

## ELECTIONS & VOTING

**SS.7.CG.2.6** Examine the election and voting process at the local, state and national levels.

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### 2023 BENCHMARK UPDATES

- New benchmark added to the 2023-2024 middle school civics and government standards
  - The topic of elections was merged in from SS.7.2.7
  - The topic of political parties was merged in from SS.7.2.8

## Essential Teacher Content Background Information

*[Teacher Content Notes Not Appropriate For Student Use]*

**This section addresses the following topics:**

1. Elections and the Voting Process at the Local, State, and National Levels
2. How Elections and Voting Impact Citizens at the Local, State, and National Levels
3. The Origins of the Republican and Democratic Political Parties and their Roles in Shaping Public Policy
4. How Free and Fair Elections Promote Trust in Democratic Institutions and Preserve the Republic

### **1. Elections and the Voting Process at the Local, State, and National Levels**

It is a common misconception that elections are a significant aspect of our national Constitution. In fact, that is not the case. The Constitution only addresses elections a couple of times. First, it describes in Article II the role of the Electoral College in selecting the President of the United States. Second, it defers to the states on the processes and procedures of elections. Article II emphasizes that states get to decide the ‘times, places and manner of holding elections’, with some potential regulation by Congress. This caveat is why we have voting rights laws, for example. Generally speaking however, there are as many different ways for elections to be run as there are states and territories in the Union.

The Florida Constitution addresses voting and elections in Article VI. According to our state constitution, election winners are decided by a plurality vote rather than a majority vote. A plurality of votes means the person with the most votes wins even if they do not have the majority (more than 50 percent of the votes), thus avoiding the need for a run off election. The Florida Constitution also discusses campaign public funding limits, political parties and how these parties determine the order of the candidates on the ballot. It also discusses if a candidate has no party or third-party candidates. Rules associated with these can not be more restrictive than those for the two leading party candidates. Our state constitution also explains the qualifications for office and voter registration while also setting out term limits for elected state office.

Our state constitution also addresses the types of elections that occur in the state, and when they occur. It’s important to note that unlike some other states, Florida has a closed primary. This means that only voters registered as a member of a specific political party may vote in that primary. This prevents a Republican from voting in a Democratic primary and vice versa. This section also sets a date for the general election as the first Tuesday after the first Monday in November. It has stipulations in the case of a state-wide emergency.

When it comes to local elections, the state constitution guides those as well, leaving many local and district election decisions to those local governments, with the caveat that they must follow state law.

When it comes to voter registration, the state constitution requires that voters must be registered at least 29 days before a primary or other election in which they want to vote.

Even though the Constitution left most of the election process to each state, national laws have been passed to regulate campaign finance for the offices of the U.S. House, Senate, Presidency, and Vice Presidency. These laws are enforced through the Federal Election Commission. You can learn more about the Federal Election Commission at their [website](#).

### Elected Offices in Florida

Level of Government	Executive Office Name	Legislative Office Name	Role of Political Parties
<b>National</b>	President	U.S. Representative U.S. Senator	Candidate names are organized on the ballot according to the party in which the state's governor is registered. For example, in 2018, Ron DeSantis, a Republican was elected governor. In the 2020 election, Republicans were listed first on the ballot, followed by Democrats, and then by candidates of other parties and independents.
Method of Selection	Voters cast ballots for president that serve as recommendations to Electoral College members chosen by the state parties. Florida is a "winner-take-all" state. The candidate receiving the most votes (whether a 50%+1 majority or a plurality, more than any other candidate but does not meet 50%) earns all of the Electoral Votes in the state. State parties select members of the Electoral College—only the state party whose candidate earned the most votes may select Electors.	Direct election  Note: U.S. Senators were selected by state legislatures until the 17 <sup>th</sup> Amendment was ratified in 1913.	
<b>State</b>	Governor	State Representative State Senator	Candidate names are organized on the ballot according to the party in which the state's governor is registered. For example, in 2018, Ron DeSantis, a Republican was elected governor. In the 2020 election, Republicans were listed first on the ballot, followed by Democrats, and then by candidates of other parties and independents.
Method of Selection	Direct election	Direct election	
<b>Local</b>	Mayor Note: Some counties do not have mayors and the	County commissioner City councilman/woman	Counties may choose as to whether their local government offices will be partisan or non-partisan. If the offices

	county commissioners take this role.		are non-partisan, candidate names are listed in alphabetical order.
Method of Selection	Direct election	Direct election	

