republican and Democratic Parties are the two major political parties. Both parties have millions of supporters. Since 1860, one or the other has always held the presidency. Together, they have also held most seats in Congress.



## 2 Practice It!

Read the following paragraph from this unit. Draw a graphic organizer like the one below to show key points and a summary.

There are important reasons to exercise your right to vote. Voting gives citizens a chance to choose their government leaders. It gives them an opportunity to voice their opinions on past performances of public officials. If voters are dissatisfied, they can elect new leaders. Voting also allows citizens to express their opinions on public issues.

*—from page 299*

**Read to Write Activity**  
Read the section titled “Forming Public Opinion” pages 318–324. Then, write a paragraph that uses key points to summarize the argument *for* public opinion polling or *against* public opinion polling.

**Key Points**



**Summary**

## 3 Apply It!

Identify one summary with supporting key points for:

- Chapter 11, Section 2



Chapter

# 9

# Political Parties and Politics



## Why It Matters

The Constitution makes no mention of political parties, but the first ones formed during the early years of the republic. Today, the United States has several political parties, although two—the Democrats and the Republicans—dominate American politics. **Why do people join political parties? Why does America have a two-party system?**

▲ Delegates cheer for John Kerry at 2004 National Democratic Convention



# BIG Ideas

## Section 1: Development of Political Parties

**Political and economic institutions evolve to help individuals and groups accomplish their goals.** The United States has had a two-party system since its early days as a nation.

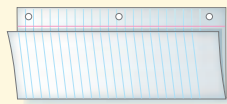
## Section 2: Role of Political Parties Today

**Political and economic institutions evolve to help individuals and groups accomplish their goals.** Political parties play a large role in the decisions made by government.

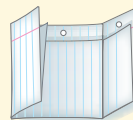
### FOLDABLES™ Study Organizer

**Comparing Information Study Foldable** Make the following Foldable to help you compare how political parties work.

**Step 1** Fold a sheet of paper in half from the long way with edges evenly together.



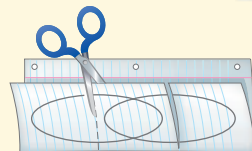
**Step 2** Turn the paper and fold it into thirds.



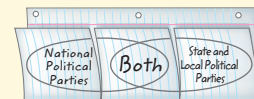
### Reading and Writing

As you read the chapter, compare and contrast the duties and roles of political parties at different levels.

**Step 3** Unfold and draw two overlapping ovals. Cut the top layer along both fold lines.



**Step 4** Label as shown.





Section  
**1**

# Development of Political Parties

## Guide to Reading

### Big Idea

Political and economic institutions evolve to help individuals and groups accomplish their goals.

### Content Vocabulary

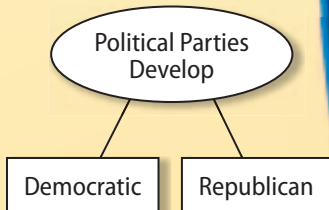
- political party (p. 273)
- two-party system (p. 273)
- third party (p. 274)
- platform (p. 277)
- plank (p. 277)

### Academic Vocabulary

- stress (p. 273)
- promote (p. 274)

### Reading Strategy

**Comparing** As you read, complete a web diagram similar to the one below by detailing the development of today's major political parties in the United States: the Democratic and Republican.



***Real World Civics*** Despite the dominance of the two major political parties, third parties have often influenced American politics. Many important issues have been brought to the public's attention by third parties. Theodore Roosevelt's Progressive Party split the Republican Party, taking many of its votes and causing it to lose the election in 1912. Democratic candidate Woodrow Wilson was elected.

▼ In 1912, Theodore Roosevelt became the presidential candidate for the newly formed Progressive Party





**Political Participation** As American citizens, each of us has the right to participate in the political process and express our opinions on government policy. Political parties are one of the major vehicles of participation in our political system. **Describing What is the function of political parties?**

## Political Parties

**Main Idea** Political parties play a vital role in our democratic system.

**Civics & You** Many of us demand to have a say in the governmental decisions that affect us. Read on to find out how political parties help meet this demand.

**A political party** is an organization of individuals with broad, common interests who organize to win elections, to operate the government, and to thereby influence government policy. During most of American history there have been two major political parties. Other parties have sometimes run in elections, but they have seldom won. For these reasons, the United States is said to have a **two-party system**.

### Growth of American Parties

The U.S. Constitution says nothing about political parties. In fact, many delegates to the Constitutional Convention were against them. In his Farewell Address of 1796, President George Washington warned against the “baneful [very harmful] effects of the spirit of the party.” Even so, by the late

1790s, two rival political groups had organized in opposition to one another.

