American Government B

**Unit 5: Political Participation**

**Unit Summary:** Political participation is vital to democracy. Voters shape the American democracy by participating in voting and other political processes, such as peaceful protesting, donating to campaigns, joining interest groups, and creating and consuming political communication.

It is critical to analyze the credibility of political communications, examine political choices before voting, and assess the factors that make someone want to vote for certain candidates.

**Lesson 2 – Election Process**

**Objective 1:** Look at the various ways in which elections in the United States take place.

**Big Ideas**: Democracy is the existence of free and fair elections to select leaders for the most powerful government roles. Voters elect officials at all levels of government to create, vote for, and/or carry out policies in government. If the people are not satisfied with their leaders, they can vote in the next election for a new leader to replace the current one in office. The people are therefore governed by their choices, rather than being ruled by an authoritarian system that does not respond to the wishes of the people.

The Electoral College is an institution whose only function is to select the president. Because of the Electoral College, presidential candidates do not compete for most of the national popular vote. Instead, they compete for most electors. Each state gets a number of electors equal to its representation in Congress. For example, California has 52 representatives in the House and two in the Senate, which equals 54 electors in the Electoral College. Each state legislature decides how to allocate its electors.

**Keywords**:

* **battleground states**– states where the outcome in a presidential election is much more competitive and either candidate has a reasonable chance of winning
* **caucus**– a method of choosing a nominee in which voters attend a scheduled meeting in a public place on election night and publicly express their support fora candidate through a series of “aye” and “nay” votes
* **delegate**– a person sent by a state to represent its residents in the national convention
* **national convention**– an event held in late summer in a presidential election year by each major political party to formally announce its presidential candidate
* **nonpartisan election**– an election in which voters get a ballot with all candidates running for office, regardless of their political party affiliation
* **partisan election**– an election in which voters choose a ballot for one political party when they enter a polling place
* **plurality**– the most votes; not necessarily a majority
* **Presidential preference primary election** – in a primary, voters show up to the polls and privately vote for their preferred nominee as in any other election
* **safe states**– states where one political party is nearly guaranteed to win in the presidential election
* **winner-take-all**– a system that awards all electoral votes to the winner

**Objective 2:** Identify the major similarities and differences between election procedures at the national, state, local and tribal levels of government.

**Big Ideas:**

* + **Federal Elections:** Presidential elections are held every four years, and the president and vice president are selected through the Electoral College. Congressional elections occur with every seat of the House of Representatives and one-third of the seats in the U.S. Senate up for election every two years.
  + **State and Local Elections****:** For all elections at the state and local levels, procedures and laws can vary if they do not violate the “one person, one vote” rule in the Constitution. State elections include those for state legislatures, governors, and other statewide elected positions. Local elections vary as well due to the length of terms and a variety of offices that make up city and county governments. These positions can include mayor, city councilmembers, county boards of supervisors, school boards, sheriffs, local judges, or members of water or park districts, among others. Many elections at the local level are nonpartisan elections.
  + **Indigenous Nations Elections:** Tribal elections occur regularly within the 574 Indigenous nations that are recognized by the federal government. Indigenous nations have sovereignty, meaning that they are allowed to create laws and determine how to represent their people. As each Indigenous nation is unique, so too are their electoral procedures.

**Keywords**:

* **Election Day**– the day set to elect federal officials, including the president, vice president, and members of Congress, on the first Tuesday after the first Monday in November in even-numbered years
* **Electoral College**– the group of presidential electors who meet every four years to select the president and vice president as outlined in the U.S. Constitution
* **general election**– an election used to determine who will be elected to public office
* **majority vote**– an electoral process to determine a winner who receives more than half the votes of those cast
* **midterm election**– an election for members of Congress in non-presidential election years
* **nonpartisan election**– an election where candidates do not affiliate with a specific political party
* **one person, one vote**– the ideal that citizens have equal representation when voting
* **popular vote**– the act of voting by citizens eligible to participate in elections
* **Primary electio**n– an election used to determine who will represent each political party in the general election
* **sovereignty**– the right of a government to rule without outside interference
* **voter registration**– the requirement for citizens to register with a governing agency to determine eligibility to vote

**Objective 3:** Critique the impact that election processes have on voter participation and engagement.

**Big Ideas:** In a winner-take-all election, the winner is the candidate who receives the plurality of the votes among what can sometimes be a large field of candidates. This is different than a proportional electoral system where political parties win seats in proportion to the percentage of votes cast. Winner-take-all elections encourage a two-party system within the United States because candidates outside the two major parties (Democrats and Republicans) have difficulty gaining traction with voters during a campaign.

Voters need substantive information about candidates and public policies to make informed decisions about choices during an election. However, not all media coverage provides substantive information, as stories often focus on the horse race of the campaign or personal scandals involving the candidates. Public opinion polling is plentiful during a campaign, but polls can be inaccurate, and the media might use them to incorrectly predict an election outcome.

**Keywords:**

* **caucus**– a gathering of local party members to publicly state their preference to select candidates for a general election
* **Electoral College**– the group of presidential electors who meet every four years to select the president and vice president as outlined in the U.S. Constitution
* **general election**– an election used to determine who will be elected to public office
* **horse race–** the news media coverage during an election that focuses on who is winning versus losing based on polling, fundraising, or delegate counts
* **nominating contest**– a primary election, caucus, or convention to determine which candidate will represent a political party in a general election
* **nominating convention**– an event held at the national, state, or local level by apolitical party to nominate candidates for a general election
* **plurality voting**– an electoral system in which a candidate wins office by receiving the highest number of votes
* **popular vote**– the act of voting by citizens eligible to participate in elections
* **pre-nomination period**– the time prior to votes being cast when candidates seek name recognition, financial donors, party support, and media attention
* **primary election**– an election used to determine who will represent each political party in the general election
* **proportional electoral system**– an election where political parties win seats in proportion to the percentage of votes cast
* **single-member district**– elections in which the winner is the candidate who receives the plurality of the votes
* **two-party system**– an electoral process dominated by two major parties (Democrats and Republicans)
* **winner take all**– an electoral process by which the candidate who wins the most votes will represent all who reside within the nation, state, district, county, or city

**Quick Check**

Question 1: Which of the following illustrates elections in the U.S.?

* **There are hundreds of thousands of elections at local, state, and national levels in the U.S.**
* There are 7,000 elected members in the federal government.
* Most local governments do not have elected officials.
* While all states elect their governors, there are not any states that elect other state executives.

Question 2: How many electors in the Electoral College will a state with 14 members of the House of Representatives and two members of the Senate have?

* 14
* 17
* **16**
* 2

Question 3: Which of these statements best explains the job of state and local election officials?

* to nominate candidates for the general election
* to determine the date of federal elections
* to determine the procedures and date of Indigenous nation elections
* **to oversee election procedures and voter registration**

Question 4: What is the purpose of a general election?

* to nominate a candidate for elected position
* to determine the length of a governor’s term in office
* **to select who will hold an elected position**
* to determine who is eligible to vote

Question 5: Which statement best critiques the winner-take-all electoral process?

* The winner-take-all process allows political parties to win seats in proportion to the percentage of votes cast.
* The winner-take-all system discourages the two-party system in the United States.
* A winner-take-all system tends to depress voter turnout.
* **The winner-take-all system makes it more difficult for a third political party to gain traction.**

**Lesson 3 – Electoral System**

**Objective 1:** Analyze the foundations of the United States electoral system and how it has shaped the U.S. political system.

**Big Ideas**: Though many others have copied the American system, our nation remains the prototype for large-scale government by the people. Does that mean all people have a say in all issues? It would be far too impractical to ask the entire population of American adults to vote on every law. Instead, the key connection points between the government and the people are the politicians who represent each state and, in the House of Representatives, each district. So, how are they elected?

* + The president is elected every 4 years.
  + Members of the House of Representatives are elected every 2 years.
  + One-third of the Senate comes up for election every 2 years.
  + Senators serve 6-year terms, but their terms are staggered based on the years they were elected.
  + Therefore, the U.S. holds a national general election every 2 years;
  + the elections without a presidential candidate and only congressional candidates on the ballot are known as “midterm” elections.

**Keywords**:

* **apportionment**– the method of assigning U.S. House districts to each state based on population
* **candidate**– someone who is running for a public office
* **convention**– a gathering of party delegates to decide their nominees for president and vice president
* **district**– the part of a state that a member of the House represents
* **gerrymandering**– creating U.S. House districts that favor one political party over the other, usually by employing unusual or convoluted shapes and boundaries
* **nominee**– a person chosen to represent a political party at a general election

**Objective 2:** Illustrate the process of the Electoral College.

**Big Ideas:** The United States uses a unique method to elect its president. itizens’ presidential votes do not go directly to the candidate. Instead, they vote for members of the Electoral College. These members, who are called electors, cast the “real” presidential votes.

