

Name:

Hour:

The Electoral Process Unit Packet

- Americans’ opinions about politics are influenced in a number of ways-primarily by the family, schools, friends, and the media. In what ways have YOU been influenced by these groups?

Use the data below and on the next page to answer Qs 2-5.

- What was the most important issue in:

2007:

2010:

2012:

2014:

- What would you answer if you were polled?_____

- Why do you think Iraq and healthcare were both seen as more important in 2007?

- How do you think these issues could affect an election? A campaign?

Most Important Problem Facing the U.S.

What do you think is the most important problem facing this country today?

| | Feb 6-9, 2014 | Mar 6-9, 2014 |
|---|----------------------|----------------------|
| | % | % |
| Unemployment/Jobs | 23 | 19 |
| Dissatisfaction with government/Congress/politicians; poor leadership/corruption/abuse of power | 18 | 18 |
| Economy in general | 20 | 17 |
| Poor healthcare/hospitals; high cost of healthcare | 15 | 11 |
| Federal budget deficit/Federal debt | 8 | 8 |
| Education/Poor education/Access to education | 4 | 5 |
| Ethics/Moral/Religious/Family decline; Dishonesty | 5 | 4 |
| Foreign aid/Focus overseas | 2 | 4 |
| Poverty/Hunger/Homelessness | 3 | 4 |
| Immigration/Illegal aliens | 6 | 4 |
| Lack of money | 3 | 3 |
| Gap between rich and poor | 2 | 3 |

Shown are the top 12 responses in March

CBS News. Feb. 8-13, 2012.

"Which one issue would you most like to hear the candidates for president discuss during the 2012 presidential campaign?" Open-ended

| | % |
|------------------------------|----|
| Economy and jobs | 44 |
| Health care | 8 |
| Budget deficit/National debt | 4 |
| Education | 3 |
| Taxes/IRS | 3 |
| Immigration | 2 |
| Politicians/Government | 2 |
| Partisan politics | 2 |
| Other | 21 |
| Unsure | 11 |

CBS News April 5-12, 2010.

"What do you think is the most important problem facing this country today?" Open-ended

| | % |
|------------------------------|----|
| Economy/Jobs | 49 |
| Health care | 8 |
| Budget deficit/National debt | 5 |
| Poverty/Homelessness | 4 |
| War/Iraq/Afghanistan | 4 |
| Big government/Bureaucracy | 2 |
| Misc. moral values | 2 |
| Other | 21 |
| Unsure | 5 |

CBS News. Oct. 12-16, 2007.

"Which one issue would you most like to hear the candidates for president discuss during the 2008 presidential campaign?" Open-ended

| | % |
|---------------------|----|
| War in Iraq | 26 |
| Health care | 25 |
| Economy/Jobs | 11 |
| Immigration | 6 |
| Education | 3 |
| Environment | 2 |
| Social Security | 2 |
| Defense/Military | 2 |
| Terrorism (general) | 2 |
| Abortion | 1 |
| Other | 12 |
| Unsure | 8 |

1. Complete the following spectrum as a class.



2. In the United States today, we have two main parties (conservatives=Republicans, liberals=Democrats). How does having a two-party system affect where our parties lie on the political spectrum?

3. Why do you think many Americans refer to themselves as Independents?

4. Many Americans choose to “split ticket vote,” which means they vote for Democrats and Republicans on the same ballot. Why do you think this is?

5. Issues: You, with others, are asked to do the following:

- Choose a “social issue” (an issue that society tries to deal with, but has conflicting viewpoints about how it should be handled...for example: abortion).
- Two people in the group will represent American conservatives, and the others will represent American liberals.
- Using your social issue, create a skit or a debate that shows what each ideology would say about your issue (use attached notes for details).
- Create a script about what you will each say...one/group.
- Come and present your skit to the class. You may use your script, but you will hand it in when finished. You will earn 10 points individually for addressing your ideology and for participating.
- Extra points for creativity and flair.
- As others present, you will listen, and mark on your attached notes where you stand on the issue (comes in handy later). You can star/circle the side that you tend to be on for EACH issue presented.

My issue is _____

Very important note-not every conservative or liberal fit perfectly into their “category”. We are all individuals with slightly different versions of the ideas listed below.