Secretary of State Thomas Jefferson led one group, and Secretary of the Treasury Alexander Hamilton led the other. They disagreed strongly about how the U.S. government should operate.

Hamilton believed that individual rights were at risk if the government was too weak, so he favored a strong national government. Jefferson wanted to limit the power of the national government. Contrary to Hamilton, he argued for more power for state governments, which were closer to the citizens.

**The Democratic Party** At first Jefferson’s group was called the Democratic-Republican Party. From 1800 to 1816 Jefferson’s party grew stronger, while Hamilton’s, the Federalist Party, weakened. In 1824 all four presidential candidates had run as Democratic-Republicans. By 1828, however, the party had split. Those who supported candidate Andrew Jackson took the name Democratic Party to **stress**, or play up, their ties to the common people. In 1830 a new party, the Whigs (or National Republicans), rose to compete with the Democrats. The Whigs and the Democrats remained the two major parties until the 1850s.





## Evolution of American Political Parties

<b>Federalist</b>	1789–1820	Promoted a strong central government
<b>Democratic-Republican</b>	1796–1832	Formed to oppose Federalist policies
<b>National Republican</b>	1828–1836	Split from the Democratic-Republican Party to promote strong national government and oppose Andrew Jackson's campaign for presidency
<b>Democratic</b>	1832–Present	Party formed in support of Andrew Jackson
<b>Whig</b>	1834–1864	Included critics of Andrew Jackson, states' rights advocates, and supporters of internal improvements
<b>Republican</b>	1856–Present	Formed to oppose the Democratic Party's support of the institution of slavery



### Analyzing Charts

- Identifying** According to the chart, which political party had the shortest life span?
- Sequencing** When did the modern Republican Party get its start?

**The Republican Party** In 1854 a group of Democrats and Whigs, many of whom opposed slavery, left their parties to form new ones. These parties took many different names, including the Fusion Party, the Peoples Party, and the Independent Party. The most popular name for the new coalition was the Republican Party.

Republicans did not agree on whether slavery should be abolished in the Southern states, but they did agree that it had to be kept out of the Northern territories. A large majority of Northern voters seemed to agree, enabling the Republican Party to make great strides in the congressional elections of 1854. In 1860 Abraham Lincoln won election as the first Republican president. Since then, Republicans and Democrats have been the major parties in our system.

**Reading Check Explaining** Why did Washington not want political parties to form?

## Third Parties

**Main Idea** Throughout American history, additional parties have arisen to influence politics.

**Civics & You** As you read, think about how third parties influence American politics.

Throughout American history, smaller minor parties, sometimes called **third parties**, have competed for power in the nation's two-party system. While most Americans do not support third parties or vote for their candidates, third parties have influenced American politics in several important ways.

Third parties have often **promoted**, or advanced, ideas that were at first unpopular or hotly debated. The Populist Party of the 1890s, a combination of farmers and laborers, called for the direct election of senators and an eight-hour working day.



AP Photo/Jim Moore

The Progressive Party promoted the direct primary to allow the people a more direct role in government. Two other Progressive ideas—the initiative and referendum—were intended to give voters more power to make laws. Although the Populists and the Progressives never won the presidency, the Democratic and the Republican Parties adopted many of their ideas. (You will read about the initiative and referendum in Chapter 10.)

**Single-Issue Parties** Some third parties form to promote a social, economic, or moral issue. For example, the Prohibitionist Party, formed in 1872, wanted to ban the sale of alcohol. A single-issue party usually does not last long. It may fade away when the issue is no longer important or if a major party adopts the issue.

**Ideological Parties** An ideology is a set of beliefs about human nature and government institutions. Ideological parties are those that support a particular philosophy or political doctrine. For example, the Socialist Labor Party and the Communist Party USA believe that our free enterprise system should be replaced by one in which government or workers own the factories, transportation, and resources. In contrast, an ideological party such as the Libertarian Party opposes government interference in private enterprise in order to increase individual freedoms.

**Independent Candidates** Sometimes third parties form around leaders with strong personalities who cannot get support from one of the two major parties. Such parties usually do not survive beyond the defeat of their candidates.

In 1992 wealthy business leader H. Ross Perot challenged both major-party candidates as an independent. Perot ran again in 1996, under the banner of the Reform Party.

**Obstacles to Third Parties** Third parties rarely win major elections because of

the nation’s two-party tradition. While the names of the Republican and Democratic candidates are automatically placed on the ballot in many states, third-party candidates must obtain a large number of voter signatures in order to get on the ballot. Third parties also often have trouble raising sufficient amounts of money to compete in campaigns against the major-party candidates.