**The Electoral Process**

* + Electors are assigned to a presidential–vice presidential nominee pair.
  + The pair is placed on a “ticket” by the state political party.
  + On election night, the nominee pair that wins the popular vote in each state receives that state’s number of electoral votes.

**The Presidential Election Process**

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| --- | --- |
| **Date** | **Event** |
| Summer | Party conventions choose nominees and states choose elector tickets. |
| First Tuesday in November | Election Day — voters go to the polls; popular vote is counted and electoral votes are pledged. |
| Mid-December | State electors meet in their state capitols to vote for president and vice president; the governor and state officials certify the results and to the U.S. Congress. |
| January 6 of the following year | Votes are opened and counted at a joint session of Congress. |

**Keywords**:

* **apportioned**– to divide or allocate
* **Electoral** **College**– the system used to elect the president of the United States
* **joint** **session**– a meeting between the members of the House and Senate in the House chamber of the United States Capitol
* **popular** **vote**– the aggregate total of all individual votes cast for each nominee

**Objective 3:** Explain the role and importance of campaigns, primaries, and caucuses in general elections.

**Big Ideas:** The United States has a multistage election process. Though there are a few exceptions, almost all candidates who wish to be on the general election ballot must first campaign and secure their political party's nomination.

Becoming the nominee involves navigating the system of primary elections and caucus elections. Primaries and caucuses are the method for party nomination. In both primaries and caucuses, voters decide who will be their party’s nominee. The procedures of the two events are different, and states may decide which method they use.

|  |  |
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| Step 1: Campaign for Party Nomination | Step 2: Campaign for General Election |
| An aspiring politician conducts a campaign to earn votes from members of the political party.  One candidate receives more primary or caucus votes than the others and becomes a party’s nominee.  Presidential nominees are selected at each party’s convention by a vote of delegates. | An aspiring politician conducts a campaign to earn votes from the entire constituency.  Voters cast their votes at the polls.  The nominee with the most electoral votes wins the presidency. |

**Keywords**:

* **caucus** **election**– an election in which members of a political party vote in closed session between all the candidates vying for a particular office, most commonly the president. Votes are counted and candidates eliminated if they fail to meet a prescribed threshold. Voters for eliminated candidates are then permitted to recast their vote for a different viable candidate
* **delegate**– a person selected to represent a political party in federal election
* **primary** **election**– an election used to determine who will represent each political party at the general election
* **Progressive** **Era**– the time from 1890 to 1920, characterized by major changes in American political culture, when a number of election reforms increased democratic participation and reduced the power of political parties
* **superdelegate**– a designation used by the Democratic Party to indicate a convention delegate who is not pledged to vote for a certain candidate

**Quick Check**

Question 1: Analyze the strategy that a candidate might use when running for president in the general election. What should their first goal be?

* to become a delegate to the national convention
* to choose the correct states in which to campaign during the general election
* **to win their party’s nomination at the national convention**
* to choose a good running mate

Question 2: Which of the following illustrates the Electoral College process?

* **1. Electors are assigned to a presidential–vice presidential nominee pair. 2. The pair is placed on a ticket by the state political party. 3. The nominee pair that wins the popular vote in each state receives that state’s electoral votes.**
* 1. Electors carefully choose a presidential and vice presidential nominee pair. 2. The pair is placed on the ballot by the state political party. 3. The nominee pair that wins the state receives its number of electoral votes.
* 1. Electors are assigned to a presidential–vice presidential nominee pair. 2. The pair is placed on a ticket by the state political party. 3. The nominee pair that wins the electoral votes receives that number of popular votes.
* 1. Electors carefully choose a presidential and vice presidential nominee pair. 2. Each state needs a certain number of voters to vote on Election Day. 3. The nominee who wins the popular vote receives the state’s electoral votes.

Question 3: What event triggers a contingent election for president?

* One of the nominees drops out of the race before Election Day.
* One of the nominees switches to a different political party.
* **One of the nominees fails to receive a majority of electoral votes.**
* One of the nominees doesn’t win their state electoral votes.

Question 4: Which of the following best explains the role of superdelegates?

* They are pledged to a candidate but are allowed to change their vote at the convention.
* **They are not pledged to a candidate and may vote for whomever they choose at the convention.**
* They only vote in closed primaries.
* They only vote in caucuses.

Question 5: What is the purpose of a presidential primary?

* to assign presidential electors from each state
* **to assign delegates from each state to the national party convention**
* to determine the best candidate through discussion and the process of elimination
* to persuade voters to select a presidential candidate

**Lesson 4 – Campaigns**

**Objective 1:** Analyze three primary source documents to determine the role of parties in American politics and analyze how voter turnout impacts elections. This lesson will include excerpts from three documents: George Washington’s Farewell Address, Theodore’s Roosevelt's speech “The New Nationalism,” and one of Barack Obama’s campaign speeches.

**Big Ideas**: Political parties have been party of American politics for hundreds of years. Throughout that time there have been concerns with partisan, division, and class conflict. These concerns are among those explored by a variety of American political figures.

**Washington**: Highly valued American unity. He feared that the rise of political parties would lead to division, and Americans identifying with their party more than America as a whole. He felt it was easy for people to have a negative opinion of their fellow Americans. He wanted Americans to be on guard against those who would turn them against each other. Washington knew self-interest, envy, and a desire for revenge are all part of human nature. If we give in to these impulses, it is easy to form factions or parties and view other Americans with envy.

**Roosevelt**: He is concerned with the role of special interests in American government and wants to limit their power. Special interests, or what are today called special interest groups, are groups of people, a company, or an industry that works to impact legislation and public policy in their favor on one or more shared concerns or topics. Roosevelt saw vast wealth as a threat to liberty. Too much money or economic power held by too few people gives them the chance to have too much influence on government. With this influence they can skew policy to benefit themselves at the expense of average Americans. Roosevelt wanted to ensure that rich Americans, middle class Americans, and poor Americans all have the same amount of political power.

**Obama**: Throughout his campaign, Obama worked to encourage voters to participate in the election process. As a result of Obama’s efforts, the 2008 election saw high voter turnout. Obama had a more diverse electorate than any presidential elections prior to then. This included a high turnout from African Americans, Hispanics, and Asian Americans. It also saw many voters under 30. Obama’s campaign outreach targeted younger voters directly by reaching out to them via phone, email, and social networking sites.

**Keywords**:

* **The New Nationalism** – Theodore Roosevelt’s campaign speech laying out his vision for new political and economic arrangements in the U.S.
* **Farewell Address** – Washington's speech as he left the presidency providing advice on the future of American politics
* **Progressive Era** – a period in the U.S. that saw significant political, social, and economic reforms aimed at reducing the power of corporations and putting government to work on behalf of American workers
* **special interest group** – a group of people, a company, or an industry that works to impact legislation and public policy in their favor on one or more shared concerns or topics
* **spirit of party** – the favoring of your segment of the community and those like you over the public good

**Objective 2:** Assess how the federal and state governments in the United States regulate campaigns and elections.

**Big Ideas:** States regulate elections by setting the rules governing election ballots, voter registration, mail-in voting, and voting machines. Since federal and state governments are both involved in regulating campaigns and elections, there are lots of rules to follow. Rules often change across each of the 50 states, which makes it more complicated. States regulate the voting process on Election Day by how many votes are cast, when to register to vote, how long polling places are open, and the types of voting machines used.

|  |  |  |
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|  | State Government | Federal Government |
| Campaigns | Regulates finance laws, ballot signatures, ensuring fair access to running for office | Regulates donations and advertising |
| Elections | Regulates number of polling locations, time polls are open, proximity of people at the polls, type of voting, ballot counts, and voter registration | Regulates voting rights, ballots written in various languages, and literacy tests |

**Keywords**:

* **campaign** – a series of events and activities carried out by a candidate trying to win public office
* **caucus** – a type of election in which voters gather and debate before casting their votes
* **election** – the formal choice of which candidate will hold public office
* **primary election** – an election used to determine who will represent each political party at the general election
* **voter registration** – the process of signing up to vote

**Objective 3:** Analyze how candidates and political parties try to shape the political process, public policy, and public opinion.

**Big Ideas:** Public opinion is at the heart of democratic governance. Elections give the public the chance to express their views on who should be in government.