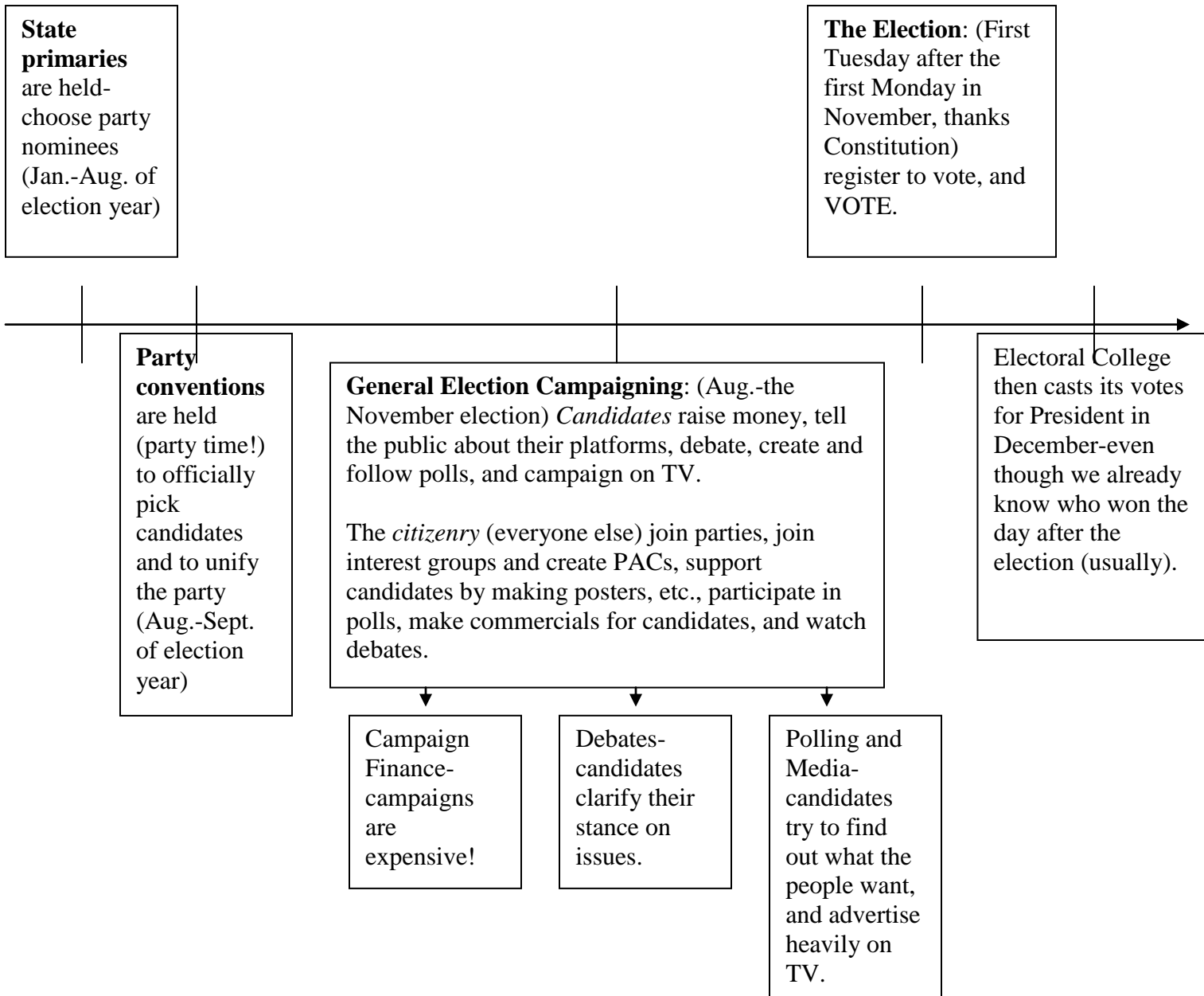
| Issue | American Liberal beliefs/attitudes | American Conservative beliefs/attitudes |
|--------------------|--|--|
| Abortion | <p>A fetus is not a human life.</p> <p>The decision to have an abortion is a personal choice of a woman regarding her own body and the government should stay out of it. Women should be guaranteed the right to a safe and legal abortion, including partial birth abortion.</p> | <p>Human life begins at conception. Abortion is the murder of a human being. Nobody has the right to murder a human being.</p> <p>Support legislation to prohibit partial birth abortions, called the "Partial Birth Abortion Ban" (partial birth abortion - the killing of an unborn baby of at least 20 weeks by pulling it out of the birth canal with forceps, but leaving the head inside. An incision is made in the back of the baby's neck and the brain tissue is suctioned out. The head is then removed from the uterus.)</p> |
| Affirmative Action | <p>Due to prevalent racism in the past, minorities were deprived of the same education and employment opportunities as whites. We need to make up for that.</p> <p>Support affirmative action based on the belief that America is still a racist society. Minorities still lag behind whites in all statistical measurements of success. Also, the presence of minorities creates diversity.</p> | <p>People should be admitted to schools and hired for jobs based on their ability. It is unfair to use race as a factor in the selection process. Reverse-discrimination is not a solution for racism.</p> |
| Death Penalty | <p>We should abolish the death penalty. The death penalty is inhumane and is ‘cruel and unusual’ punishment. It does not deter crime. Imprisonment is the appropriate punishment. Every execution risks killing an innocent person.</p> | <p>The death penalty is a punishment that fits the crime; it is neither ‘cruel’ nor ‘unusual’. Executing a murderer is the appropriate punishment for taking an innocent life.</p> |
| The Economy | <p>Favor a market system in which government regulates the economy. We need government to protect us against big businesses. Unlike the private sector, the government is motivated by public interest. We need government regulation to level the playing field.</p> | <p>The free market system, competitive capitalism, and private enterprise afford the widest opportunity and the highest standard of living for all. Free markets produce more economic growth, more jobs and higher standards of living than those systems burdened by excessive government regulation.</p> |
| The Environment | <p>Conservatives don't care about protecting the environment. Industrial growth harms the environment.</p> <p>Global warming is caused by an increased production of carbon dioxide. The U.S. is a major contributor to global warming because it produces 25% of the world's carbon dioxide. The U.S. should enact laws to significantly reduce that amount.</p> | <p>Desire clean water, clean air and a clean planet, just like everyone else. However, extreme environmental policies destroy jobs and damage the economy.</p> <p>Changes in global temperatures are natural over long periods of time. So far, science has not shown that humans can affect permanent change to the earth's temperature.</p> |
| Gun Control | <p>The Second Amendment gives no individual the right to own a gun, but allows the state to keep a militia (National Guard). Guns kill people. Guns kill children.</p> | <p>The Second Amendment gives the individual the right to keep and bear arms. Gun control laws do not thwart criminals. You have a right to defend yourself against criminals. More guns mean less crime.</p> |
| Healthcare | <p>Support universal government-supervised health care. There are millions of Americans who can't afford health insurance. They are being deprived of a basic right to healthcare.</p> | <p>Free healthcare provided by the government (socialized medicine) means that everyone will get the same poor-quality healthcare. The rich will continue to pay for superior healthcare, while all others will receive poor-quality free healthcare from the government. Health care should remain privatized.</p> <p>Support Healthcare Spending Accounts.</p> |
| Immigration | <p>Support legal immigration and increasing the number of legal immigrants permitted to enter the U.S. each year. Support blanket amnesty for current illegal immigrants.</p> | <p>Support legal immigration at current numbers, but do not support illegal immigration. Government should enforce immigration laws. Oppose President Bush's amnesty plan for illegal immigrants. Those who break the law by entering the</p> |