### Primaries

Definition	Nomination contests where one candidate is selected to run for office from among several potential nominees from the same party.		
Scheduling	May be scheduled at any time although Florida's supervisors of elections prefer that election contests, including primaries, be consolidated so that multiple contests take place on the same day. In 2022, Florida primaries took place Tuesday, August 23, 2022		
Ballot Design	Candidates from the same party are listed in alphabetical order; Florida is a closed primary system. Only registered members of a party may vote in that party's primary.		
Role of Political Parties	Candidates register to run for office from one party only.		

### Run-offs

Definition	Runoff primaries take place when none of the candidates earns at least 50% of the vote. Runoff primaries were held in Florida until 2001. Beginning in 2002, there have been no runoff primaries.  Runoff elections take place when no candidate earns at least 50% in a nonpartisan race.		
Scheduling	Elections for nonpartisan offices normally take place on the same day as the primary; if a runoff is required, it takes place on the day of the general election.		
Ballot Design	Candidate names are listed alphabetically		
Role of Political Parties	None		

### General Elections

Definition	Election contests that decide who will hold public office		
Scheduling	Congress sets the date for national elections that include the president and Congress. These elections are held the first Tuesday after the first Monday in November in even numbered years (i.e. 2020 president/Congress; 2022 Congress, governor). State legislatures schedule all other elections although state level elections usually take place on the same day as the national election.		
Ballot Design	Federal offices listed before state offices; executive offices listed before legislative offices within federal or state categories.		
Role of Political Parties	Candidate names are organized on the ballot according to the party in which the state's governor is registered. For example, in 2018, Ron DeSantis, a Republican was elected		

	governor. In the 2020 election, Republicans were listed first on the ballot, followed by Democrats, and then by candidates of other parties and independents.
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## **2. How Elections and Voting Impact Citizens at the Local, State, and National Levels**

Citizens vote because elections impact them on multiple levels. The Founding Fathers created a constitutional republic centered around the election of knowledgeable representatives of the people, who could make fair and just laws based on that knowledge and reflecting the will of the people. It's important to understand that more than half of the world's population does not have the right to vote for their leaders. Some places (like Russia or China) may have fraudulent elections or have elections with only one name on the ballot. In the U.S., there are specific guidelines for a genuinely free and fair election.

Citizens should vote in all elections, not just presidential elections. There is a downturn in voter turnout at midterm elections, but all elections affect our daily lives. In all elections the direction of things like budgets and taxes, infrastructure, safety and security, and the common welfare are at stake. At the national level, those elected will be involved in foreign policy decisions. In both national and state elections, individuals selected will help drive agendas and policy-making on major topics. And at the local level, basic everyday decisions like the school year calendar and whether to build a new fire station will be in the hands of the locally elected officials.

## **3. The Origins of the Republican and Democratic Political Parties and their Roles in Shaping Public Policy**

Before we begin a discussion of political parties, it is important to recall that our Founding Fathers, particularly Washington, viewed political parties (what they termed as 'factionalism') as potentially dangerous to the republic. That aside, however, the Founders themselves ultimately sorted into their own factions despite the potential conflicts this would raise.

Political parties serve several interconnected roles in American politics. They serve a socializing role for the public, where they impact political knowledge and political activity. Party organizations oversee nominations and elections, contribute resources to political campaigns, and shape party messages. Parties also impact policy making and political decision making among elected officials. These roles are interconnected in that how the public perceives political parties will impact their vote choice and campaign contribution decisions, which impacts who wins elections. How elected officials create and shape public policy impacts how the public perceives political parties because most elected officials are identified as political party members.