## Other Party Systems

Political parties exist in most countries. Two-party systems, however, are rare. The role that political parties play differs with each nation’s political system.

**Third Parties** Former professional wrestler and Reform Party candidate Jesse Ventura was elected governor of Minnesota in 1998. **Explaining Why are some political parties called third parties?**





## Leading Third-Party Presidential Candidates, 1948–2004

ELECTION YEAR	CANDIDATE	POLITICAL PARTY	VOTES (in thousands)
1948	Strom Thurmond	States' Rights	1,176
1952	Vincent Hallinan	Progressive	104
1956	T. Coleman Andrews	States' Rights	111
1960	Eric Hass	Socialist Labor	48
1964	Eric Hass	Socialist Labor	45
1968	George Wallace	American Independent	9,906
1972	John Schmitz	American	1,099
1976	Eugene McCarthy	Independent	757
1980	John Anderson	Independent	5,720
1984	David Bergland	Libertarian	228
1988	Ron Paul	Libertarian	432
1992	H. Ross Perot	Independent	19,742
1996	H. Ross Perot	Reform	8,085
2000	Ralph Nader	Green	2,883
2004	Ralph Nader	Independent	464



### Analyzing Charts


- Identifying** Which of the candidates listed was most successful in gaining popular votes?
- Comparing** Which third-party candidates received more than 5 million votes?

**Multiparty Systems** Many democracies have multiparty systems. In these systems, three or more parties compete for control of the government. For example, Canada has three major parties, Germany has five, and Israel has more than 20.

In multiparty systems, one party rarely wins enough support to control the government, so several parties often must work together. This is a situation that may easily break down and become politically unstable because of so many competing interests of the parties.

**One-Party System** Another type of party system is the one-party system. In such a system, the party and the government are nearly the same thing. In the People's Republic

of China, for instance, only one party—the Communist Party—is allowed to exist, and only Communist candidates may run for office. As a result, only Communist Party members fill government positions. In a one-party system, the main job of party members is to recruit new members, maintain party discipline, and carry out the party's orders. Elections are an empty exercise because there are no rival candidates. One-party systems, obviously, are not democratic systems.

 **Reading Check Describing** Name three different types of third parties and explain why they were formed.



# How the Parties Differ

**Main Idea** Political parties play a large role in the decisions made by government.

**Civics & You** People who share common goals often join political parties. Read on to find out about the basic differences between the major parties.

Competing political parties are a necessary part of democratic government. They are a key link between citizens and their elected officials. They give voters a choice among candidates and ideas.

A basic difference between the major parties is their belief in how much the government should be involved in the lives of Americans. For example, the Democrats tend to believe that the federal government should be more directly involved in regulating the economy and in providing housing, income, education, and jobs for the poor. The Republicans tend to believe that if they help the nation's economy grow, poor people will have a better chance of finding jobs on their

own. They favor less government regulation of the economy as the best way to promote the growth of production.

Sometimes the differences between the two major parties seem small. Both try to appeal to as many voters as possible. By adopting moderate and mainstream positions and avoiding extreme or radical positions, the major parties hope to attract votes and win elections. The parties are also similar because the majority of American people generally agree about many political and social issues.

One way to identify the differences between the parties is to read the political document, or platform, that each party writes at its presidential nominating convention, held every four years. The **platform** is a series of statements expressing the party's principles, beliefs, and positions on election issues. Each individual part of the platform is called a **plank**. The platform communicates to voters what the party claims it will do if it wins.

**Reading Check Explaining** Why do the two major parties seem so similar?

## Section Review 1

### Vocabulary

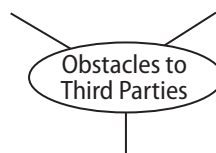
- Write** sentences or short paragraphs about political parties in which you use the following terms: *political party, two-party system, third party, platform, plank*.

### Main Ideas

- Identifying** What were the first two major political parties in the United States?
- Explaining** What are the characteristics of one-party systems?

### Critical Thinking

- Comparing** Describe the basic differences between the views of Thomas Jefferson and Alexander Hamilton regarding how government should operate.
- BIG Ideas** In a diagram like the one below, identify at least three obstacles third parties face.



### CITIZENSHIP Activity

- Expository Writing** Prepare for a debate on the following statement: The two-party system has outlived its usefulness. Choose either the pro or con side of the issue and prepare arguments for the side you choose. Pair up with a classmate who has prepared arguments opposing yours and debate the issue.



**Study Central™** To review this section, go to [glencoe.com](http://glencoe.com).



Section  
**2**

# Role of Political Parties Today

## Guide to Reading

### Big Idea

Political and economic institutions evolve to help individuals and groups accomplish their goals.