| | | |
|---------------------|---|---|
| | <p>Believe that regardless of how they came to the U.S., illegal immigrants deserve:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - U.S. government financial aid for college tuition. - visas for spouse/children to come to the U.S. <p>Families shouldn't be separated.</p> <p>Illegal immigrants do the jobs that Americans do not want to do.</p> | <p>U.S. illegally should not have the same rights as those who obey the law by entering legally.</p> <p>If there were a decrease in cheap, illegal immigrant labor, employers would have to substitute higher-priced domestic employees, legal immigrants, or perhaps increase mechanization.</p> |
| Religion | <p>Support the separation of church and state. Religious expression has no place in government.</p> <p>Support the removal of all references to God in public and government spaces.</p> <p>Religion should not interfere with government.</p> | <p>The phrase "separation of church and state" is not in the Constitution. The First Amendment to the Constitution states "Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof..." This prevents the government from establishing a national church. However, it does not prevent God from being acknowledged in schools and government buildings.</p> <p>Oppose the removal of symbols of Christian heritage from public and government spaces.</p> <p>Government should not interfere with religion and religious freedom.</p> |
| Same-sex marriage | <p>Marriage should be legal for gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender couples to ensure equal rights for all.</p> <p>All individuals, regardless of their sex, have the right to marry.</p> <p>Believe that prohibiting same-sex citizens from marrying denies them of their civil rights. Opinions differ on whether this issue is equal to civil rights for African Americans.</p> | <p>Marriage is between one man and one woman.</p> <p>Opinions differ on support for the creation of a constitutional amendment establishing marriage as the union of one man and one woman.</p> <p>Believe that requiring citizens to sanction same-sex relationships violates moral and religious beliefs of millions of Christians, Jews, Muslims and others who believe marriage is the union of a man and a woman.</p> |
| Taxes | <p>Support higher taxes and a larger government. High taxes enable the government to do good and create jobs. We need high taxes for social welfare programs, to provide for the poor. We can't afford to cut taxes.</p> | <p>Support lower taxes and a smaller government. Lower taxes create more incentive for people to work, save, invest, and engage in entrepreneurial endeavors. Money is best spent by those who earn it.</p> |
| United Nations (UN) | <p>The United States has a moral and a legal obligation to support the United Nations (UN). The UN can be effective in promoting peace and human rights. The U.S. should not have acted in Iraq without UN approval. The U.S. should submit its national interests to the greater good (as defined by the UN).</p> | <p>The UN has repeatedly failed in its essential mission: to preserve world peace. The wars, genocide and human rights abuses of the majority of its member states (and the UN's failure to stop them) prove this point. History shows that the United States, not the UN, is the global force for spreading freedom, prosperity, tolerance and peace. The U.S. should never subvert its national interests to those of the UN.</p> |
| War on terrorism | <p>9/11 was caused by America's arrogant foreign policy. America needs to stop angering other countries. The threat posed by terrorism was exaggerated by President Bush for his own political advantage. President Obama should limit involvement in foreign conflict</p> | <p>The world toward which the Militant Islamists strive cannot peacefully co-exist with the Western world. In the last decade, Militant Islamists have repeatedly attacked Americans and American interests here and abroad. The terrorists must be stopped and destroyed. ISIS is a threat that must be taken down.</p> |
| Welfare | <p>Support welfare. We need welfare to provide for the poor. Conservatives oppose welfare because they are not compassionate toward the poor. We have welfare to bring fairness to American economic life. Without welfare, life below the poverty line would be intolerable.</p> | <p>Oppose long-term welfare. We need to provide opportunities to make it possible for poor and low-income workers to become self-reliant. It is far more compassionate and effective to encourage a person to become self-reliant, rather than keeping them dependent on the government for money.</p> |

6. Generalize after skits: based on what I've heard, I tend to be more liberal/conservative (circle one).

From Wannabe to Nominee!

Study the timeline below. This will outline everything we talk about in the coming weeks.



1. If you want your name on the ballot, you have to be _____!! (178)
2. Most presidential candidates are self-announced. What does this mean? (179-180)

3. Once potential candidates announce that they are running for office, each party has to determine who will represent them (only one per party can officially run!) This tends to be a very divisive and expensive process within parties. We the people are directly involved in this process. This mini- election is called a primary.

Define:

What is a direct primary? (182)

There are two types of primaries (open and closed). What is a closed? (182-183)

What is an open? (183)

Look at the map on page 183. Which type of primary does Michigan use? Which is better (closed/open)? Why?

4. Once all the states have voted, both Republicans and Democrats have a National Convention. It is a largely televised event where parties put divisive matters behind them, and unite behind one candidate. Some might call it a big party (see pic on page 114!)

What is the purpose of a convention, and what is the mood? (372-374)

Political Parties: 2-party systems and voter behavior

1. What is a political party? (116)
2. What do political parties do? (116-118, summarize giving examples)
 - a. Nominating Candidates:
 - b. Informing and Activating Supporters:
 - c. The Bonding Agent Function:
 - d. Governing:
 - e. Acting as Watchdog:

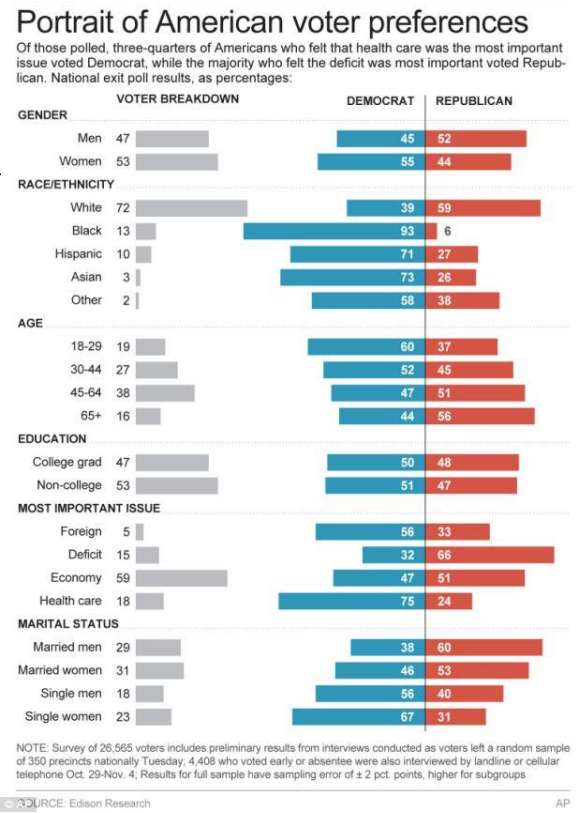
3. Why do we have only two parties? (119-122, summarize below, giving examples)
 - a. Historical basis
 - b. The Force of Tradition
 - c. The Electoral System
 - d. The American Ideological Consensus

4. Some critics argue that the American two-party system should be replaced with a multi-party system. Define, and give one reason why. (122)

5. Do you believe that our 2-party system is the best for us? Explain alternatives if not.

6. Describe the generalized groups that associate with the two parties (i.e. who is a Democrat (D) and who is a Republican (R)?) Some groups of voters have favored one or the other major party over time. Using this data, which group most clearly demonstrates that point?

| | |
|-------------------------|---------------------------|
| Democrats tend to be... | Republicans tend to be... |
|-------------------------|---------------------------|



Minor Parties Power Point notes

A Political Party is a group who seeks

They want to win elections to

The Minor Parties

There are **four distinct types** of minor parties in the U.S.