Political parties serve critical roles in our system because they combine individual citizens' political views and communicate them to government. In combining these views, the public's voice is more readily heard by public officials. The Democratic and Republican parties have served as the two main U.S. political parties since 1860. It is through parties that the public learns about, sees and understands the political process. Political parties also act as a vote guide because voters more often select candidates who represent their own party identification or party registration.

The role of parties as policy guides functions particularly well within the systems of separation of powers, checks and balances and federalism. All elected offices are tied to party labels at the national and state levels although this does not preclude independents from seeking office. For example, as of 2023, two U.S. Senators were elected as independents. At the local level, counties and cities decide if their public officials will seek election under party labels.

Members of Congress who share a party label tend to shape public policy together while different parties tend to take opposing views on key policy issues. Similarly, the president tends to spend more time with members of his own party in Congress compared with members of the opposite party.

The Democratic Party is the nation's oldest existing political party. Although the idea of political parties can not be found anywhere in the U. S. Constitution, soon after the creation of the new government, factions developed among the nation's founders. The two-party system emerged in 1792 in Washington's first cabinet; as issues were discussed, cabinet members took sides, creating "factions". George Washington, John Adams, and Alexander Hamilton had similar ideas and created the Federalist Party. Thomas Jefferson and James Madison had disagreements with the Federalists in just about every area and created a political party known as the Democratic-Republican Party. Despite Washington's warnings about the dangers of political parties in his well-known farewell address, the power struggle between Federalists and Democratic-Republicans monopolized the nation's early years. Jefferson and his supporters emerged triumphant after the election of 1800, and other parties were created as the Federalists disappeared. The Democratic Party as we know it today, however, can be traced back to the election of Andrew Jackson in 1828. Cartoonist Thomas Nast popularized the donkey as the party's symbol in the late nineteenth century.

The Republican Party, our other major party, was formed when members of diverse political groups held a political convention committed to resisting the expansion of slavery in the United States. Many of these individuals came from the former Whig party, so some historians will say that the Republican Party was an extension of the Whig party. Much of its support was centered in the Western states and territories and in the North. Abraham Lincoln was the first member of the party to be elected President of the United States. Lincoln was instrumental in bringing together the Republican Party; therefore, it is sometimes referred to as the "Party of Lincoln." In the 1870s, the Republican Party was nicknamed the "Grand Old Party" or "GOP" because it kept the Union together through the Civil War. The Republican Party adopted the elephant symbol when the originator of the political cartoon, Thomas Nast, used an elephant in one of his cartoons to represent the party.

Both the Republicans and Democrats have evolved well beyond their initial founding and platforms, and it is important to understand where each party stands on issues today. You can learn more about the origins and positions of each party at their party websites ([Republican](#) | [Democrats](#)).

#### **4. How Free and Fair Elections Promote Trust in Democratic Institutions and Preserve the Republic**

Free and fair elections are vital to the health and well-being of our democratic republic. Our Constitution declares that 'We the People' form the foundation of our government, and free and fair elections are a necessary component of that foundation. Tied to the idea of free and fair elections is the importance of rule of law. As Locke once said, "Wherever Law ends, Tyranny begins." This remains true in elections, which to be considered free and fair must reflect the free expression of the people's will. A core feature of America's constitutional republic is the acceptance of election results in a free and fair election, no matter the outcome.

Free and fair elections, according to many definitions, have certain shared characteristics. These include transparency, inclusivity, accountability, and equal opportunities to compete.

- A. Transparency: Laws concerning registration, processes and procedures, vote counting, and other aspects of elections must be clear and evident and adhere to the rule of law
- B. Inclusivity: All citizens must have the opportunity to vote if they so choose.
- C. Accountability: Election officials, and candidates, are accountable to citizens and to the rule of law.
- D. Equal Opportunity: all who wish to compete as candidates in an election must be given the opportunity to do so, within the context of the rule of law and previously established policies and procedures. Note that this does not mean that there are no limitations on who can run as a candidate for office; rather, it

means that those that follow pre-established policies and procedures should have equal access to a ballot slot.