**Candidates influence Political Process: When** candidates are already members of Congress, they can pass laws governing fundraising, how candidates can spend funds, how they can advertise their campaigns, and the like. In doing so, they are influenced by both the common good and their own interests. State-level officials have power over the availability of early voting, when the polls are open, how votes are counted, voter registration, when candidates can request recounts, and even when recounts are legally required due to an extremely close election. Since most elected officials seek reelection, candidates can have a major say in how the political process works

**Candidates influence Public Policy: One**-way candidates influence public policy is to win elections so they can pass laws that shape policy. Other ways they influence policy are part of the process of getting elected. Candidates will promise specific policy changes to seek to win votes.

**Candidates influence Public Opinion: Candidates** frequently hold rallies at which they and other speakers give speeches to persuade the public. When the candidate is the president or another prominent public official, this is known as the bully pulpit. One of the most high-profile tools candidates use to shape public opinion are attack ads. Attack ads are campaign ads whose main purpose is to cause the public to have negative views of the opposing candidate.

**Political Parties Influence the Political Process: Political** parties play a key role in shaping elections. Primary elections and caucuses are used to pick the party’s nominee for various elected offices. Parties can determine the rules for how primary votes gain delegates for candidates and how those delegates pick the nominee at the state party convention. This gives political parties significant influence over the political process.

**Political Parties Influence Public Policy: By winning elections, political parties can influence public policy.** Once in office, members of a political party coordinate to pass legislation that advances the party’s public policy goals and block legislation that they consider to be bad policy.

**Political Parties Influence Public Opinion: Political** parties seek to influence public opinion to win elections and gain support for their legislative agenda. Parties can buy ads on television, the radio, and websites to promote their candidates and policies and attack their opponents. Political parties also hold party conventions. A party’s national convention usually takes place over several days

**Keywords**:

* **attack ad** – a campaign ad that is intended to cause the public to have negative views of the opposing candidate
* **bully pulpit** – a process by which elected officials seek to shape public opinion to support them
* **incumbent** – an officeholder who is seeking reelection
* **party platform** – the ideas and beliefs that a party stands for and wishes to enact
* **party whip** – an elected official whose job is to ensure that other officeholders of the same political party vote the way party leadership desires
* **public opinion** – the collective attitudes and beliefs of individuals about issues, leaders, events; the heart of democratic governance
* **public policy** – government laws and regulations designed to help solve problems
* **White primary** – a primary election in which only White Americans were allowed to vote

**Quick Check**

Question 1: Which statement draws correct conclusions about the relationship between Washington’s spirit of party and Roosevelt’s special interests?

* **Special interests are an example of the spirit of** **party**.
* Special interests cause the spirit of party.
* Special interests and the spirit of party are good for democracy.
* Special interests and the spirit of party are unrelated.

Question 2: What conclusions can be drawn about special interests and the Civil War?

* **Special interests were among the causes of the Civil War.**
* Special interests tried to stop the Civil War.
* Special interests didn’t exist until after the Civil War.
* Special interests profited off the Civil war.

Question 3: Which of the following accurately assesses how the federal government regulates campaigns and elections?

* The federal government regulates voting times, voting locations, and voting booths.
* The federal government regulates how ballots are counted, when ballots are counted, and who counts the ballots.
* The federal government regulates and governs the type of voting equipment, voting machines, and voting ballots to vote.
* **The federal government regulates campaign donations, television advertisements, and voting rights.**

Question 4: Which of the following correctly describes the features of the Voting Rights Act of 1965?

* **The Voting Rights Act protects the right to vote and requires access to ballots printed in multiple languages.**
* The Voting Rights Act protects your right to donate money to candidates.
* The Voting Rights Act protects the rights of the federal government from state regulations and laws.
* The Voting Rights Act protects the states’ rights to enforce ballot procedures.

Question 5: Which of the following analyzes how political parties influence public opinion?

* **Parties use conventions and advertising to influence how the public views them and their policies.**
* Parties use the bully pulpit to shape public opinion.
* Parties pass laws that are favorable to the public and will help influence how voters view them.
* Parties control who can vote in their primaries.

**Lesson 5 – Campaign Funding**

**Objective 1:** Compare the influence of campaign funding and campaign advertising on election polling.

**Big Ideas:** Polls asking voters their preference among candidates occur at all phases of the campaign. In the early stages of a campaign, performing well in public opinion polls can demonstrate candidate viability with potential voters and donors. This can help to create momentum for a candidate during their campaign. This helps generate positive media coverage, which in turn keeps donations coming in to pay for campaign advertising and events. Polling can also have the opposite effect for candidates who do not perform well. Candidates who place near the bottom of a poll will have a difficult time generating positive media coverage or continuing financial support from donors.

Running for office is expensive, which means that fundraising is one of the most important parts of a political campaign. There are many campaign expenditures that are necessary for a candidate to effectively compete. Advertising is generally the biggest expense of any campaign, whether at the national, state, or local level. Other expenses related to the campaign can include the campaign staff (who manage all aspects of the candidate’s schedule as well as fundraising), get-out-the-vote efforts, legal and political consultants, travel for the candidate and their staff, and internal polling.

Campaign advertising is used to provide information to voters about candidates and issues. The content and tone of advertising can help to determine whether a candidate is viewed favorably or unfavorably by potential voters.

**Key words**:

* **campaign advertising –** the specific messages on television or other mediums to promote a candidate and their policy views to voters
* **campaign expenditures –** the specific expenses associated with running a political campaign, like advertising or hiring campaign staff
* **candidate viability** – positive news media coverage from successful polling and fundraising that suggests to voters that a candidate can win
* **momentum** – a combination of positive poll results, media coverage, and fundraising that helps a candidate succeed on the campaign trail
* **poll** – a series of questions asked of voters about their candidate or policy preference
* **public opinion** – the collective view of citizens on a specific topic

**Objective 2:** Assess how campaign funding impacts candidates’ political strategies.

**Big Ideas:** Fundraising is one of the most important parts of a political campaign and how much money is available can determine the overall campaign strategy for getting the candidate’s message out to voters.

Campaign advertising is used to provide information to voters about candidates and issues. Advertising is the biggest expense of any campaign. The amount of money available during a campaign dictates how often and in what mediums advertising will appear. The content and tone of advertising can help determine whether a candidate is viewed favorably or unfavorably by potential voters.

Another major expense related to the campaign is hiring campaign staff to manage all aspects. A campaign staff usually includes a chief of staff who oversees each aspect of the campaign, as well as various consultants, strategists, pollsters, marketing and communication experts, event planners, fundraisers, and legal experts.

Other expenses can include what is known as the ground game. This includes voter registration and get-out-the-vote efforts. Travel for the candidate and their staff during the campaign can also be a significant expense, as well as renting space for campaign headquarters, internal polling on how the candidate is performing, or focus groups to get feedback from potential voters on issues such as campaign messaging, advertising, or even the candidate’s appearance.

**Key Words**:

* **ground game** – the efforts by a political campaign to register voters and increase voter turnout
* **horse race coverage** – the news media coverage during an election that focuses on who is winning versus losing based on polling, fundraising, or delegate counts

**Objective 3:** Assess how campaign contributions can influence the outcome of an election.

**Big Ideas:** A sizable amount of money for political campaigns is raised among individual donors. Contribution limits for federal campaigns began after passage of the Federal Election Campaign Act (FECA) in 1974. That law was amended with passage of the Bipartisan Campaign Reform Act in 2002, which set the contribution limit to increase based on inflation (the purchasing power of $2,900 today is roughly equal to $1,000 in the mid-1970s).

Candidates also raise money from political party committees and political action committees (PACs). Both entities must register with the Federal Election Commission (FEC). The FEC was created under FECA in 1974 to enforce federal campaign finance laws.

Direct donations to a candidate from corporations or labor unions are illegal. Nonetheless, both can contribute to PACs if they do not exceed federal contribution limits. However, with its decision in Citizens’ United v. FEC in 2010, the Supreme Court also created a super PAC (Political Action Committee). A super PAC is a campaign fundraising vehicle that allows corporations and labor unions to spend unlimited amounts of money during a campaign.

Given the increasing cost of political campaigns, more wealthy individuals are seeking elected office. The ability to self-fund a campaign means that, in theory, more time can be spent on connecting with voters than spending time at fundraising events. A downside of being a wealthy candidate, however, is the potential perception among voters of being out of touch with the concerns of average citizens.

**Key Words**:

* **Federal Election Commission (FEC)** – an independent regulatory agency to enforce federal campaign finance laws
* **political action committee (PAC)** – a committee affiliated with an interest group that collects money from its members to donate to a candidate
* **Super PAC** – a type of independent political action committee that can raise unlimited amounts of money from corporations, unions, and individuals but cannot coordinate expenditures directly with a candidate or political party

**Quick Check**

Question 1: Which statement best compares the influence of fundraising and advertising on polling during a campaign?