-
-
-
-

Ideological Parties are based on a particular set of beliefs. For example, the _____ party!

Single Issue Parties only concentrate on *one* particular issue. The name of the party usually indicates their main concern. For example, the _____ party!

What usually happens to these parties?

Economic Protest Parties have no clear cut ideology. They have proclaimed their disgust with the major parties and demand _____.

What usually happens to these parties?

Splinter Parties have split from _____ or _____ (the major parties).

Most have formed around a strong personality – someone who has lost an election.

The most important of the minor parties have been splinter parties. For example, _____ split from the Republican party to create the _____ party.

Problems with classifying minor parties?

The Socialist Party is an example of an **ideological** type of third party, but could also be an **economic protest** type of third party, since they also focus a lot on labor and workers...

This makes classification tough with most minor parties!

Importance

Why should we care about minor parties?

- Many minor parties have made an impact throughout history. The development of a national convention started with a minor party.
- _____ -- a minor party many times can pull votes away from a major party (For example: Ross Perot and Ralph Nader).
- Unlike major parties, minor parties are ready to take a clean-cut stance on a controversial issue. Voters like this.
- There has been a big increase in _____ - _____ voting – voting for candidates of different parties for different offices in the same election.

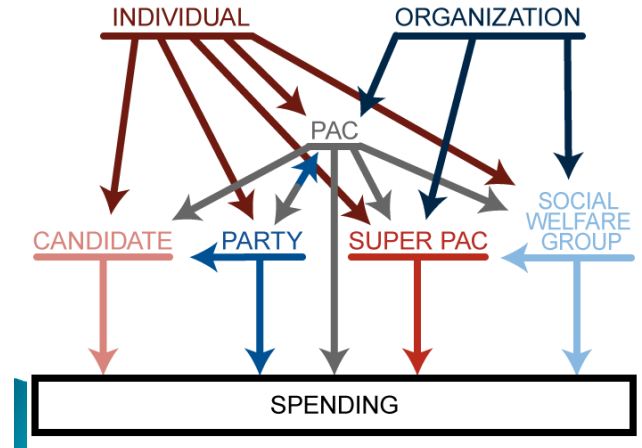
- Increasingly, people are becoming “_____” voters. This means that they refuse to side with a major party.
- Implications? More voters are becoming interested in minor parties and what they have to offer.

Money and Elections Power Point notes

If you want to run for office, what do you need A LOT of?

Who is involved?

- ▶ People _____
- ▶ Individuals _____
- ▶ Political _____
(the financial arm of interest groups)
- ▶ Political _____
- ▶ 527s (non taxable organizations) or charities _____
- ▶ _____



The Problems?

- ▶ Will candidates “buy” their way into office?
Nixon was so shady in his financial dealings that the _____

_____ was created

(2 million from one donor)

Will special interest groups try to buy favors?

Does this bring corruption to elections?

Then why do candidates need \$?

Campaigns are _____!

- ▶ Presidential candidates have to pay for _____ (speeches, commercials, traveling)
_____ (all those balloons!)

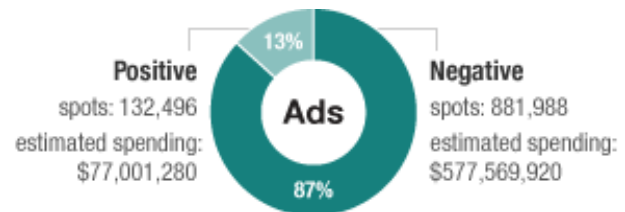
The Presidential _____ (speeches, TV commercials, fancy suits and haircuts, paying employees, airfare, food, hotels, fuel, brochures, communication, pollsters, private consultant, speech writers etc.)

A 30 second commercial can cost _____ or more!!

Why would anyone want to donate money to a campaign anyway?

<http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-srv/special/politics/track-presidential-campaign-ads-2012/>

Scroll over the map and compare two regions (amount spent and cost per advertisement)



- ▶ Because money equals influence
- Get the candidate _____ elected
- Get a _____ into office
- Get _____ passed the way you want them
- Get laws _____
- Access to the government



- ▶ At least it is regulated now! Who does this?
- The FEC: Federal Election Commission
 - ▶ 6 people that

_____ (appointed by Pres., with Senate confirmation)

- ▶ <http://www.fec.gov/>

What information is maintained on the FEC's website (what info is required of donors)? Why is this important?

- ▶ All of this is thanks to Nixon



What are the rules/limits?

1. DISCLOSURE REQUIREMENTS

Contributions must be made through a single committee that reports all the contributions in a "timely matter." (usually _____)

2. LIMITS ON CAMPAIGN CONTRIBUTIONS (updated for inflation every 2 years)

Contribution Limits 2011-12

| | To each candidate or candidate committee per election | To national party committee per calendar year | To state, district & local party committee per calendar year | To any other political committee per calendar year ¹ | Special Limits |
|--|---|---|--|---|---|
| Individual may give | \$2,500* | \$30,800* | \$10,000 (combined limit) | \$5,000 | \$117,000* overall biennial limit: • \$46,200* to all candidates • \$70,800* to all PACs and parties ² |
| National Party Committee may give | \$5,000 | No limit | No limit | \$5,000 | \$43,100* to Senate candidate per campaign ³ |
| State, District & Local Party Committee may give | \$5,000 (combined limit) | No limit | No limit | \$5,000 | No limit |
| PAC (multicandidate) ⁴ may give | \$5,000 | \$15,000 | \$5,000 (combined limit) | \$5,000 | No limit |
| PAC (not multicandidate) may give | \$2,500* | \$30,800* | \$10,000 (combined limit) | \$5,000 | No limit |
| Authorized Campaign Committee may give | \$2,000 ⁵ | No limit | No limit | \$5,000 | No limit |

* These contribution limits are indexed for inflation.

1. A contribution earmarked for a candidate through a political committee counts against the original contributor's limit for that candidate. In certain circumstances, the contribution may also count against the contributor's limit to the PAC. 11 CFR 110.6. See also 11 CFR 110.1(h).

2. No more than \$46,200 of this amount may be contributed to state and local party committees and PACs.

3. This limit is shared by the national committee and the national Senate campaign committee.

4. A multicandidate committee is a political committee with more than 50 contributors which has been registered for at least 6 months and, with the exception of state party committees, has made contributions to 5 or more candidates for federal office. 11 CFR 100.5(e)(3).

5. A federal candidate's authorized committee(s) may contribute no more than \$2,000 per election to another federal candidate's authorized committee(s). 11 CFR 102.12(c)(2).