### Content Vocabulary

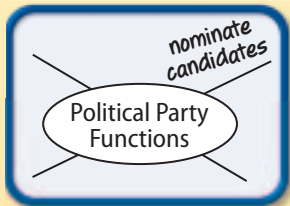
- national committee (p. 279)
- caucus (p. 279)
- precinct (p. 281)
- ward (p. 281)
- political machine (p. 282)
- direct primary (p. 283)
- closed primary (p. 283)
- open primary (p. 283)
- plurality (p. 284)
- majority (p. 284)
- petition (p. 284)

### Academic Vocabulary

- range (p. 279)
- adjacent (p. 281)

### Reading Strategy

**Identifying** As you read, identify four functions of political parties.



***Real World Civics*** The scene is chaotic, noisy, and boisterous. Representatives from every state crowd huge convention centers waving flags, posters, hats, and anything else on which you can put a candidate's name. It is political party convention time. At their conventions, political parties gather support for candidates by raising money and getting the candidate's message out to voters. They discuss the party's position on important issues and officially nominate their candidates.

▼ Delegates support George W. Bush at the 2004 National Republican Convention in New York City



**NORTH CAROLINA STANDARDS**  
Civics and Economics

- 4.01** Examine the structure and organization of political parties.
- 4.02** Describe the election process and the qualifications and procedures for voting.



**National Conventions** Every four years, political party delegates gather to select a ticket—candidates for president and vice president as they did in 1948 in Philadelphia.  
**Explaining** What is the first task for the delegates?

## Organization of Political Parties

**Main Idea** Democrats and Republicans are organized into 50 state parties and thousands of local parties that operate independently of the national organization.

**Civics & You** Do you support one of the political parties? Political parties do everything they can to attract supporters.

**T**he two major parties are organized at the local, state, and national levels. These levels are only loosely tied together. There is no chain of command that lets the national organization control state or local party leaders. All the levels, however, have roughly the same political beliefs, and they are united in their ultimate goal—to help the party win election to as many offices as possible.

## National Organization

Each party has a **national committee** made of representatives from every state. This committee helps raise funds for presidential elections and organizes the party's national convention. A national party chairperson runs the committee. The chairperson's main job is to manage the office, to direct the committee staff, and to lead fund-raising efforts.

**National Convention** The national convention is one of the most important responsibilities of the national committee. Held once every four years, the national convention is where party members nominate their candidates for president and vice president of the United States. Each party chooses its delegates through a combination of presidential primary elections and **caucuses**, or meetings, of state and local party organizations.

The delegates' first job is to write the platform. This task can be difficult because each party includes members with a wide **range**, or variety, of positions on key issues.



**Nominating the Candidate** After the platform has been prepared and approved, delegates nominate the party’s presidential candidate. The nominating speech for each candidate sets off a demonstration, as supporters parade around the convention hall. Historically, conventions were suspenseful events where delegates from around the country decided upon their presidential candidate. The conventions were a grand spectacle on television. Today the increasing use of early primary elections, where voters narrow down the list of candidates, has caused the nomination for president to be almost entirely decided by the time of the convention.

**Campaign Committees** The major parties also have campaign committees made up of members of Congress. These committees work to elect party members and raise money.

## State and Local Organization

Each major party has 50 state committees or organizations. In some states the parties are well organized, have large staffs, and spend a lot of money each year. In others the organization is weak. State committees focus on electing party candidates to state offices—governor, attorney general, state legislators, and others. They also work to elect their parties’ candidates to national offices.



### Analyzing Charts

- Identifying** At what level of organization is a precinct? Who controls the precinct workers?
- Explaining** Why do you think political parties have three levels: national, state, and local?



Local party organizations consist of thousands of city, town, and county committees across the country. These committees include people elected by their fellow party members.

**What Is a Precinct?** Each city or county is divided into election districts or precincts. A **precinct** is a geographic area that contains a specific number of voters. A precinct may consist of an entire small town or, in a large city, a group of **adjacent**, or neighboring, neighborhoods. All voters in a precinct cast their ballots at the same voting place.

For each precinct, the local party committee appoints a precinct captain, whose job is to organize other party members during campaigns and encourage voters on Election Day. The volunteers distribute leaflets, register voters, and try to convince voters to support the party's candidates.

Several geographically connected precincts make up a larger election unit called a **ward**. Party members in each ward typically elect a volunteer to represent the ward at the local party's next level of organization—the county committee.

## County Committees

Counties are the largest political units within a state. Both major parties have county committees. A county chairperson, who runs the committee, often has a great deal of political power in the county. If the county is large, state party leaders such as the governor or a U.S. senator may consult with the county chairperson about important appointments, such as judgeships.