A lack of trust in elections has the potential to encourage discontent and conflict. We need only look at recent elections in Latin America, such as in [Brazil](#), [Peru](#), and [Venezuela](#), to see the consequence of that discontent.

Sources: [Our History - Democrats](#); [About Our Party | GOP](#); [Supporting Free and Fair Elections | Democracy, Human Rights & Governance | U.S. Agency for International Development \(usaid.gov\)](#); <https://www.usa.gov/midterm-state-and-local-elections>; <https://www.liberties.eu/en/stories/free-and-fair-elections/43642>; <https://share.america.gov/chinese-media-press-or-propagandists/>

## Lesson Summary

ESSENTIAL QUESTION		
How do elections and voting impact citizens at local, state, and national levels? How do free and fair elections promote trust in democratic institutions? What are the origins of political parties? How do political parties shape public policy?		
BENCHMARK		
SS.7.CG.2.6 Examine the election and voting process at the local, state and national levels.		
CIVICS EOC REPORTING CATEGORY		
N/A		
OVERVIEW		
In this lesson, students will examine the election and voting process at all levels of government, including an examination of why free and fair elections are important. In addition, students will understand the origins of America's two main political parties and the role they play in shaping public policy.		
BENCHMARK CLARIFICATIONS		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Students will explain how elections and voting impact citizens at the local, state and national levels.</li> <li>Students will explain the origins of the Republican and Democratic political parties and evaluate their roles in shaping public policy.</li> <li>Students will explain how free and fair elections promote trust in democratic institutions and preserve the republic.</li> </ul>		
BENCHMARK CONTENT LIMITS		
N/A		
CIVICS CONTENT VOCABULARY		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>autocracy, ballot, candidate, Democratic Party, elector, general election, incumbent, party affiliation, party platform, political office, political official, political party, primary election, public policy, registered voter, republic, Republican Party, suffrage, third party, transparency, two-party system, vote</li> </ul>		
INSTRUCTIONAL STRATEGIES		
Close reading of complex text	Collaborative Learning	Vocabulary- Context clues
MATERIALS		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Chart paper</li> <li>Markers</li> <li>Sticky notes</li> <li>Timer</li> <li>Student digital devices</li> </ul>		



- How Do Voting Laws Differ By State? fact sheet (external link)
- How the Voting and Election Process Works reading
- Team Statement slide
- How Elections and Voting Impact Citizens reading
- Group Share Directions #1 slide
- Understanding Free and Fair Elections reading
- Political Parties reading (external link)
- Political Parties QAR activity sheet
- Was George Washington a Republican or Democrat? video (external link)
- Origins of the Political Parties activity sheet
- Origins of the Republican and Democratic Political Parties slides
- Public Policy Definition slide
- Group Share Directions #2 slide

### **B.E.S.T. STANDARDS**

- ELA.7.R.3.2- Paraphrase content from grade-level texts.
- ELA.7.C.2.1- Present information orally, in a logical sequence, emphasizing key points that support the central idea.
- ELA.12.V.1.1- Integrate academic vocabulary appropriate to grade level in speaking and writing.
- ELA.V.1.3- Apply knowledge of context clues, figurative language, word relationships, reference materials, and/or background knowledge to determine the connotative and denotative meaning of words and phrases, appropriate to grade level.