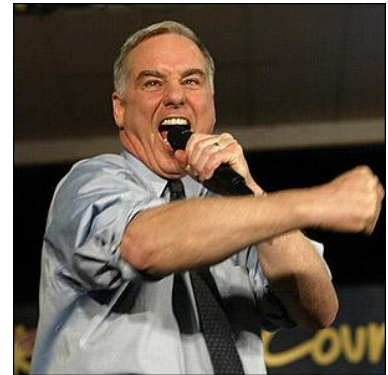
3. LIMITS ON CAMPAIGN SPENDING (EXPENDITURES)

Buckley v. Valeo, 1976: money = freedom of speech (so presidential candidates can _____).

4. PROVIDE PUBLIC FUNDING (TAX DOLLARS) FOR PARTS OF THE ELECTION PROCESS

The government gives money to pre-_____ (if you raise over 100,000 and they will only match private donations)

- **national conventions** (they get grants to cover the _____ convention)
- **Presidential election campaigns** (if candidates refuse the money, they can _____ - but if you take it you can only spend as much as the subsidy and can't take from any private sources. MOST refuse today!)
- You are only eligible if you have won _____ of the popular vote. (so you have to be popular already in order to get more \$)
- This money comes from _____ (we check a box on our federal income tax forms to give \$3 to the process).
- <http://www.fec.gov/finance/2004matching/matching.shtml>



2 types of money in elections

▶ Hard Money:

Raised and spent to elect candidates for the _____ and Congress

_____ to raise

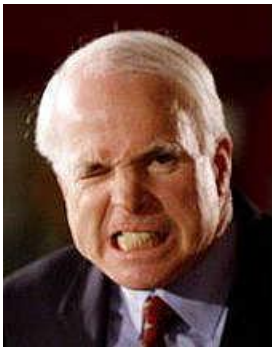
Can be traced, _____ keeps track

▶ Soft Money:

Funds given to party organizations for such “_____” as candidate recruitment, voter registration drives, etc.

Unreported to _____, unlimited, filtered illegally back to candidates

Has been banned since _____ (still happens!)



Limiting Soft Money: The Bipartisan Campaign Reform Act of 2002 (aka, McCain Feingold Act)

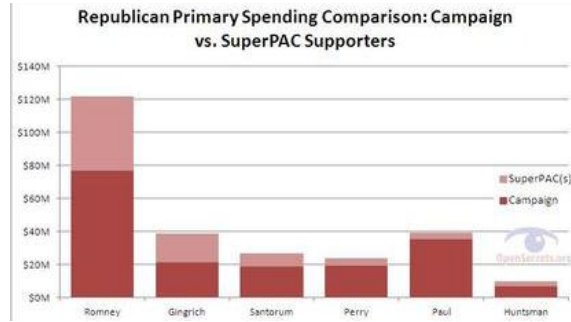
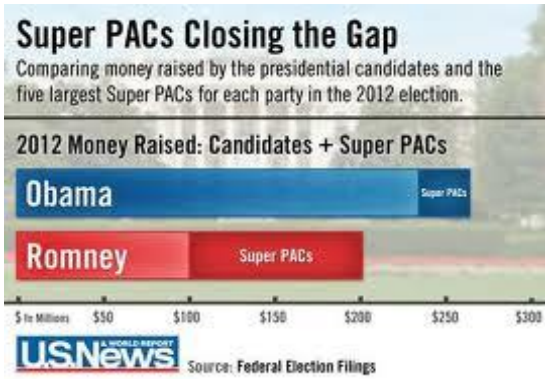
- ▶ Sponsored by _____ and Russ Feingold
- ▶ Bans _____ contributions
- ▶ Became effective November 6, 2002
- ▶ The law also limits _____ within 60 days of a general election or within 30 days of a primary election (A commercial that discusses a topic but does not favor a particular candidate)

Should campaign financing be reformed?

What are Super PACs?

<http://learning.blogs.nytimes.com/2012/05/22/follow-the-money-understanding-super-pac-spending/>

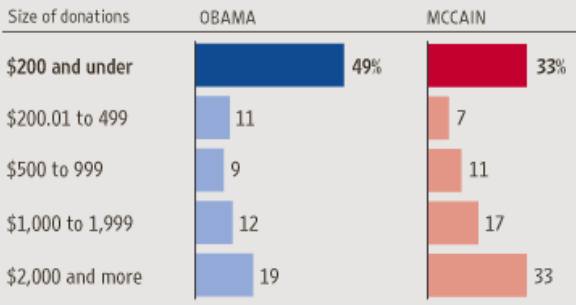
Are Super PACs good for our democracy?



What role did SuperPACs play in the 2012 election? (using both graphs above)

Small Donors, Big Money

The 2008 election has shattered the campaign-financing system in place for a generation. Obama has relied heavily on small donors for campaign funds, while McCain has gotten more support from large donors.



Note: Contributions are from individuals. Figures do not add up to 100% due to rounding.
Source: Federal Election Commission

What do you think? Is it better to get a lot of small donations from lots of people, or to get fewer but larger donations?

Techniques of Persuasion video notes

1. How do debates help citizens prepare for voting day?
2. As you watch this short video, take notes next to each technique. Give specific examples of where candidates are using these techniques as they debate against their opponents.

- ❑ Appeal to emotion
- ❑ Generalities
- ❑ Over-simplification
- ❑ Avoidance
- ❑ Misrepresenting the opponent's position
- ❑ Testimonial
- ❑ Personal attacks



3. What techniques do you see being used in “Peace Daisy Girl”?
4. What about “Gray Dot”?
5. Which technique is the most powerful? Explain.



Interest Groups and PACs

1. What is an interest group? (page 236)
2. What do they do? (pages 239-240)
 - a.
 - b.
 - c.

d.

e.

f.