Higher-level party leaders depend on precinct and ward leaders to build the party at the “grassroots,” or neighborhood, level. These local leaders have to know what issues their neighbors are worried about and keep track of how local political sentiment is running. At election time they must “deliver the vote” for party candidates at every level of government.

## Emily Nguyen

**E**mily Nguyen, 16, from Morristown, New Jersey, knows debate is a big part of politics. That is one reason she takes part in the Junior Statesmen of America (JSA).



**QUESTION:** What's JSA?

**ANSWER:** It's a group for high school students that promotes interest in government, politics, debate, law, and global affairs.

**Q:** How does it do all that?

**A:** JSA hosts discussions about contemporary issues, conventions for students, and summer school programs. The group encourages all teenagers to stand up and be heard with its motto “Democracy is not a spectator sport!”

**Q:** Sounds intense. But is it fun?

**A:** Yes! The chapter at my school is extremely active. We attend the triannual regional conventions, hold debates at our weekly meetings, organize community service projects—and take part in many other activities.

**Q:** How will it help your future?

**A:** Members of JSA learn leadership, managerial, and public speaking skills. JSA works solely to educate America's youth, with the knowledge that one day they will become lawmakers, lawyers, activists, and politicians.

**Q:** How can other teens get involved with JSA?

**A:** If there isn't a chapter at their school, students can visit [www.jsa.org](http://www.jsa.org) for more information.



**ACTION FACT:**

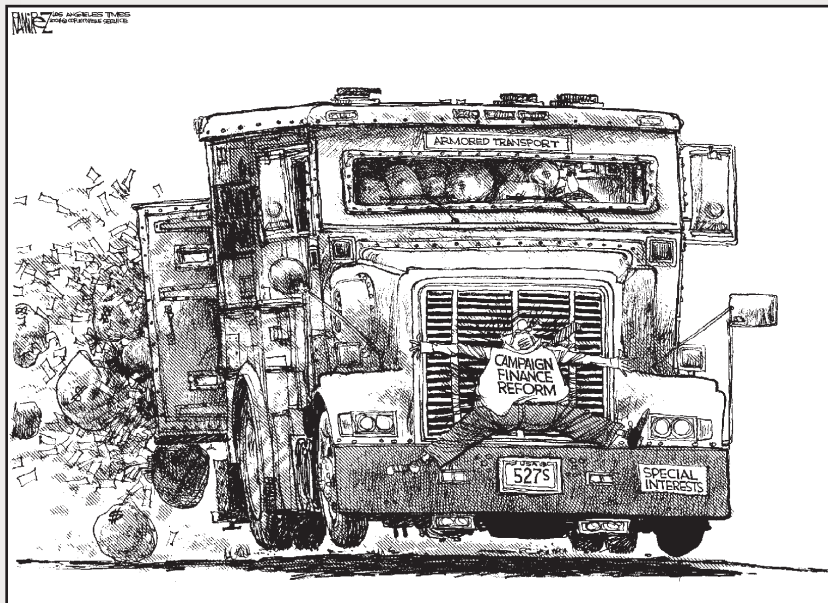
Nguyen can often be found playing soccer with a team or refereeing youth soccer.

Making a Difference

CITIZENSHIP

What is the motto of JSA?





Michael Ramirez/Copley News Service

In this cartoon, Michael Ramirez makes a comment on the campaign-finance reform movement, whose aim is to regulate donations to political candidates.

1. How are “special interests” represented?
2. Why do you think Ramirez chose this symbol?
3. Why is money falling off the back of the truck?
4. Do you think Ramirez is optimistic or pessimistic that new campaign-finance reform measures will become law? Explain.

## Political Machines

Sometimes a local party organization becomes so powerful that, year after year, their candidates sweep almost every election. Such a strong party organization is called a **political machine**. One of the most famous—and notorious—political machines was New York City’s Tammany Hall.

This organization ruled New York City in the late 1800s and early 1900s. Its leader, William Marcy “Boss” Tweed, and his friends grew rich from bribes and kickbacks—extra payments—given by building contractors seeking to do business with the city. Eventually, many members of the Tweed group ended up in prison.

At a time in American history when few social service agencies existed to help poor people and immigrants, political machines often served a useful purpose. The machines provided needy citizens with jobs, food, fuel, and help with medical care in return for their votes. Today most people think of political machines as harmful. They believe when one party is in power for too long, it may become

unresponsive to the needs of the community. Political leaders are less accountable to citizens when the leaders do not have to worry about getting reelected.