* Fundraising affects candidate polling negatively, while advertising affects candidate polling positively.
* Only advertising can shape the opinions expressed by voters in polling.
* **Both can generate positive media coverage for a candidate, which can in turn generate positive polling results.**
* Fundraising shapes public opinion in the early stages of a campaign, while advertising shapes opinions during the last few weeks before the election.

Question 2: What is a common criticism of election polling?

* There is not enough media coverage of polls during a campaign.
* **Polls can make incorrect predictions, which in turn can affect voter turnout.**
* Polling does not occur during the last few weeks of the election.
* There are not enough polls conducted during campaigns.

Question 3: Which statement best assesses the influence campaign funding has on campaign strategy?

* Only wealthy candidates can win elected office.
* The amount of money raised in a campaign does not matter because the news media do not report on this information.
* **Fundraising is one of the most important parts of a political campaign, because adequate funding for advertising is essential for a candidate to be competitive.**
* The candidate who raises the most money almost always wins elected office.

Question 4: Which of the following is an example of a campaign expenditure?

* public debates
* news coverage
* poll workers
* **advertising**

Question 5: Which statement best assesses the role that money can play on an election outcome?

* Raising the most money during a campaign guarantees that a candidate will win the election.
* Only candidates who coordinate their campaign activities with super PACs are competitive.
* For a candidate to win the election, they can only raise money from PACs.
* **Adequate funding is necessary for a candidate to compete but does not guarantee that the candidate will win.**

**Lesson 6 – Funding Campaigns**

**Big Ideas:** You will discuss with your peers whether donating money to a political campaign should be protected as free speech by the First Amendment.

Begin the discussion by responding to the following prompt: *Explore various arguments regarding the Supreme Court’s decision in Buckley v. Valeo (1976) that determined campaign contributions are protected as free speech under the First Amendment.*

Analyze the arguments for and against protecting campaign contributions as free speech. What were the most important factors the Supreme Court considered?

Post a detailed response to the Funding Campaigns prompt. Then respond to two classmates’ posts.

**Lesson 8 – Minority Rights**

**Objective 1:** Assess how reapportionment, redistricting, and gerrymandering can influence or impact minority rights.

**Big Ideas**: The United States is divided into 435 congressional districts. Each district has a member of the House of Representatives elected to serve the district’s constituents. These districts are redrawn every 10 years by each state’s legislature based on changes in population captured by the census. Drawing new boundaries for each district is meant to ensure that all citizens are fairly represented in the government. However, politicians have used this process to manipulate district maps to the advantage of their own party.

**Reapportionment**: As people migrate from state to state and the population of the different states within the U.S. changes, there is a process to shift the number of congressional districts allotted to each state. That process is called *reapportionment*. When reapportionment occurs, states with increased populations gain seats in Congress, while states with decreased populations lose seats. Minority populations may have more or less of a say following reapportionment depending on whether their districts gain or lose seats.

**Redistricting**: *Redistricting* is the process of redrawing congressional district lines to account for reapportionment. If people move from one side of a state to another, congressional district lines will be redrawn to account for the population shift. However, redistricting can be done to break up certain blocks of voters, particularly minority voters.

When redistricting, state legislatures may try to weaken the influence of minority groups by packing and cracking. Packing refers to grouping large numbers from the opposing political party in a few districts. At the same time, other voters of the same party are “cracked,” broken up across several districts. This way, their votes do not wield much influence in any election, giving voters of the other party greater power.

Gerrymandering: *Gerrymandering* is to manipulate the boundaries of election districts to gain an unfair electoral advantage. This is done for the sole benefit of political gain. Gerrymandering can occur during reapportionment or redistricting. Either way, districts are drawn to favor one party or disfavor another for the sake of winning congressional races.

**Key Words**:

* **census** – an official count of the population and its demographics
* **congressional districts** – states are divided into congressional districts based on the number of members they are assigned in the House of Representatives. Each congressional district elects one member to the House of Representatives.
* **cracking** – a gerrymandering method used to divide a cluster of voters who support the same political party into several districts
* **packing** – a gerrymandering method where like-minded voters are grouped to support a political party in one voting district to reduce their influence in surrounding districts

**Objective 2:** Explain how different groups of people fought for and achieved suffrage in the United States of America.

**Big Ideas:** *Suffrage*, or the right to vote, was not a right guaranteed to all Americans when the country was founded. When the U.S. Constitution was written, only white men of certain religions who owned property were allowed to vote. Over time, other groups have fought to secure the right to vote, often using all manner of protest and civil discourse.

**The Fifteenth Amendment**

Following the end of the Civil War and the emancipation of enslaved people, the Fifteenth Amendment was added to the U.S. Constitution, granting Black men the right to vote. However, many Black men were denied this right due to discriminatory practices and laws, as well as the threat of violence. Literacy tests were administered to those who tried to register to vote. White people often did not have to take these literacy tests. Black people, on the other hand, were often unfairly disqualified based on the administrator’s interpretation of their answers. Voters in the South were also required to pay poll taxes to cast their ballots. As Black families could often not afford these taxes, they were effectively prevented from voting. Meanwhile, impoverished white people were offered exemptions from paying these taxes.

**The Nineteenth Amendment**

Women first officially called for the right to vote at the Seneca Falls Convention (1848). During this convention, women’s rights advocates issued the Declaration of Sentiments, which stated that women deserve the same civil rights as men. Known as suffragettes, women worked tirelessly both in their own states and at a federal level to earn their right to vote. In 1920, the Nineteenth Amendment was ratified and added to the Constitution giving women the right to vote.

**Indigenous Americans**

In 1924, Congress passed the Indian Citizenship Act, which gave citizenship to Indigenous Americans. However, states would still limit the voting rights of Indigenous Americans for decades to come. Indigenous Americans in all states had the right to vote by 1962. Like Black Americans, Indigenous Americans faced literacy tests and poll taxes meant to prevent them from voting and having a say in government. The Voting Rights Act of 1965 protected the rights of all citizens to vote by banning discriminatory practices such as literacy tests.

**Objective 3:** Analyze the impact of expanding suffrage throughout American history.

**Big Ideas:** U.S. history has been a story of expanding suffrage. Each step along this journey has led to extending the concept of equality for all to more people. Further, expanded suffrage has led to new candidates being elected to represent all Americans.

**The Fifteenth Amendment**

Following the Civil War and the emancipation of enslaved people, the Fifteenth Amendment expanded suffrage to Black men. For the first time, Black men were able to access jobs, housing, and education during the era of Reconstruction. But, due to unrest in the southern states, many restrictions were put on the ability of Black people to cast a vote. By the 1890s, many states had passed laws, such as literacy tests and poll taxes, to keep formerly enslaved people from voting. The impact of these laws was that those who had recently been given the right to vote now faced many obstacles to exercising that right. Due to lack of education and money, formerly enslaved people once again found that their rights were being taken from them. Because of these restrictions, only a small portion of the Black population was able to vote for the next few decades. Due to continued economic and social segregation, the Black population saw a huge loss of political power and little progress made toward their equality. The famous decision in the Supreme Court case Plessy v. Ferguson continued to support discrimination, as the court ruled that “separate but equal” was legal. Coupled with the Supreme Court’s decision, Jim Crow laws continued to suppress the voting rights of Black people. It was not until the Voting Rights Act of 1965 that the rights given to the Black population nearly 100 years earlier were finally enforced.

**The Struggle for Women’s Suffrage**

With the ratification of the Nineteenth Amendment, women were finally granted equal rights as citizens of the country. This effectively doubled suffrage rights in the United States, impacting legislation significantly. With the women’s vote came more female candidates at all levels and sections of government. In addition to voting and running for public office, women have contributed to society in ways not possible before they were allowed to vote. Women’s votes have been responsible for legislative changes in wage increases, education, divorce options, employment opportunities, suffrage for other groups of people, and many other social programs.

**The Inclusion of Native American Voters**

The Snyder Act extended citizenship to Indigenous Americans in 1924. Even after the passing of the Snyder Act, the issue of whether Indigenous Americans could vote was left up to the states. After the initial passage of the bill, it took more than 40 years for all the states to allow Indigenous Americans the opportunity to vote. Even after Indigenous American gained the right to vote, poll taxes, literacy tests, intimidation, and fraud were used to keep them from voting until the passage of the Voting Rights Act of 1965.