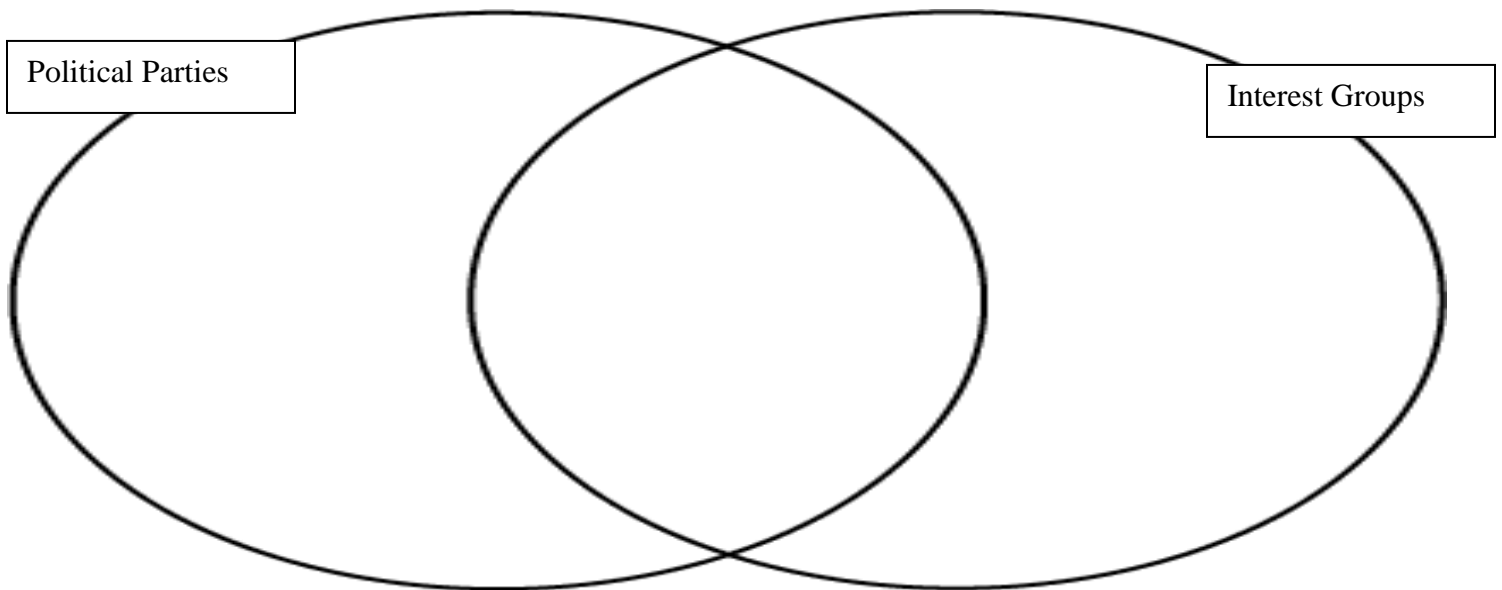
3. Based on this, why do you think interest groups are also called “pressure groups”? Who are they putting pressure on?

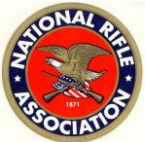

4. Interest groups often take many criticisms. Choose 2 of the 4, and explain them below. (page 240)




a.

b.

5. Comparing political parties with interest groups: Use pages 237-238 to complete the Venn below.



| Interest Group | Major Interests | Where does their money go |
|--|--|------------------------------------|
| National Rifle Association  | Protecting gun rights Lobbying against firearm control | Democrats: 17% Republicans: 82% |
| National Education Association  | Largest teachers union. Lobbies for increased funding, teacher pay, and safety measures | Democrats: 80% Republicans: 5% |
| Collection of unions | Lobbies for job creation, worker healthcare, | Democrats: 82% |

| | | |
|--|--|------------------------------------|
|  | safety, and wages | Republicans: 4% |
|  | World's biggest energy companies Production of coal, gas, and oil Concerned with environmental regulations | Democrats: 13% Republicans: 85% |
|  | Telecommunication laws Business freedom | Democrats: 44% Republicans: 55% |

6. Pick one of the first 4 interest groups above and explain why you think they support the party they do.



7. Why do you think AT&T gives to both parties? Why don't any parties give 100% to a party?

8. What is a PAC? How are they related to interest groups?

9. Analyze the cartoon to the left. Who is shown? Why would the old man give that advice?

Follow the Money Video Clips (Intro, 18:55- 24, 27:55- 32:15, 39-41)

1. What did Howard Dean use to raise money that no other candidate had successfully used before?
2. Which groups can raise and spend soft money outside federal election law? Should they be regulated more?
3. What is the problem with creating new campaign finance laws?
4. A. What has the increase in campaign spending encouraged TV stations to do?

B. Should TV stations' prices be regulated during elections? Explain.

5. What percent of a campaign's budget be spent on TV advertising? _____

6. Should there be free advertisement time for candidates? Explain.

Polls: the measuring stick of modern politics

By [Eric Pryne](#)

Seattle Times staff reporter

In 1936 Literary Digest magazine, citing its own poll, boldly predicted that Republican Alf Landon would defeat President Franklin D. Roosevelt. FDR, of course, was re-elected by a landslide.

Oops.

Literary Digest is long dead. Polls, still in their infancy in 1936, are thriving. It's hard to imagine modern American politics without them.

The concept behind polling is simple: ask a question of a representative sample of the population, and you should get a pretty accurate sense of what the country as a whole is thinking.

Candidates use polls to monitor how their campaigns are faring, and to find out which buttons they might push to win your vote. The news media conduct polls to find out what's on voters' minds, and to track the "horse race."

Polls are controversial. Some people say they discourage good potential candidates with low name familiarity from running for office. Others say polls help obscure differences between candidates: they all read the polls and tailor their pitches accordingly.

Others say polls may measure public opinion, but often don't measure the intensity of that opinion. And of course nobody knows how much those responding have thought about the candidate or issue.

Reading polls intelligently Public-opinion researchers know much more about how to conduct a poll now than they did when the Literary Digest staged its spectacular bellyflop. Still, polls are imperfect tools, subject to manipulation and misinterpretation. Here are some questions you should ask whenever you're looking at poll results. **Red flags** should go up if the people behind the polls don't provide the answers.

1. Who sponsored the poll?

Special-interest groups love to commission and release polls that support their points of view. If the National Rifle Association sponsors a poll that shows most Americans want to keep assault weapons under their beds, or if the Sierra Club sponsors a poll that shows people want the spotted owl to replace the bald eagle as the nation's symbol, you might well question the survey's objectivity.

2. How big was the sample?

Obviously, it's impossible to poll every voter. But it doesn't take a rocket scientist to figure out that the more people you poll, the more likely you are to obtain results that reflect the attitudes of the population as a whole.

How far from reality the poll results can be expected to be is called the *margin of error*. The larger the sample polled, the smaller the margin.