## Joining a Political Party

You do not need to join a political party in the United States to vote. However, political parties offer every citizen a great way to get involved in politics. Political parties do everything they can to attract members, and they welcome whomever wishes to belong. Party membership involves no duties or obligations other than voting. If a member of a party chooses to do more, then he or she may contribute money, do volunteer work, or participate in other activities, especially during election campaigns. The parties depend on citizen involvement to accomplish their goals.

 **Reading Check** **Concluding** Why is it important to build grassroots support for a party?



# Nominating Candidates

**Main Idea** Political parties nominate candidates to run for public office.

**Civics & You** Have you ever run for an office at school? Did you choose to run or did someone nominate you? Read to find out the role political parties play in selecting nominees for public office.

The individuals who take part in the work of political parties play an important role in the American system of government. They select candidates for office. They keep people informed and interested in the issues and the candidates. They try to see that party members elected to office do a good job. They keep an eye on the opposition party, publicly criticizing many of its actions. They also act as a link between different branches and levels of government.

The parties carry out these activities throughout the year. They are busiest, however, at election time. Political parties are the only organizations that select and present candidates for public office. They do this through the nomination process.

## Primary Elections

Today major parties in all states nominate candidates at all levels of government. The method most commonly used today to nominate candidates is the direct primary. The **direct primary** is an election in which voters choose candidates to represent each party in a general election. In recent years, these elections have been very competitive, and the winner of the most primaries is often nominated by his or her party. There are two main forms of the direct primary: closed and open.

Most states hold a **closed primary**, in which only the declared members of a party are allowed to vote for that party's nominees. For example, only Republicans can vote in the Republican Party's primary.

Rules for how voters declare their party affiliation vary by state. In some states you must declare your party when you register. In others, you do not have to declare your party preference until you actually vote.

A few states hold an **open primary**, in which voters do not need to declare their party preference in order to vote for the party's nominees. In most open-primary states, you choose a party in the privacy of the voting booth.

**Campaigning** Candidates for president begin organizing their campaigns long before the election. Representative Dennis Kucinich of Ohio, campaigning for the 2004 Democratic nomination, talks to New Hampshire students before the state's primary election.

**Explaining** Why do candidates bother to talk to students who cannot vote?





**Closed Primaries** People who support the closed primary believe that it helps keep the members of one party from crossing over into the other party’s primary to try to promote weak candidates (who would then be easy to defeat). An argument against the closed primary is that it does not permit a truly secret ballot, since voters must first declare a party preference. It also prevents unaffiliated voters from taking part in primary elections in most states.

**What Is a Plurality?** Sometimes a political office can have more than one vacancy, and thus each party can nominate more than one candidate. Most offices, however, are open to only one winner. In these cases, the candidate who gets the *most* votes obtains a **plurality** (the largest number), and wins the election, even if this means less than 50 percent of the votes cast.

**What Is a Majority?** In a few states, however, the winner must have a **majority**. (A majority is more than 50 percent of the total votes.) If no candidate receives a majority, the party holds a runoff primary between the two leading candidates with the most votes. The winner then becomes the party’s candidate in the general election.

**Unaffiliated Candidates** Candidates who are not affiliated with either of the two major parties can get on the ballot for the general election in most states by **petition**. If enough qualified voters sign papers declaring support for a candidate, he or she goes on the ballot for the general election.

 **Reading Check** **Contrasting** What is the difference between an open and a closed primary?

**Civics ONLINE**  
**Student Web Activity** Visit [glencoe.com](http://glencoe.com) and complete the Chapter 9 Web Activity.

## Other Party Roles

**Main Idea** In addition to nominating candidates for office, political parties have many other responsibilities.

**Civics & You** Taking part in political parties is an important way for citizens to affect government decision making. Read to find out the impact of political parties on government.

**A**lthough the main purpose of political parties in the United States is to elect candidates to office, they also play an important role in helping the people of the United States practice self-government. The parties enable people to communicate with their government leaders and help ensure that government remains responsive to the people. The parties fulfill this role in a number of ways. Nominating candidates for office is just one of many tasks that political parties perform.

Political parties have several functions that help them fulfill their role in government. Political parties do the following:

- select and support candidates
- inform citizens
- carry the message of the people to the government
- operate the government
- act as a watchdog over government
- serve as a link between different levels and branches of government

**Campaigning for Candidates** After a political party nominates its candidates for office, it begins to campaign for them in the general election. The parties raise money for the campaign. They also help candidates inform voters about their ideas and views on public issues. A key role for party volunteers is to make sure party supporters are registered to vote and to ensure that on Election Day these voters go to the polls.



