

The Almost Painless Guide to the Election Process

BLACKLINE MASTERS

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Directions: Read the following statements, and circle whether they are true or false.

1. The role of political parties is outlined in the U.S. Constitution.

True False

2. The United States has had only two political parties, the Democratic party and the Republican party.

True False

3. You can't vote or run for office if you weren't born in the United States.

True False

4. You must be at least 21 years old to vote.

True False

5. Women have always had the right to vote in the United States.

True False

6. African American men gained the right to vote with the 26th Amendment.

True False

7. U.S. presidents are officially elected by the popular vote.

True False

8. initiative is a method citizens can use to remove someone from office.

True False

9. Political parties can choose their candidates through a primary.

True False

10. Students under the age of 18 cannot play a role in the American political system.

True False



True or False Questions

Directions: Read each of the following statements. Then circle the correct answer. If a statement is false, change the statement to be correct.

1. Anyone born in the United States is a citizen.

True False

2. Naturalized citizens cannot vote.

True False

3. Elections are usually held on a Saturday.

True False

4. People must be at least 18 years old to participate in campaigns.

True False

5. There have always been only two political parties in the United States.

True False

6. The U.S. Constitution outlines the role of political parties.

True False

7. The elephant is a symbol of the Democratic party.

True False

8. Another word for initiative is proposition.

True False

9. The place where citizens cast their vote is called an Electoral College.

True False

10. Collecting signatures for a petition is an example of working on a grass roots level.

True False

Multiple-Choice Questions

Directions: Read each of the following statements. Then circle the best answer.

11. African American men gained the right to vote with the:

- (a) the 15th Amendment to the U.S. Constitution.
- (b) the 19th Amendment to the U.S. Constitution.
- (c) the 20th Amendment to the U.S. Constitution.
- (d) the 26th Amendment to the U.S. Constitution.

12. Women gained the right to vote with the:

- (a) the 15th Amendment to the U.S. Constitution.
- (b) the 19th Amendment to the U.S. Constitution.
- (c) the 20th Amendment to the U.S. Constitution.
- (d) the 26th Amendment to the U.S. Constitution.



13. A citizen who is traveling on Election Day can still vote using:
- (a) a recall vote.
 - (b) the initiative.
 - (c) the phone.
 - (d) an absentee ballot.
14. An election to choose a political party's candidate for an upcoming general election is called a:
- (a) local election.
 - (b) primary election.
 - (c) referendum.
 - (d) congressional election.
15. To run for president, a U.S. citizen must be:
- (a) at least 35 years old.
 - (b) native-born.
 - (c) living in the United States for at least 14 years.
 - (d) all of the above
16. To be a senator, a U.S. citizen must at least be:
- (a) 35 years old.
 - (b) 30 years old.
 - (c) 25 years old.
 - (d) 20 years old.
17. To be a congressional representative, a U.S. citizen must be :
- (a) native-born.
 - (b) a citizen for at least seven years.
 - (c) a citizen for at least nine years.
 - (d) none of the above.
18. Citizens can propose new legislation through the technique of:
- (a) recall.
 - (b) referendum.
 - (c) initiative.
 - (d) primary.
19. In a presidential election, a president is actually chosen by:
- (a) the popular vote.
 - (b) the electoral vote.
 - (c) both a and b.
 - (d) none of the above.
20. Which of the following events should a citizen do first?
- (a) vote in a general election
 - (b) register to vote
 - (c) vote in a primary
 - (d) run for office



Directions: Read the following statements, and circle whether they are true or false.

1. A citizen is anyone who lives in the United States.

True False

2. An alien can become a citizen through a process called naturalization

True False

3. The 15th Amendment to the U.S. Constitution lowered the voting age to 18 years old.

True False

4. To be a senator, a person needs to be at least 25 years old, a citizen of the United States for nine years, and a resident of the state from which he or she was elected.

True False

5. It is not necessary to register in order to vote.

True False

6. If you are not old enough to vote, you can still participate in the political process, for example, by expressing your opinion to your elected officials or by campaigning for candidates.