For example, 570 Washingtonians responded to a statewide Seattle Times/Front Porch Forum in April 1996, and 18 percent said they were very concerned about keeping their jobs. Statisticians calculate that the margin of error for a sample that size is 4 percentage points. That means that if every adult in the state were questioned, between 14 and 22 percent would say they are very concerned about job security.

A smaller sample would have a larger margin of error.

3. Who was sampled?

Good pollsters strive for randomness. Theoretically, every person in the target population should have an equal chance of being surveyed.

That's where the Literary Digest poll fell short. The magazine surveyed only owners of automobiles and telephones; in 1936, many poorer voters owned neither. So wealthier voters were over-represented in the sample, and the poll results were skewed.

Today many pollsters dial phone numbers at random, so people with unlisted numbers will have as much chance of being sampled as people listed in phone books.

4. What methodology was used?

Polls can be conducted in person, by telephone or by mail. Mail surveys, often employed by politicians to gauge voter opinion on issues, are the least accurate; the people who take the time to return the survey forms usually aren't a representative sample of all the people who receive them.

5. When was the poll conducted?

Voters change their minds; an old poll may not reflect new developments or current attitudes. Pollsters expect a "bump" in a candidate's standing, for instance, at the end of a national convention with all its positive coverage. Pollsters incorrectly predicted Thomas Dewey would defeat President Harry Truman in 1948 partly because they didn't poll close enough to election day.

6. What was the exact wording of the question?

Leading questions can produce biased results: An example: "For president, are you leaning toward voting for war hero Bob Dole, or that dope-smoking draft-dodger Bill Clinton?"

Bias rarely is that obvious. Still, a look at the precise wording of a question allows you to make up your own mind. Some poll questions ask respondents to choose from a limited number of responses. Other questions are open-ended.

Read the questions at the top of 219 of your book and the section called "preparing valid questions." Now, practice write an invalid question and a valid question on the same topic:

Invalid:

Valid:

Poll jargon: pushing, tracking and exit

Finally, a brief word about three kinds of polls you may hear mentioned this election year.

Exit polls are often conducted by news organizations, who question voters as they leave polling places on election day. The results are then used to "project" the winners of races long before the votes are counted.

Candidates have complained when TV networks broadcast results of these polls before all voters have cast their ballots, and these days most exit polls aren't released until after the end of the voting day in the state where the polling was done.

Tracking polls are small-sample surveys used by campaigns and others to track the standing of candidates on a regular basis, sometimes daily.

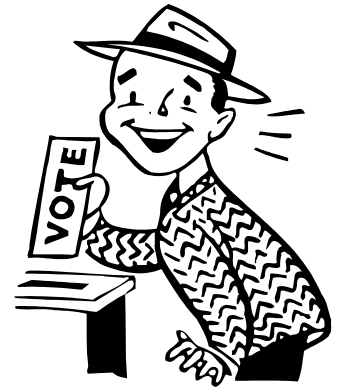
Push polls aren't really polls at all, but campaign propaganda masquerading as research. They aim not to measure public opinion, but to manipulate it by planting negative impressions of an opposing candidate in the form of a question. An extreme example: "Would you be more or less likely to vote for Candidate X if you learned he frequents topless bars?"

Makes no difference if that allegation is true; the purpose of a push poll is to plant that seed.

Use the section above to summarize the six “red flags” in the polling process below.

| | |
|----|----|
| 1. | 4. |
| 2. | 5. |
| 3. | 6. |

Voter Qualifications: Chapter 6, Section 2



1. What are the 3 voter qualifications for EVERY state?
 - a.
 - b.
 - c.
2. How does citizenship influence voter qualifications?
3. How does residence influence voter qualification?
4. What are the top two reasons states adopted residence requirements?
 - a.
 - b.
5. Who is a “transient,” and how does it influence voter qualification?
6. How has the age requirement changed throughout the years?

7. Explain the process of registering to vote:

8. Why would states want people to register to vote?

9. What are some criticisms about forcing people to register to vote?

10. What is literacy? Explain how literacy has been a factor in voter registration throughout history:

11. What is a poll tax? Explain how a poll tax affected voting and how has it changed over time:

12. What is the “Grandfather Clause”? How has it impacted voting in our history?

Making Connections: Make a list of the pros and cons of our electoral system (the way we elect our president). Think about all of the topics we’ve discussed in this packet.

| Pros to our Electoral system | Cons to our Electoral system |
|------------------------------|------------------------------|
| | |
| | |
| | |

Overall, would you argue that our current electoral process does a good job of representing us and our needs in a diverse democratic society?

Vocabulary Section

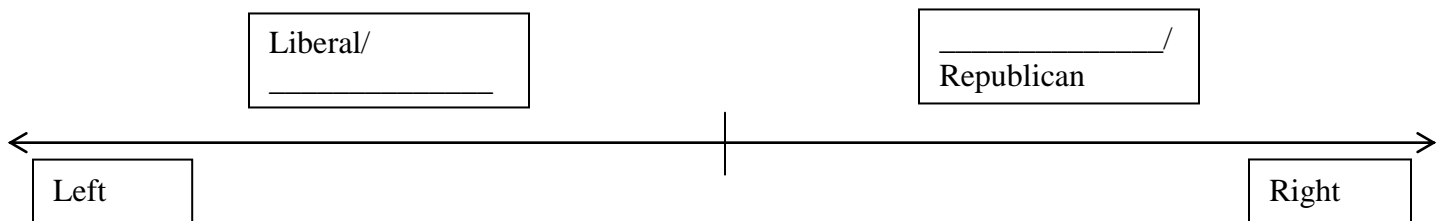
| |
|--|
| 1. ____ primary |
| 2. ____ convention |
| 3. ____ liberal |
| 4. ____ conservative |
| 5. ____ Political Action Committee (PAC) |
| 6. ____ straight ticket voting |
| 7. ____ incumbent |
| 8. ____ Political Party |
| 9. ____ soft money |
| 10. ____ hard money |
| 11. ____ Convention |
| 12. ____ Federal Election Commission (FEC) |
| 13. ____ interest group |
| 14. ____ matching funds |
| 15. ____ poll |
| 16. ____ precinct |
| 17. ____ Electoral College |

Electoral Process Test Review Sheet

This should be completed for your test. Write your answers here or if you need more space, on a separate sheet of paper.