The Twenty-Fourth and Twenty-Sixth Amendments

The Twenty-Fourth Amendment, ratified in 1964, ended poll taxes in the U.S. The creation of poll taxes targeted a lower socioeconomic class and reaffirmed the idea that people who did not make enough money could not exercise their right to vote. Laws like these disconnected the Black population from having any sort of power or political input.

The Twenty-Sixth Amendment was ratified in 1971 and lowered the voting age from 21 to 18. The amendment expanded suffrage to this group of younger citizens, ensuring their right to vote and contribute to the selection of leaders in the country.

**Keywords**:

* **Reconstruction** – the period after the Civil War when the federal government attempted to address the wrongs done to Black Americans under the institution of slavery and tried to make all Americans equal

**Quick Check**

Question 1: Which assesses how minority rights could be negatively impacted by redistricting?

* **Redistricting could disenfranchise minority voters by making their votes less influential.**
* Redistricting could give more power to some minority voters while taking away power from others.
* Redistricting could put voters into districts outside of their own states.
* Redistricting could take away the ability of minority voters to participate in elections.

Question 2: How can reapportionment impact minority rights?

* Minority voters may be less likely to vote based on changes to congressional representation.
* **Minority voters may gain or lose congressional representation based on population changes.**
* Minority voters may have less influence based on the new boundaries of congressional districts.
* Minority voters may be grouped into one district based on changes to the population.

Question 3: Which explains how suffrage was granted to Black men in the United States?

* through the Voting Rights Act of 1965
* through a convention
* **through a constitutional amendment**
* through the U.S. Constitution

Question 4: Which statement best analyzes the historical impact of the Twenty-Fourth Amendment for Americans?

* The Twenty-Fourth Amendment allowed women to vote, doubling the voting population of the United States.
* The Twenty-Fourth Amendment gave citizenship to Indigenous Americans, allowing them the right to vote.
* **The Twenty-Fourth Amendment prohibited discriminatory laws, expanding the voting rights of minority populations.**
* The Twenty-Fourth Amendment gave suffrage rights to Black women, expanding the voting population.

Question 5: What was the historical impact of the Snyder Act?

* The Snyder Act required the payment of poll taxes, limiting who was able to vote.
* The Snyder Act gave women the right to vote, doubling the country’s voting population.
* The Snyder Act affirmed suffrage for Black men, protecting their ability to vote.
* **The Snyder Act gave Indigenous Americans U.S. citizenship,** **opening up the opportunity for voting rights.**

**Lesson 9 – Citizenship**

**Objective 1:** Analyze the expansion of the Constitution as it relates to citizenship and political participation.

**Big Ideas**: In the United States, the Constitution outlines the role of individuals, the requirements for being a citizen, and what rights are given to citizens. Rights that are given to people living in the U.S. can vary depending on the type of citizenship they hold. *Natural born citizens* are those who are born in the U.S., while *naturalized citizens* are those who were born in another country and complete certain steps to become U.S. citizens.

**Who Is a** **Citizen?**: Originally, only people born on American soil were U.S. citizens. In 1790, the first naturalization law was introduced that granted citizenship to anyone who had lived in the country for two years, were of good character, and were White. This also extended citizenship to children of U.S. citizens born in another country.

The case *Dred Scott v. Sandford* stated that no person of African descent could be considered a citizen of the U.S. even if they were born in the U.S. The outcome of this case was challenged, and the definition of citizenship was revised with the addition of the Fourteenth Amendment in 1868, which gave citizenship to anyone born or naturalized in the U.S. This still allowed for the exclusion of most Indigenous Americans as they were under the jurisdiction of tribal law.

**Citizens and Political Participation**: Any U.S. citizen who is at least 18 years old has the right to vote in federal, state, and local elections, if they do not have a felony conviction.

Initially, only White, landowning males were given the right to vote in the U.S. With the addition of the Fifteenth Amendment, voting rights were given to all men who were citizens of the U.S. Still, even with new laws that gave all men the right to vote, poll taxes and literacy tests were implemented to hinder Black Americans from voting even after they had been granted citizenship.

In 1920, women were given the right to vote with the ratification of the Nineteenth Amendment. The women’s suffrage movement was an effort to promote equality for women in a variety of ways, including voting.

The Twenty-sixth Amendment allowed more people to vote in state and federal elections across the country by changing the voting age from 21 to 18.

If an individual is not a citizen, they are not able to vote in state and federal elections. This includes permanent legal citizens.

**Key Words**:

* **citizen** – a person who shows an allegiance to a state, agreeing to be legally bound by its laws and in turn is covered by its protection
* **enfranchise**– the granting of a right or privilege; commonly referring to the right to vote
* **literacy tests** – a test given to assess a person’s ability to read and write; used as a tool in the Jim Crow era to restrict voting among Black Americans
* **natural born citizen** – someone who at birth is a U.S. citizen
* **naturalized citizen** – a person who is born in a foreign country and completes all the steps required by law to become a citizen
* **poll taxes** – money that some citizens had to pay to vote
* **suffrage**– the right to vote

**Objective 2:** Evaluate how changing demographics have impacted political outcomes throughout history.

**Big Ideas:** The evolution of citizenship and voting laws in the United States have greatly impacted political outcomes throughout history. The changes in demographics have led to a more diverse voting population throughout history.

The changes in voting patterns throughout U.S. history are directly related to the people who were able to vote in each election. White, land-owning males were initially the only people allowed to participate in politics. This small population participation narrowed the outcomes of elections. With the inclusion of men of all races, women, and young adults into the voting population, political parties became more established and defined. Greater voter turnout and inclusion have led to political outcomes being determined by a wider variety of people who vote based on their personal interests or beliefs.

**Political Parties and Demographics**: Political parties formed in the early days of the U.S. with the Federalist and Anti-Federalist parties. Today, the Republican Party and the Democratic Party are the two main groups that dominate the political arena.

Candidates who are running for office will align themselves with a political party and tend to absorb those voters with their like-minded views on policy and reform. A voter’s views can be heavily influenced by the area where they reside, their ethnicity, and current issues facing the country.

**Impact of Underrepresented Voters**: Underrepresentation in voting is not a new concept. Initially it was due to certain groups, such as Black Americans and women, not having the right to vote at all. In more recent years, even with the right to vote being available, these groups are often still underrepresented. This has been due to the availability of polling locations, the requirement of advance registration, and the requirement of certain information.

**Key Words**:

* **demographic data** – the information collected in the U.S. Census about major groups in the U.S. population; includes data on gender, race/ethnicity, age, etc.
* **political party** – an organized group of people with common political ideologies who work to acquire and exercise political power

**Objective 3**: Evaluate the factors that have influenced active citizenship and participation throughout American history.

**Big Ideas:** Citizens of the United States are granted certain freedoms and rights that allow them the opportunity to have a voice.

**Citizen vs. Active Citizen**: Being an *active citizen* means that you are participating in the democratic process by knowing your rights and exercising them. It is also demonstrated by getting involved in the community and participating in nondemocratic activities. Being a citizen means you have rights, while being an active citizen means using the rights you are given and fulfilling civic responsibilities.

**Defining Citizenship and Civil Rights**: With the addition of the Fourteenth Amendment to the Constitution, citizenship was defined. Rights were given to those who were determined to be citizens under the law. Discrimination and violence were used to keep Black people from being active citizens during the Reconstruction Era. Ida B. Wells was a Black writer and activist who fought for civil rights and women’s suffrage during the early 1900s.

Even after redefining citizenship and rights given to the newly freed Black population, states still limited their citizenship in voting, employment, housing, and all other areas in the form of Jim Crow laws. Black Americans faced limitations on the street they could live on, where they could shop, what type of job they could have, and being in the same room as a white person. These discriminatory laws encouraged Black groups to take the role of active citizenship seriously. More Black people began to run for public office and push for legislative changes. Issues regarding discrimination were prevalent well into the 1960s when the civil rights movement focused on bringing important inequality issues to light exemplified active citizenship and engagement for the needs of society.

**Women Fight for Full Citizenship**: Women did not have the right to vote prior to the Nineteenth Amendment, ratified in 1920. They were not able to hold public office or even work outside the home for many years. A woman could not own land or conduct business without the participation of a man. Women did not have many rights and up until the 1900s were not included as active members of society. They were thrown in jail and given excessive fines when they tried to speak out against their lack of voting rights. In the late 1800s, suffragettes such as Susan B. Anthony, Amelia Bloomer, and Elizabeth Cady Stanton teamed up to speak out for women’s rights. They focused on gender inequality, the right to vote, and rights for married women. Their efforts paved the way for many legislative changes.