True False

7. The two major U.S. political parties are the Whigs and the Copperheads.

True False

8. Women and African American men have always had the vote in the United States.

True False

9. An open primary is a way citizens can propose legislation.

True False

10. The Electoral College consists of the people who actually vote to elect the president of the United States.

True False



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★ DISCUSSION QUESTIONS ★
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1. Name some ways Americans can take part in the political life of our country.
2. How can people under the age of 18 take part in American political life?
3. What are some of the ways political candidates use to convince voters to elect them?
4. Why does our Constitution only let *citizens* vote?
5. What role do major and minor political parties play in the American political process?
6. Why should American citizens educate themselves about political issues, vote, and run for election?
7. Is a closed primary fair to voters who aren't members of a political party? Why or why not?
8. How do the techniques of initiative, referendum, and recall give average citizens political power?
9. What is the Electoral College, and how does it work?
10. How have the 15th Amendment, 19th Amendment, and 26th Amendment affected the number of voters?



DESIGN A CAMPAIGN POSTER

Directions: Read over the descriptions of each of the following candidates who are running for representative of your congressional district. Choose one candidate and design a campaign poster for him or her. Include one reason on your poster why voters should elect your candidate. Your reason can be: the candidate's age, education, experience, or most important issue.

Maria Hernandez

Age: 28

Education: B.A., Harrison College; LL.B., Johnson University

Profession: attorney

Experience: three years as assistant prosecuting attorney for Midland County

Most important issue: in favor of tough laws on criminals and aid to crime victims

Campaign motto: Fight crime and help crime victims!

Jim Silenski

Age: 33

Education: B.A., St. Ursula's College; M.A., Johnson University

Profession: social worker

Experience: 10 years as a social worker for United Charities

Most important issue: in favor of health insurance for every child

Campaign Motto: No child should go without health care!

Roberta Lozano

Age: 45

Education: B.A., Johnson University

Profession: homemaker

Experience: community leader for 20 years; most recently led campaign to provide computers for elementary schools

Most important issue: wants more money for schools

Campaign Motto: Good schools produce educated workers and a strong economy!

Brian Bedford

Age: 52

Education: two years at Erie Technical College

Profession: owner, heating and air conditioning business

Experience: 30 years as owner of a small business

Most important issue: wants to lower taxes

Campaign Motto: Lower taxes means more money in your pocket!



Directions: Read over the following list of terms. Then fill in the sentences below with the correct term. Not all terms will be used

citizen	19th Amendment	primary	closed primary
alien	referendum	initiative	open primary
26th Amendment	to register	polling places	absentee ballot
third parties	Democratic party	Republican party	recall
grass roots	Electoral College	15th Amendment	naturalization
local election	general election	national election	candidate

1. Anyone born in the United States is a _____, but someone born outside the United States, called an _____, can become a citizen through the process of _____.
2. The donkey is a symbol of the _____, and the elephant is a symbol of the _____. Citizens first need _____ before they can cast their vote in an election.
3. African American males gained the right to vote with the passage of the _____, and American women gained the right to vote with the passage of the _____.
4. The _____ lowered the voting age to 18.
5. Elections are traditionally held on a Tuesday at various public buildings called _____.
6. If a voter will be out of town on election day, he or she can vote by _____.
7. Whigs, Copperheads, and Populists were _____.
8. A _____ is an election in which voters choose a political party's _____ for an upcoming general election. In a _____ only that party's registered voters can participate, but in an _____ everyone can vote.
9. _____ is a method of passing laws that legislatures won't consider, and _____ is a method of removing someone from office.



WORD SEARCH

Directions: In each statement below, fill in the words that best complete the statement. Then find and circle the words hidden in the puzzle. Words are hidden vertically and horizontally.