## Suggested Student Activity Sequence & Pace

DAY	ACTIVITY SEQUENCE
DAY 1	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Ask students the following question: Why does the U.S. Constitution begin with the words ‘We the People’?</li> <li>2. Lead students to an understanding that government’s power is derived from the people. In order to grant them that power, elections play a vital role in our constitutional republic.</li> <li>3. Explain to students that according to Article II of the U.S. Constitution, most of the election processes and procedures are left up to the states to decide, therefore making things look a little different on election days from state to state.</li> <li>4. Project the article “<a href="#">How Do Voting Laws Differ By State?</a>” from USA FACTS, and scroll through the maps/graphic images to visually show students some of those differences (i.e. whether the state allows online registration, same day registration...etc.)</li> <li>5. Let students know that today, they are going to learn about some of the basics of the voting and election process at the national, state, and local levels.</li> <li>6. Provide each student a copy of the “How the Voting and Election Process Works” reading.</li> <li>7. Go around the room and assign each student a letter/topic of the reading that they will be responsible for examining.</li> <li>8. Provide time for the students to read their letter/topic and individually write a one sentence summary in the right-hand column of the handout.  <b>Teacher Note:</b> If students struggle with reading and summarizing, you may want to do one together as a class.</li> <li>9. Once the students have finished writing their individual summary, direct them to group with other students in the room who have the same letter/topic as them.  <b>Teacher Note:</b> Set-up signs around the room with corresponding letters to the reading to make this step easier.</li> <li>10. In their like groups, students will craft a team statement by combining their individual statements into one joint statement. Project the “Team Statements” slide with directions.</li> <li>11. Next, each group will write their team statements on a large piece of chart paper with a marker. Teachers or students then need to put the team statements up around the room.  <b>Teacher Note:</b> Ensure each group labels their poster with their corresponding letter/topic from the text.</li> <li>12. Bring students back together.</li> <li>13. As a whole class, start with topic A: Registration: Sign Up!. Provide the students 1 minute to complete an individual quick read of the text. During this time, Group A should go stand by their team statement.</li> <li>14. Once the time is up, have Group A share their team statement and expand on any information they feel necessary to teach the class about that section of text.</li> <li>15. Using their own reading and the Group A team statement have students write their own summary sentence in the right column.</li> <li>16. Continue to repeat steps 13-15 for the remaining sections/topics.</li> <li>17. Checking for Understanding (Formative Assessment):  Instruct students to write a well-crafted informative response using the following prompt:  <u>Prompt:</u>  Create a short script for a social media video that explains the voting and election process. Include 3 of the following 5 vocabulary words: registered voter, primaries, general election, convention, midterm elections. Ensure something about all three levels of government are mentioned.</li> </ol>

DAYS  
2 & 3

1. Divide your board into 5 squares, numbering each space. Ensure that each space is large enough to hold around 10 sticky notes.
2. Ask the students this question: On a scale from 1-5 (1 being not very much, 5 being a lot) how important is it for all eligible U.S. citizens to exercise their right to vote?
3. Give each student a sticky note and have them place it in the box on the board that corresponds with their answer.  
**Teacher Note:** You can give different colors to different periods or start over each period. You can have the students write their name on the sticky note or leave it blank to be anonymous.
4. Have the students turn to a partner and discuss why they chose that box to place their sticky note.  
**Teacher Note:** Feel free to repeat this hook activity with other questions related to voting/elections such as: How important is it to participate in local elections? How important is it to join a political party? etc.
5. Pass out the "How Elections and Voting Impact Citizens" reading.
6. Instruct students to read individually and mark text that provides them with an understanding of why voting matters.
7. When finished, have students sit in a circle in a group of four.
8. Pose the following questions: Why vote? How can voting (or not voting) impact the life of a citizen?
9. Post the "Group Share Directions #1" slide on the board so students can see the steps as they are brainstorming.
10. Set a timer for four minutes.
11. Students rotate around the circle, saying 1 possible answer each time (without duplicating previous answers).  
**Teacher Note:** Students may choose to write down their list individually or as a group.
12. Students are to continue brainstorming until the timer goes off.
13. Bring the class back all together.
14. Explain to students that now that they have a general understanding of how elections and voting work, and why voting matters, with the remaining time today, they are going to examine elections more closely. Share with students the following points:
  - Just holding elections is not enough in a true democracy (constitutional republic)
  - Elections must be "free and fair"
  - "Free and fair" elections promote trust in our democratic institutions
  - In order for an election to be considered "free and fair", certain standards/criteria must be met before, during, and after the election.
15. Pass out to each student a copy of the "Understanding Free and Fair Elections" reading.
16. Read the first two sections together as a whole class. Review the meaning of the terms 'free' and 'fair'.  
**Teacher Note:** 'Free' is not pertaining to money but free of interference
17. Have the students read the remaining sections on criteria to be met before, during, and after an election for them to be 'free and fair'.
18. Review as a whole class. Together, examine the application questions at the bottom of the reading.  
**Teacher Note:** Students will need individual digital devices to access the internet for this portion. You may also need to help students locate the Supervisor of Elections website for your district.