**A New Generation**: While age is a limiting factor in voting or running for office, the right to speak freely, assemble, and take an interest in politics can be fulfilled at any age. Civics education is also a large part of being an active citizen for younger people. Having a knowledge base that allows them to formulate opinions and stay informed on important social issues helps to create well-rounded participation from citizens as they grow older.

**Key Words**:

* **active citizen** – a citizen who is active in local communities and government at all levels while advocating for social issues
* **civil rights movement** – a movement from 1954 to 1968 that sought equal status for Black Americans
* **Fourteenth Amendment** – the addition to the Constitution that granted African Americans citizenship
* **Jim Crow laws** – the laws that legalized the separation of people based on race in areas of school, public places, and transportation
* **Nineteenth Amendment** – an addition to the Constitution that granted women the right to vote
* **Reconstruction** – the time period after the Civil War when the federal government attempted to address the wrongs done to Black Americans under the institution of slavery and tried to make all Americans equal
* **suffragette** – a woman who fought for the right to vote

**Quick Check**

Question 1: Which best analyzes how U.S. citizenship in regard to political participation has evolved over time?

* Originally, men of any race could vote, while now any U.S. citizen can vote.
* Originally, all men who were born or naturalized in the U.S. could vote as long as they had lived in the country for two years, while now any citizen born in the U.S. can vote.
* Originally, men who were 18 years of age or older could vote, while now, any citizen born in the U.S. can vote at 18.
* **Originally, only White men who owned land could vote, while now any U.S. citizen can vote.**

Question 2: What is the difference between natural born citizens and naturalized citizens in the United States?

* Natural born citizens are born in the U.S., and naturalized citizens are any person who is born in a foreign country who wants to be a citizen.
* Natural born citizens must have parents who were born in the U.S., and naturalized citizens gain legal citizenship after being born in a foreign country.
* Natural born citizens must go through a legal process to become a citizen, and naturalized citizens are those people who have lived in the country a specific amount of time.
* **Natural born citizens are born in the U.S., and naturalized citizens are born in a foreign country and gain legal citizenship.**

Question 3: What best evaluates the connection between demographic changes over time and political outcomes in the U.S.?

* the inclusion of all men being able to vote in elections
* **the addition of amendments to the Constitution giving more people the right to vote**
* the limiting of polling locations, language-specific material, and mail ballots for specific voters
* the targeting of underrepresented voters by candidates during elections to gain more votes

Question 4: What changes in voting patterns throughout U.S. history are directly related to the people who were able to vote in a given election?

* access to voting material in every voter’s language and wide variety of poll locations
* **greater voter turnout at elections and** **better defined political parties**
* a reduced number of voters participating in elections and more established political parties
* a decrease in voters participating in elections and candidates targeting underrepresented voters

Question 5: What best evaluates how underrepresented populations during the civil rights movement exercised their active citizenship options?

* passing legislation to help their cause
* resorting to discrimination and violence
* attending any school or business of their choice
* **peacefully protesting and assembling**

**Lesson 10 – The Governed and the Government**

**Objective 1:** Examine the responsibility that citizens have toward the government and the responsibility that the government has toward citizens.

**Big Ideas**:

**Responsibilities of Citizens**

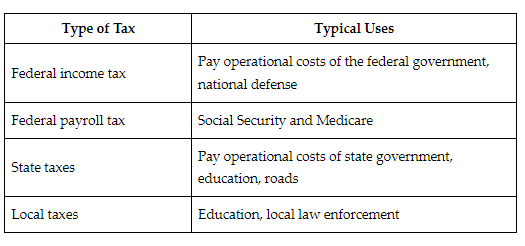
* Obey the law
* Pay taxes
  + income tax - paid on income earned
  + payroll tax – funds Social Security and Medicare
  + sales tax - paid on the purchase price of goods and services
  + property tax – paid on property owned. Big revenue for local governments and schools.
* Serving on juries
  + Grand juries - determine if there is sufficient evidence against a person to warrant a criminal trial.
  + Trial juries:
    - Criminal – jury will consider the evidence that is presented to it and determine if the defendant is guilty. To be found guilty, the jury must be convinced "beyond a reasonable doubt" that the defendant did, in fact, commit the crime that they are accused of. Further, all 12 jurors in felony (serious) cases must agree on the verdict: guilty or not guilty.
    - Civil - jury will hear the evidence presented by each side. Then they decide who is right. The burden of proof in a civil case is a "preponderance of the evidence." This means that all a side must do to win is present slightly more evidence than the other.
* Serving in the military - serve in the military if drafted. A draft is where citizens are picked for the military with a lottery system.

**Responsibilities of Government**

* Protecting Natural Rights
  + According to the Declaration of Independence, the primary purpose of government is to protect and promote a person's right to life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness. These are called natural rights.
* National Government
  + Defense – key responsibility of the national government. To defend the country, the national government has created the branches of the military:
    - Air Force
    - Army
    - Coast Guard
    - Marine Corps
    - Navy
    - Space Force
    - Another branch, the National Guard, is run by the states under rules set up by the national government. In times of war, the National Guard can be "federalized," or brought under the direct control of the national government.
  + Regulate Commerce - establishes laws, like minimum wage, and fair hiring and firing practices. It has the power to prohibit or regulate the sale of some items.
* State and Local Governments
  + Reserved power - state and local governments can engage in any activity they wish unless there is some sort of rule against it, or it has been assigned to the national government.
  + Police Power - the power to protect the public peace, safety, and welfare.
  + Public education - helps to ensure the continuation of democratic government because educated citizens are better able to participate politically and to hold their government accountable.

**Objective 2:** Look at the impact of citizen involvement in society, specifically paying taxes, serving on a jury, and registering for the draft.

**Big Ideas:** Essential services cost money. Typically, a citizen will pay taxes to three levels of government: federal, state, and local.



**Serving on a Jury**

**Grand Jury:** ensures that the government has enough evidence to warrant a trial. Grand juries do not determine if a person is guilty or not.

**Trial juries**: hear the evidence presented by the prosecution and the defense. For the state to secure a conviction, a jury must be convinced beyond a reasonable doubt that the defendant committed the crime. The trial jury is there to keep a check on the judicial system.

There are also trial juries in civil cases. In this situation the penalty would only be financial.

**Serving in the Military**

The military is made up of people who volunteer for service. There are times when volunteers cannot staff the military. In those times, Congress can order the draft. To enable this, all males, both citizens and noncitizens, must register for the draft at age 18.

**Objective 3:** Look at the responsibility of the government to the citizens and the responsibility of the citizens to the government.

**Big Ideas:**

The purpose of government is to protect a person's natural rights. Natural rights are rights granted to all people that cannot be taken away. They include life, liberty, and property.

The national government’s powers are called delegated powers. This means the national government only has the power to do those things it has been assigned to in the Constitution or that can be reasonably inferred from the Constitution's text. An easy way to understand what the national government does is to think about the national government undertaking four basic tasks:

1. fiscal policy: taxing, spending money, and borrowing money
2. monetary policy: setting the value of and printing money
3. regulating commerce: making rules about sales within and between states
4. defense policy: protecting the country against attacks

State governments have reserved powers. This means that states can typically do whatever they would like to do unless there is a specific rule against it. Most states will spend their resources doing the following:

1. building roads
2. operating educational institutions
3. exercising the police power

The Obligations of Citizens

1. obey the law
2. pay taxes
3. vote
4. serve on juries

**Keywords:**

* **trial jury –** the jury that determines if a criminal defendant is guilty in a criminal case or which side wins in a civil case
* **grand jury** – a jury that determines if there is enough evidence to warrant a criminal trial
* **natural rights** – the rights, such as life, liberty, and property, that are considered inalienable
* **reserved power** – the powers that are kept by the states; these are protected by the Tenth Amendment
* **delegated powers** – the powers that are assigned to the national government based on the language in the Constitution

**Quick Check**

Question 1: Which of the following is an accurate analysis of the fundamental obligations that a government must fulfill with regard to its citizens?

* A government must ensure that citizens are only tried for crimes after review by a grand jury, and as a result, they use grand juries to review all crimes.
* A government must promote the physical well-being of its citizens, and as a result, they charge taxes.
* **A government must protect people’s natural rights, and as a result, they maintain services such as the schools, police forces, and the military.**
* A government must ensure that citizens can only be convicted of a crime by a fair and impartial jury, and as a result, they require jury duty.

Question 2: Which of the following statements is the most accurate assessment of the impact of citizen involvement on society?

* Citizen involvement strengthens government services and has no impact on its power.
* Citizen involvement strengthens government services and always limits its power.
* Citizen involvement strengthens government services and always increases its power.
* **Citizen involvement strengthens government services and sometimes limits its power.**

Question 3: Which of the following best explains the impact the jury service has on the judicial system?