1. The two major U.S. political parties are the _____ and the _____ .
2. To vote, a citizen needs to be at least _____ years old.
3. A political party can choose its candidates through a _____ .
4. The president of the United States is elected through the _____ .
5. Citizens who are campaigning door-to-door are involved in politics at the _____ level.
6. The 19th Amendment to the U.S. Constitution gave _____ the right to vote.
7. _____ men gained the right to vote with the 15th Amendment to the U.S. Constitution.
8. Voters can remove someone from office using the _____ .
9. Voters can pass laws that legislatures won't consider with the _____ .
10. The _____ ballot gives voters who will be away on Election Day a way to vote.
11. An alien can become a citizen through the process of _____ .
12. Before voting, it is necessary to _____ .
13. Citizens can take part in the political process by expressing their opinions, voting in elections, running for office, and _____ for candidates.
14. The place where citizens vote is called a _____ place.

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WORD SEARCH ☆ ☆
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D	E	M	O	C	R	A	T	I	C	P	A	R	T	Y	G
A	L	Z	M	N	Q	B	L	N	E	R	F	E	C	R	R
F	E	X	O	U	T	S	E	I	S	I	R	P	A	E	A
S	C	H	G	X	Y	E	I	T	J	M	I	U	M	G	S
A	T	K	L	P	R	N	J	I	D	A	C	B	P	I	S
W	O	M	E	N	H	T	B	A	C	R	A	L	A	S	R
P	R	P	I	Z	S	E	R	T	U	Y	N	I	I	T	O
O	A	C	G	H	H	E	V	I	F	E	A	C	G	E	O
L	L	Q	H	O	B	C	R	V	M	L	M	A	N	R	T
L	C	I	T	J	K	Z	W	E	U	E	E	N	I	Z	S
I	O	B	E	G	H	P	Q	N	C	C	R	P	N	C	T
N	L	D	E	I	K	M	N	P	R	T	I	A	G	V	R
G	L	C	N	E	G	Z	X	W	U	I	C	R	H	T	I
R	E	C	A	L	L	D	F	Y	B	O	A	T	A	J	L
C	G	H	Z	Q	O	M	N	B	U	N	N	Y	M	O	N
G	E	N	A	T	U	R	A	L	I	Z	A	T	I	O	N



DRAW A POLITICAL CARTOON

One way voters are influenced is by political cartoons. These are cartoons that make a comment on a political candidate or issue. In drawing such cartoons, editorial cartoonists may save space by using symbols to convey meaning. An elephant, for example, may represent the Republican party and a donkey may represent the Democratic party. Uncle Sam may represent the United States. You can find examples of political cartoons in newspapers and weekly news magazines such as *Time*, *Newsweek*, and *U.S. News and World Report*, or on the Internet.

Directions: Collect some examples of political cartoons. Then draw an editorial cartoon that makes a comment on one of the following issues or another issue of your choosing.

Issue #1

Even though 18-year-olds have the right to vote, many do not bother to exercise this right.

Issue #2

The Electoral College is an out-of-date method to elect the president and should be abolished.

Issue #3

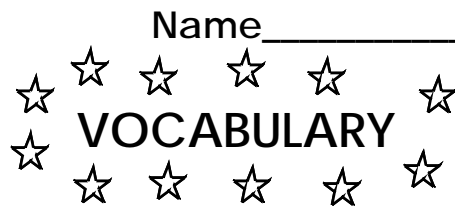
A closed primary is unfair to independent voters.

Issue #4

A closed primary is fair since anyone can register as a member of political party.

Issue # 5

Elections should be held on a weekend when most people are not working or in school.

**absentee ballot**

An instrument that allows citizens who are not able to vote on election day the opportunity to vote by mail-in ballot

alien

Someone born outside the United States

campaign

An organized effort in which an individual citizen seeks election to political office

candidate

One who aspires to or is nominated or qualified for an office

citizen

anyone born in the United States, whose parents are U.S. citizens, or who is naturalized

general election

An election, usually held at regular intervals, in which candidates are elected at the local, state, and national levels

grass roots

The most basic level of support for a candidate or an issue

initiative

A method for citizens to pass legislation

naturalization

The process through which an alien can become a citizen of the United States

political party

An group of citizens, united by common goals and beliefs, that strives to get its candidates elected to public office

primary

An election in which members of a political party can select their candidate for the general election

recall

A method for citizens to remove someone from office

suffrage

The right to vote, as in "women's suffrage"