The Political Spectrum

1. Fill in the blanks in the boxes to label the political spectrum.



2. Liberals believe in _____ government involvement in the economy. That the government should provide more services to the less fortunate and _____ taxes if necessary to fund these programs.
3. _____ believe in less government involvement in the economy. They prefer limited government authority over people’s financial matters and that the government should tax less.
4. _____ believe in less government involvement in social issues. That the government should stay out of citizens’ personal choices.
5. Conservatives believe in _____ government involvement in social issues.
6. From what we learned in class about the political spectrum, currently less people are identifying with the two main political parties (_____ party and Republican party), more Americans fall between the liberal and conservative views. They are known as moderates or
- confused voters
 - radical voters
 - independent voters

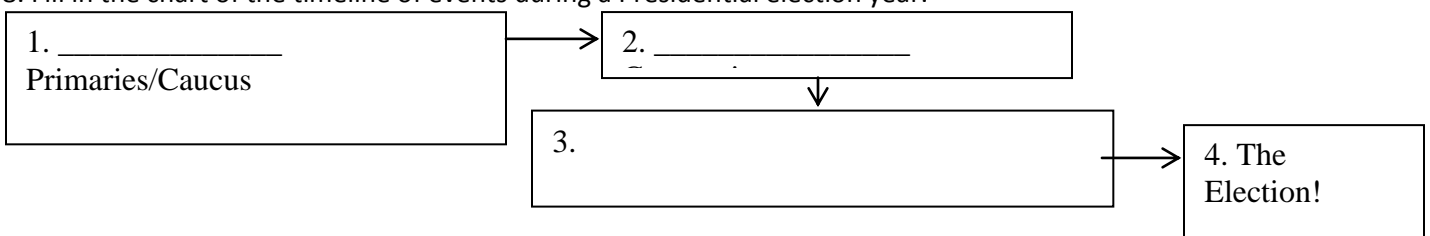
7. Who would argue? Directions: Using pages 4 and 5 of the “Electoral Process Unit Packet” fill in the blanks to figure out if an American Liberal or Conservative would argue the statement.

7a. “The _____ Amendment gives _____ individual the right to own a gun, but allows the _____ to keep a militia (National Guard). Guns kill people. Guns kill children.” **(Liberal or Conservative)**

7b. “Support the _____ of church and state. Religious expression has _____ place in government. Support the removal of all references to God in public and government spaces.” **(Liberal or Conservative)**

7c. “The Second Amendment _____ to keep and bear arms. Gun control laws do not thwart criminals. You have a right to defend yourself against criminals. _____ guns mean less crime.” **(Liberal or Conservative)**

8. Fill in the chart of the timeline of events during a Presidential election year.



9. What are the 3 main goals of a national convention?

- Unify party behind _____.
- Adopt party _____.
- _____ candidates.

10. The purpose of a primary is to decide _____ will run for the party that is _____ of office.

11. In a _____ primary only party members can vote in a party nominating election. In a _____ primary anyone who is a qualified voter can participate in a party nominating election.

Two Party System (Ch 5)

1. A political party is a group of people who come together to _____ and _____ for public office.
2. The United States was founded with two major parties competing for power, the Federalists and Anti-Federalists. The two-party system continues today due to the prevalence of _____-member districts, where there is _____ prize for coming in 2nd or 3rd.
3. _____ parties are based on a particular set of beliefs (they have a clear ideological base). Two examples of this type of minor parties are the _____ Party and Socialist Party.
4. Economic Protest Parties have _____ clear cut _____ and are rooted in periods of economic discontent. The Greenback Party is an example of an Economic Protest Party.
5. The importance of minor parties throughout history/effect of minor parties:
 - they take a stance on controversial topics
 - the development of a _____ convention
 - the _____ role-often times minor parties can pull votes away from a major parties. These voters are often dissatisfied with the two main parties.
 - Why aren't third parties more powerful?
6. A _____ -- _____ vote is when a voter, votes for candidates of different parties for different offices in the same election.

Campaign Finance (Ch 7 and 9)

1. Money is necessary for campaigns because it helps _____ make themselves known to the _____.
2. Campaign finance is controversial because candidates usually have to be _____, it gives too much _____ certain donors, and current laws have too many _____.
3. The _____ Election Commission is an independent agency in the Executive Branch that administers all federal law dealing with campaign finance. It was created to keep track of _____ and spending from candidates.
4. The 4 FEC requirements are: 1. Disclosure _____. 2. Limits on campaign _____. 3. Limits on _____ spending. 4. Provide _____ funding (tax dollars) for parts of the _____ process.
5. The McCain-Feingold Bill aka the Campaign Reform Act of 2002 _____ soft money contributions and limited _____ advertising within 60 days of general elections and within 30 days of primary elections.
6. A private organization that tries to persuade public officials to respond to the shared attitudes of its members is a _____.
 - a. party convention
 - b. interest group
 - c. political party

d. party nominee

7. Interest groups seek to _____ public policy. They are sometimes called “pressure groups” because they seek to put _____ on the government to effect policies.

8. How are interest groups related to PACs and lobbyists?

9. _____ money is money donated to a political party rather than an individual candidate for “party building” purposes. What are examples of soft money?

10. Candidates in recent elections have been using the _____ to raise money, which is very different from how many had been raised in the past.

11. An _____ is the person who currently holds an office. They have numerous advantages over their opponents which include:

1. _____ recognition.
2. Easier time raising _____.

Polling and Media (Ch. 8)

1. What role does the media play in campaigns?

2. _____ determine people’s attitudes and view-points.

3. The 5 steps in creating a scientific poll are: (pg. 218)

1. Define the _____ to be sampled.
2. Constructing a _____.
3. Prepare valid _____.
4. _____.
5. _____ and report findings.

4. _____ of _____ is an analytical tool that accounts for the number of acceptable errors in an experiment. It helps determine the level of accuracy of a poll. A smaller margin of error indicates trustworthy results and a larger margin of error means the results are not considered as accurate.

5. What are the six red flags you should watch for in reading a poll?

1. Who _____ the poll?
2. _____ size.
3. Who was _____?
4. _____.
5. _____ was the poll conducted.

6. _____ of questions.

6. _____ voters are most affected by presidential debates. Why do we have presidential debates?

Voting (Ch. 6)

1. What are the 3 requirements to vote?

1. _____ of the United States.

2. Legal _____ of the State in which he or she wishes to cast a ballot.

3. At least _____ years of age.

2. Some ways voting has been limited in the past is by using the Grandfather _____, charging a _____ tax, requiring voters to get registered, and having a literacy test. Explain how literacy tests have worked to limit voters?

3. Why do some Americans not vote?

4. A _____ is the _____ geographic unit for the conduct of elections.