* Juries are the primary way that judges are selected for a particular case.
* Jury service ensures that the decisions made by the judge in a criminal case are accurate.
* **Jury service ensures that the judicial system is accountable to the people.**
* Juries are the primary way by which evidence is presented during the trial.

Question 4: Based on current law, which of the following groups are required to register for the draft?

* all persons over the age of 21
* **all males over 18, both citizens and immigrants**
* all citizens over 18, both men and women
* all immigrants over the age of 21

Question 5: Which of the following accurately evaluates the relationship between government and citizens?

* Government has obligations only to those citizens who pay the taxes that government needs to operate.
* Government has obligations to citizens, but citizens have no meaningful way in which to participate in government.
* **Both government and citizens have obligations to each other that must be fulfilled in order for society to function.**
* Citizens have obligations to government, such as obeying the law, but government obligations to citizens are minimal.

**Lesson 11 – Activism and Participation**

**Objective 1:** Evaluate a variety of ways in which citizens participate in the political process.

**Big Ideas:** Political parties try to impact public policy by getting their members elected or appointed to positions of governmental authority. The goal is that once they are elected, the members implement the ideas of the party.

Citizens can be involved in their political party by:

* + - holding party offices
    - serve as party chairperson or precinct captain
    - volunteering at party events
    - volunteering to work on the campaigns of those nominated by their party

Special Interest Groups - groups of people organized to impact public policy. They do not run candidates for public office. They seek to influence public policy by:

* + - lobbying government officials
    - supporting the election of sympathetic candidates
    - attempting to shape public opinion

Social Movements - broad-based movement of individuals trying to shape or change public policy.

Talking about politics is one of the most common forms of political participation in the U.S. By sharing your views with others, you are helping to shape public opinion.

By voting for a candidate who promises to pursue a course of action, you are showing support for the issues that the candidate supports.

**Objective 2:** Evaluate ways in which citizen activism impacts the political agenda.

**Big Ideas:** Citizen activism can impact the political agenda.

**Political Demonstrations**

The goal of these demonstrations is to get on TV to impact public opinion. The public will then pressure policy makers to create public policy sympathetic to the group's views.

**Campaign Contributions**

Individuals can make contributions to interest groups.

Interest groups can make contributions directly to a candidate. These hard money contributions are limited by law.

**Non-coordinated Expenditures**

This type of spending, to be legal, must be done independently of a campaign. These non-connected groups can raise and spend unlimited amounts of money.

**Political Movements**

These are broad-based movements of people and groups that attempt to change public policy.

**Objective 3:** Evaluate how citizens support the policy-making process through political participation.

**Big Ideas**: A political party is an organization that exists to try to influence public policy by getting its members elected or appointed to positions of governmental authority.

Parties nominate candidates for office and help fund their campaigns. Political parties serve as linkage institutions. They provide citizens with information about government policies and programs. This information helps citizens make more informed decisions.

Political parties serve as a way for citizens to express their points of view to the government. This is primarily done through the construction of a party platform. A party platform is a statement of beliefs and policy preferences of the members of a particular political party. Elected officials from that political party will then often take elements of that platform and make them into public policy.

**Interest Groups**

An interest group is an organization of people that tries to influence public policy. Interest groups do not run candidates for office. They give information to citizens about governmental actions. Citizens can use this information to help decide for whom to vote.

**Supporting Candidates**

Interest groups are a way for citizens to pool their money to support specific candidates. These contributions are limited by law. They cannot exceed the set amount. The way around this rule is for the group to contribute to a super PAC. These contributions are unlimited.

If these candidates win office, they are more likely to be sympathetic to the group's views.

**Lobbying**

Lobbying is attempting to influence the course of legislation and the development of administrative regulations in the bureaucracy. This is often done through a lobbyist. A lobbyist attempts to influence members of Congress and policy makers about the content of statutory law and administrative regulations. The main way that lobbyists do this is by creating an ongoing mutually beneficial relationship with policy makers.

**Keywords:**

* **electioneering –** the process of trying to influence elections
* **initiative petition –** a process by which citizens can make public policy by circulating a petition, gaining an appropriate number of signatures, and then forcing a vote on a specific question or proposition
* **political action committee –** an organization that facilitates special interest group contributions to candidates
* **referendum –** a general vote by citizens on a single political question
* **special interest group –** a group of people, a company, or an industry that works to impact legislation and public policy in their favor on one or more shared concerns or topics
* **hard money –** the contributions made directly to a candidate

**Quick Check**

Question 1: Which of the following is a fair evaluation of the methods of participation?

* Campaign contributions are the only form of effective action.
* Social movements have yet to produce lasting change in society.
* **Collective action usually makes more of an impact than individual action.**
* Small group action is always more effective than large group action.

Question 2: Which of the following is a key distinction between a political party and an interest group?

* Political parties are largely unorganized, while interest groups are organized.
* Political parties lobby government officials, while interest groups do not.
* Political parties attempt to influence public policy, while interest groups are largely unorganized.
* **Political parties nominate candidates for office, while interest groups do not.**

Question 3: Which of the following is an accurate evaluation of the impact of money generated by citizen activism?

* Money generated by citizen activism can be very effective in deciding which demonstrations receive coverage.
* Money generated by citizen activism can be very effective in controlling the news cycle.
* Money generated by citizen activism can be very effective in changing how members of Congress vote.
* **Money generated by citizen activism can be** **very effective in changing electoral outcomes.**

Question 4: Which of the following is an accurate evaluation of citizens’ support of civil institutions through political participation?

* Effective participation is primarily through the media.
* Effective participation is most often with a large group of citizens.
* Effective participation is only through interest groups.
* **Effective participation is** **almost always through linkage institutions.**

Question 5: Which statement best describes the function of interest groups?

* Interest groups nominate and fund candidates for public office during elections.
* Interest groups are the primary way in which people acquire political information.
* **Interest groups attempt to influence public policy in Congress and the bureaucracy.**
* Interest groups fund political parties and media outlets to advance their agenda.

**Lesson 12 – Influencing Policy**

**Objective 1:** Identify methods used by stakeholders to influence public policy and political action.

**Big Ideas: Governmental Stakeholders**

Presidents, members of Congress, and governmental bureaucrats all try to use the resources at their disposal to obtain support for a policy or political action.

Presidents can use town halls and rallies to present their plan directly to members of different communities. These outlets can increase the popularity of the plan. When the public supports a political action, they can persuade representatives in Congress to vote for that policy.

The threat of vetoing is a powerful tool. Writing legislation and passing a bill through Congress can take months. Since Congress does not want that time wasted, they often listen to the president if they threaten to veto legislation. This can help shape legislation in a way that favors the president.

Bureaucrats write the details of how to implement legislation. This allows them to influence the way that public policy is implemented and enforced.

When Congress is writing a new bill, they call on bureaucrats to get their perspective and insight. Bureaucrats are appointed and hired for positions by executive leadership. They can be influenced by the opinion of their boss when writing legislation.

**The Tools Used by Congress to Persuade Action**

Logrolling: when members of Congress work together to support each other’s bills by exchanging positive votes on their legislation.

Party Structure: Voting along party lines can help members of Congress get support during elections and favorable assignments within committees.

Funding Appropriation: By controlling the amount of money that executive agencies receive, Congress can influence the actions these agencies take.

**Outside Influences**

Individuals can help guide lawmakers and executives by casting their vote. At a state level, individuals have the power to decide public policy by voting on a referendum. A referendum is a process in which a state legislature or city council writes and submits a proposed law to the voters for their approval.

If people oppose a particular policy, they will often protest to signal disapproval. Protesting can help raise awareness on a particular action or policy. It can also apply pressure for change. Individuals can also provide support for or opposition to an action by fundraising and donating money to a candidate or cause.

**Special Interest Groups**

Fundraising: These kinds of groups often use money to help influence public policy and action. By fundraising for a candidate or a cause, they can get the support needed for their interest.

Lobbying: Lobbying works by funding research and providing information that can be difficult for government to obtain. This information can help convince members of Congress and the executive to favorably enact and enforce laws.

**Media**

The media can direct the public’s attention. Media outlets and individuals decide what, how, and when information is released. This can help deter or obtain support for a particular policy or change. While the media is meant to remain unbiased, the information they present and the language they use often affects the public’s view of government policies.

**Objective 2**: Evaluate the impact of the methods stakeholders use to influence public policy and political action.

**Big Ideas**: **The Impact of Individual Action**

**Voting**

Voting is the most common way to influence public policy and political action. Individuals vote for the candidates they think will best represent their needs.