David McNew/Getty Images

**Informing Citizens** Running a campaign serves another important purpose in a democracy: it informs citizens about public issues and the way government works. To get their views across, party candidates make speeches, publish and distribute pamphlets, and place ads in newspapers and magazines and on television and radio.

**Carrying the People's Message** In addition to presenting their views to the people, the parties listen to what the people have to say. Voters have ideas and concerns of their own and issues they want leaders to address.

Sometimes people in different areas feel very strongly about an issue. They may oppose a government policy or want stronger laws to protect the environment. A political movement that begins with the people

is known as a grassroots movement. When a grassroots movement becomes strong enough, its ideas will probably be taken over by a political party.

**Operating the Government** Political parties play a key role in running and staffing the government. Congress and the state legislatures are organized and carry on their work on the basis of party affiliation. Party leaders in the legislature make every effort to see that their members support the party's position when considering legislation.

Many government jobs are civil service jobs gained on the basis of open, competitive examinations and merit. However, the president, governors, and some mayors have the power to appoint their trusted supporters to many high-level jobs.

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**Spreading the Message** Concerned citizens use various tactics to make the public aware of their concerns. These California citizens hand out information before a special election. *Explaining* **What is a grassroots movement?**





These supporters will usually be party members who believe in their party's ideas and want the opportunity to serve in government. If a chief executive has jobs to fill but does not have enough high-level supporters to fill them, he or she often seeks recommendations from party leaders.

**Linking the Different Levels of Government** Just as political parties carry the people's message to the government, they also help different levels and branches of government cooperate with one another. For example, suppose the mayor of Columbia, South Carolina, and the governor of South Carolina are both Democrats. They are likely to have similar goals and ideas. They may be personal friends. Perhaps they have worked together on election campaigns or party business in the past. These connections may make it easier for them to join forces to tackle

mutual problems. Likewise, when a majority of legislators belongs to the same party as a chief executive, cooperation between the two branches is likely to be better than if they belong to opposing parties.

**Acting as a Watchdog** Between elections, political parties act as “watchdogs” over government activities. The party that is out of power—the party that lost the election for president, governor, or Congress—watches the actions of the party in power for any mistakes or misuse of power. This opposition party may criticize the party in power and offer its own solutions to political problems. In this way, the opposition party hopes to attract voters. Competition between parties forces the party in power to pay attention to the will of the people.

 **Reading Check Explaining** What is a political party's connection to legislation?

## Section Review 2

### Vocabulary

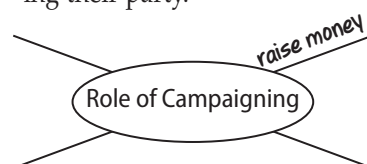
- Explain** the following terms by using each in a complete sentence: *national committee, caucus, precinct, ward, political machine, direct primary, closed primary, open primary, plurality, majority, and petition.*

### Main Ideas

- Explaining** What is the purpose of a party's national convention?
- Explaining** In what way do political parties help manage the government?
- Identify** three ways in which parties and their candidates inform the public.

### Critical Thinking

- Evaluating** In your opinion, which is a better system, the open primary or the closed primary? Explain.
- BIG Ideas** On a web diagram like the one below, write the campaigning roles that political party members play in supporting their party.



- Understanding Cause and Effect** The two major parties are criticized as being out of touch with the needs of many Americans. How might a successful third party affect the two major parties?

### CITIZENSHIP Activity

- Creative Writing** Create a poster that presents a democratic and cost-efficient system for selecting nominees for president.



**Study Central™** To review this section, go to [glencoe.com](http://glencoe.com).

## What Is a Political Party?

A political party is a group of individuals outside of government that organizes to win elections, to operate the government, and to determine policy.



Candidates are ready to answer questions

## Political Parties Form

- Shortly after our nation began, two political parties formed.
- The basic difference between the two parties today is their beliefs in how much the government should be involved in Americans' lives.
- In the United States, we have a two-party system, which means that two major parties—the Democrats and the Republicans—dominate national politics.



Students speak out on issues

## Organization

- Each party has a national committee and congressional campaign committees. Each party also has 50 state committees and many local party organizations.
- In the past, some local party organizations became so powerful that their candidates won almost every election. These were known as political machines.

## What Political Parties Do

- Select candidates
- Inform the public
- Coordinate policy making
- Balance competing interests
- Run campaigns

## Comparing Parties

- One way to compare political parties is to study their party platforms, which are declarations of each party's beliefs and positions on major issues.
- The platform is made of planks, which are the party's official positions on specific issues such as education, crime, and foreign policy.

The president leads his political party



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# North Carolina End-of-Course Test Civics and Economics Practice

## TEST-TAKING TIP

Preconceived ideas about what will be on the test may lead you to assume the meaning of a question before you finish reading it. Read every word in each question to avoid wrong answers based on false assumptions.