	<p>19. Have students complete the application questions on a separate sheet of paper either on their own or in pairs/small groups. Students should use knowledge acquired from the reading, well supported opinions, and internet research to formulate answers.</p> <p>20. Checking for Understanding (Formative Assessment): Instruct students to write a well-crafted informative response using the following prompt: <u>Prompt:</u> How do free and fair elections promote trust in democratic institutions and preserve the republic?</p> <p><b>Lesson Alternative Option:</b> Have the students complete the “Understanding Free and Fair Elections” reading but instead of internet research for the questions, invite a representative from your local Supervisor of Elections office to your class to discuss/answer the questions.</p>
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DAY 4	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To begin today, ask students the following fun fact: All elected U.S. presidents except for one belonged to a political party. Do you know who that one president was? (Answer: George Washington)</li> <li>Explain to students that for almost all of our country’s history, political parties have played a major role in elections and voting.</li> <li>Pass out or project the “<a href="#">Political Parties</a>” article from the Library of Congress.</li> <li>Read through the article as a whole class, modeling text marking strategies and pausing to summarize sections.</li> <li>Pass out the “Political Parties QAR” activity sheet and instruct students to use the Library of Congress article to complete the sheet individually.</li> <li>Place students in groups of four.</li> <li>Have them check their answers to the ‘Right There’ and ‘Think and Search’ sections.</li> <li>Next, have the groups share their responses for the ‘Author and You’ and ‘On My Own’ sections. As a group, instruct them to pick one response for each section that will serve as the group response.</li> <li>Divide your whiteboard into four separate sections, giving each one a heading: Right There, Think and Search, Author and You, On My Own.</li> <li>Have each group select one person to come up to the whiteboard and record their group’s responses.</li> <li>Choose a few of the shared responses to discuss as a class. <b>Teacher Note:</b> Be sure to emphasize that the Author and You and On My Own questions do not have right or wrong answers. We want students to understand that they can share their opinions if they have evidence to support them.</li> <li>Finish today by watching a summary video from Mount Vernon called “<a href="#">Was George Washington a Republican or a Democrat?</a>”. Have the students record one additional piece of information they learn from the video.</li> </ol>
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DAY 5	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Pass out the “Origins of Political Parties” activity sheet to each student.</li> <li>Use the “Origins of the Republican and Democratic Political Parties” slides to share information with students on the topic.</li> <li>As you go through the slides, pause to provide time for students to record notes/answers and complete a quickdraw to help them remember the information.</li> </ol>
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|  | <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>4. Have a few students share their responses and/or drawings before moving on to the next slide/question.</li><li>5. Once notes are complete, project the “Public Policy Definition” slide.</li><li>6. Put students in a circle in a group of four.</li><li>7. Pose the following question: How do political parties shape public policy?</li><li>8. Post the “Group Share Directions #2” slide on the board to remind students of the steps as they brainstorm.</li><li>9. Set a timer for four minutes.</li><li>10. Students rotate around the circle, saying one possible answer each time (without duplicating previous answers).</li><li><i><b>Teacher Note:</b></i> Students may choose to write down their list individually or as a group.</li><li>11. Students continue brainstorming until the timer goes off.</li><li>12. Wrap up the discussion by sharing ideas from each group.</li><li>13. Checking for Understanding (Formative Assessment):<br/>Instruct students to write a well-crafted informative response using the following prompt:<br/><u>Prompt:</u><br/>Your friend just turned 18, and they tell you they will not vote because they do not know enough about how or why to do it. Write 5 - 7 sentences to explain the process and why it is essential. Be sure to include information about political parties and how they relate to voting.</li></ol> |
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## Civics Content Vocabulary