### Reviewing Vocabulary

Directions: Choose the word(s) that best completes the sentence.

- A political party's belief, position, or principle on an election issue is called a(n) \_\_\_\_\_.  
**A** idea                                      **C** plank  
**B** platform                                 **D** ideology
- Each party chooses its delegates to the national convention through a combination of elections and \_\_\_\_\_.  
**A** petitions                                 **C** political machines  
**B** caucuses                                 **D** national committees
- All voters in a \_\_\_\_\_ cast their ballots at the same voting place.  
**A** ward                                        **C** political party  
**B** precinct                                 **D** direct primary
- An election in which only the declared members of a party are allowed to vote for that party's nominees is a(n) \_\_\_\_\_.  
**A** direct primary                         **C** open primary  
**B** general election                       **D** closed primary

### Reviewing Main Ideas

Directions: Choose the best answers to the following questions.

#### Section 1 (pp. 272–277)

- In what year did Democrats and Republicans become the major political parties in the United States?  
**A** 1824  
**B** 1828  
**C** 1854  
**D** 1860

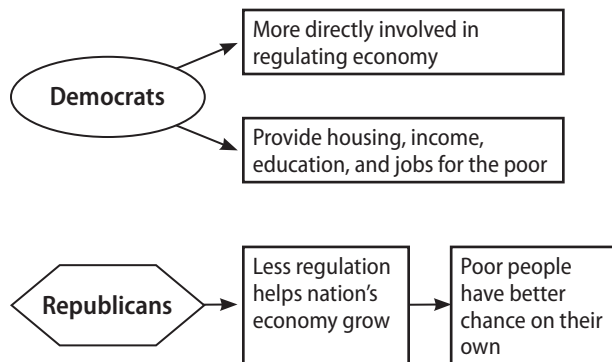
- Which third party would like to replace capitalism with worker-owned factories?  
**A** Reform Party  
**B** Libertarian Party  
**C** Communist Party  
**D** Prohibitionist Party

#### Section 2 (pp. 278–286)

- What is the delegates' first job at a party's national convention?  
**A** nominating candidates  
**B** writing the party platform  
**C** raising large amounts of money  
**D** listening to nominating speeches
- How do candidates unaffiliated with either of the two major parties get on the ballot in a general election?  
**A** by winning an open primary  
**B** by running in a direct primary  
**C** by collecting voters' signatures  
**D** by receiving a majority of votes
- What political organization of the past used to win elections consistently?  
**A** ideological party  
**B** whig party  
**C** precinct organization  
**D** political machine

## Critical Thinking

Directions: Base your answers to questions 10 and 11 on the diagram below and your knowledge of Chapter 9.



10. Consider how different persons might view the two major parties. Which voter would most likely support the Republican Party?
- A a homeless senior
  - B a low-income student
  - C a corporate executive
  - D a government regulator
11. Compare the discussion of third parties in the chapter with the facts in the diagram. Which third party has goals similar to those of Republicans?
- A Libertarian Party
  - B Communist Party
  - C Prohibitionist Party
  - D Socialist Labor Party

## Document-Based Questions

Directions: Analyze the following document and answer the short-answer questions that follow.

The following passage is from the keynote speech by senatorial candidate Barack Obama given at the Democratic National Convention in 2004.

*For alongside our famous individualism, there's another ingredient in the American saga. A belief that we are connected as one people.*

*If there's a child on the south side of Chicago who can't read, that matters to me, even if it's not my child. If there's a senior citizen somewhere who can't pay for their prescription and having to choose between medicine and the rent, that makes my life poorer, even if it's not my grandparent. If there's an Arab American family being rounded up without benefit of an attorney or due process, that threatens my civil liberties. It's that fundamental belief—I am my brother's keeper, I am my sister's keeper—that makes this country work. It's what allows us to pursue our individual dreams, yet still come together as a single American family. "E pluribus unum." Out of many, one.*

—Barack Obama

12. What two priorities of the Democratic Party are alluded to in Obama's speech?
13. How does Obama suggest that the Democratic Party is the party of diversity? Back up your answer with proof from the passage.

## Informational Writing

14. Write a short description of the state and local organization of the political parties. Discuss the differences from state to state, the divisions of the organization, and the common focus in all the states.

**STOP**

**Civics ONLINE**

For additional test practice, use Self-Check Quizzes—Chapter 9 on [glencoe.com](http://glencoe.com).

### Need Extra Help?

If you missed question...	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14
Go to page...	277	279	281	283	274	275	279	284	282	277	275	279	279	280