Word/Term	Definition
<b>autocracy</b>	a form of government where one person has unlimited power
<b>ballot</b>	voting, in writing and typically in secret
<b>candidate</b>	a person running for political office
<b>Democratic Party</b>	a political party that believes that the national government should take a more active role in people's lives, particularly those who are in need
<b>elector</b>	a person who has the right to vote in an election
<b>general election</b>	election in which voters decide which candidates will actually fill elective public offices
<b>incumbent</b>	a person who is currently holding public office
<b>party affiliation</b>	the political party a voter is registered as belonging to or is most closely connected with
<b>party platform</b>	a written statement of the goals and principles of a political party
<b>political office</b>	the name given to the government office that is obtained by an election
<b>political official</b>	a person holding an elected office
<b>political party</b>	an organization that tries to get political power by electing members to public office so that their political ideas can become laws or policies
<b>primary election</b>	nominating election held to choose party candidates who will run in the general election
<b>public policy</b>	actions taken by the government to solve problems and achieve goals
<b>registered voter</b>	those legally eligible to vote who have registered in accordance with the requirements prevailing in their state and locality
<b>republic</b>	a form of government in which the people select representatives to govern them and make laws
<b>Republican Party</b>	a political party that believes that the national government should play a less active role in people's lives and that individuals can take care of themselves without government help
<b>suffrage</b>	the legal right to vote
<b>third party</b>	a political party that is not one of the two major political parties in the country; a minor party

<b>transparency</b>	the availability of information to the general public and clarity about government rules, regulations, and decisions
<b>two-party system</b>	a political system consisting primarily of two major political parties, more or less equal in strength
<b>vote</b>	to elect or decide

## ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

### [Civics 360 Resources](#)

Florida Department of Education's Civic Literacy Reading List

- N/A

## ANSWER KEYS

Sample Answers: How the Voting and Election Process Works reading

Note: Answers to the "Understanding Free and Fair Elections" questions will be opinion based and vary by county

Sample Answers: Political Parties QAR activity sheet

Sample Answers: Origins of the Political Parties activity sheet

Written Response: Sample Scoring Rubric

## SOURCES

"How do voting laws differ by state?" from USA FACTS:

<https://usafacts.org/articles/how-do-voting-laws-differ-by-state/>

"Free and Fair Elections" from Facing History and Ourselves:

<https://www.facinghistory.org/resource-library/free-fair-elections>

"Free and Fair Elections-A Database" from Journal of Peace Research:

<https://www.jstor.org/stable/43920613?seq=2>

Political Parties/ The Presidential Election Process from Library of Congress:

<https://www.loc.gov/classroom-materials/elections/presidential-election-process/political-parties/>

"Was George Washington a Republican or a Democrat?" video from Mount Vernon:

<https://www.mountvernon.org/george-washington/the-first-president/political-parties/>

Our History-Democrats: <https://democrats.org/who-we-are/our-history/>

About Our Party/GOP: <https://gop.com/about-our-party/>

Free and Fair Elections:

<https://www.principlesofdemocracy.org/election-dem#:~:text=Free%20and%20fair%20elections%20increase%20the%20likelihood%20of,the%20state%20to%20tamper%20with%20the%20election%20process.>

<https://www.liberties.eu/en/stories/free-and-fair-elections/43642>

<https://share.america.gov/chinese-media-press-or-propagandists/>

Presidential Election Process - <https://www.usa.gov/election>

Congressional, State, and Local Elections : <https://www.usa.gov/midterm-state-and-local-elections>