An individual’s vote has more impact in local elections. This is because fewer votes are cast than in a national election.

**Contacting government officials**

Contacting government officials is done through social media, email, letters, the phone, or attending town halls. Political participation typically creates a greater impact if it is done in larger numbers.

Individual political contributions also impact the political process. Political contributions are the money given to candidates to help them win elections. Elected officials need funding to help with campaign costs. Campaign finance laws limit the amount an individual can give directly to a candidate. These laws are meant to provide all individuals with a possibility of impacting a campaign.

**The Power of Working Together**

Protesting is a common method used to pressure government for change. People participate in protests by gathering and marching or sitting in a location to demonstrate their desire for change. Protests are more impactful when they happen in large numbers.

Political parties are organizations that seek to control the government and enact their policy preferences by getting their members elected to Congress. The U.S. has two major political parties. These parties help mobilize voters, organize campaign movements to elect candidates, and provide a platform for people to follow. Parties also raise money to support the candidates they believe will better represent their party. If a government official does not have the support of a party, the reelection process can be hard.

**The Power of Interest Groups**

Special interest groups are a group of people, a company, or an industry that works to impact legislation and public policy in their favor on one or more shared concerns or topics. The impact of different interest groups depends on the number of members in the group. It also depends on the amount of money the group has access to.

Having many members allows them to mobilize a large number of people. This is beneficial for voting efforts or to protest a law or ruling.

Interest groups are limited to how much money they can give directly to candidates. But they can use their money to support candidates in other forms. Interest groups might run ads that support and raise awareness of their cause.

**Objective 3**: Analyze how individual beliefs and values lead to the formation of groups that influence political outcomes.

**Big Ideas**: Members of Congress work together through coalitions. Coalitions are formed when members of Congress join to pursue action on common legislative goals. Members of a coalition may be of different political parties. Members of these coalitions attempt to obtain support for their interpretations of a given bill.

**How Beliefs and Values Bring Individuals Together**

Special interest groups are a group of people, a company, or an industry that works to impact legislation and public policy in the favor of one or more shared concerns or topics. Members who have the same values and beliefs and want to support change, form these groups.

Individuals might want to organize when they feel an important value or belief is threatened by legislative or executive action. This mobilization is better achieved through forming groups. Advocacy groups, or groups that form to inform the public and support a cause, have strengthened with social media. Advocacy and interest groups often use a variety of incentives to appeal to new members.

Companies who have similar sets of beliefs and values regarding their business will often unite to influence political action. Lobbying firms represent these groups of companies. They can better pursue public policy or political action that affects them when working together.

**Different Incentives to Form Groups**

Most individuals form or join a group with others who have the same belief or value. This is a type of solidarity incentive. Solidarity incentives are social benefits that one can get from being part of a group.

Being part of a group can give purpose. A purpose incentive is a benefit members receive from being part of a group that wants to accomplish a goal. Because a group is working to achieve something a person believes in, they join to support the effort.

Some groups provide members with material benefits. It can be anything from discounts on select goods and services, to information that may be pertinent to that member.

Some individuals will want to express their values and beliefs through a group. This is an expressive incentive. An expressive incentive provides members with ways to show their beliefs and values.

**Keywords:**

* **logrolling –** a situation in which members of Congress work together to support each other’s bills by exchanging positive votes on their legislation
* **referendum –** a process in which a state legislature or city council writes and submits a proposed law to the voters for their approval
* **express advocacy –** an advertisement that expresses direct support for a candidate
* **issue advocacy –** an advertisement that supports a cause and raises awareness of a specific interest
* **coalition –** a group of members of Congress who join together to pursue action on common legislative goals

**Quick Check**

Question 1: Identify one method used by individuals to influence public policy.

* voting for a national referendum to establish national public policy
* funding research to inform government about a political action or policy
* making an advertisement for their public policy
* **voting for the representatives who best represent their needs**

Question 2: Evaluate the impact that political parties have on public policy. Which statement is the most accurate?

* Political parties donate unlimited amounts of funds to candidates.
* **Political parties help get individuals who promote party ideology elected to Congress.**
* Political parties vote for members of Congress.
* Political parties focus on a particular issue or interest and work to impact legislation.

Question 3: Which of the following best analyzes how individual beliefs and values can create special interest groups?

* **Individuals with a common belief or value are triggered by an incentive or an event to** **join together for collective action.**
* Individuals with common beliefs and values simply prefer to work together and believe that their individual actions will be impactful.
* Voters with common ideologies get together in a political party who represents their beliefs and values.
* Coalitions are formed to discuss specific legislation on an interest or topic.

Question 4: Which of the following is an incentive to join a group that is working to accomplish a specific goal?

* material incentive
* advocacy group
* **purpose incentive**
* solidarity incentive

Question 5: How do congressmembers from different parties collaborate with one another?

* Congressmembers form special interest groups to invite other congressmembers to join.
* **Congressmembers form coalitions that unite members who want to work toward common legislation.**
* Congressmembers work with other members who have a similar political ideology.
* Congressmembers provide material incentives to other Congressmembers with different beliefs.

**Lesson 14 – Influence and Bias**

**Objective 1:** Analyze the influence of private and public institutions on shaping public policy and political opinions.

**Big Ideas**:

**Influencing Public Policy Outside and Within Government**

Political participation consists of activities through which people develop and express their opinions about the world and how it is governed. People try to take part in and shape the decisions that affect their lives.

**The Power of Information**

Everything the government does impacts citizens’ lives. Some laws may affect some sectors and regions more directly than others, while other regulations create a standard for everyone to follow.

Businesses, interest groups, and individuals all want government policy to benefit them. For these groups to achieve their goals, they lobby the government. Lobbying is performed in various ways, but providing information is the most common form.

Powerful forms of information are research and public opinion. Research or survey information about public opinion may be given to Congress to help support an interest or to sway legislation in an institution’s favor.

**The Importance of Funding**

In addition to using information, the private sector uses funds to influence public policy and political opinion. Businesses and corporations often pool their money to donate toward a common policy goal.

**The Influence of the Public Sector**

The media is another important tool used to influence political opinion. In recent years, social media has become an important platform used by public officials. Public officials appear with social media influencers and create content to help move public opinion.

**Key Words**:

* **interest group** – a well-organized group of people with a shared identifying interest that attempts to influence the legislative process
* **iron triangle** – a figurative relationship among Congress, bureaucracy, and interest groups
* **lobbying** – the organized process of influencing legislation or policy
* **private institution** – an independent organization owned by a non-state entity, such as a firm, business enterprise, or individual
* **public institution** – a large organization controlled by any level of government and paid for by public money

**Objective 2**: Analyze different forms of political communication to identify bias.

**Big Ideas**:

**Bias All Around Us**

Think about the different information each person is exposed to every day. Nearly all of this information includes some form of bias or set ideas for or against something.

The messages communicated by corporations, the media, and politicians are all crafted to obtain their ultimate goal. By identifying bias, we can determine the accuracy of information presented. This allows us to make the choice that we feel is best, instead of the choice we are led to believe is best.

**Looking at the Whole Picture**

We often fail to realize the extent to which one-sided information is present all around us. When reading an argument or information, it is important to identify the author or publisher. Information written or published by someone who will directly benefit can be one-sided information. The type of language used can also create bias, such as exaggerations or the emphasis of one idea over another. Certain words that have a positive or negative connotation can be used to sway readers' opinions. Including or omitting information can show preference towards one argument. It is important to also identify if all perspectives on a topic are equally explored. Not providing multiple perspectives or all facts for conclusions to be made can be a sign of biased information.

**Key Words**

* **bias** – set ideas for or against something
* **political communication** – the methods used by politicians to form and transmit messages to the public

**Objective 3**: Analyze the influence of bias on shaping public opinion.

**Big Ideas**:

**Bias and Public Opinion**

Public opinion is the general view of the people, which is an important component of a democratic government. A democratic government emphasizes that power is in the hands of the people and that they can voice their preferences. Public opinion represents the voice of many.

A key factor that shapes public opinion is one’s social environment. People are likely to share the opinion of those who surround them. They are influenced by their coworkers, friends, and family. Public opinion is also influenced by various outside sources, including the government and the media. These sources will often provide biased information to try to move public opinion toward their goal.

**The Different Perspectives of Government**

Elected members of government are especially interested in public opinion. Since their job is to be the representatives of the people, they are looking to fulfill the will of their constituents. This gives members of government a natural bias when forming public policy. They often seek to ensure that their initiatives are aligned with the people they represent.

Because they know their constituents will also hear public opinion, members of government are careful of how they convey information. Information can be framed to benefit their agenda through concision bias. This bias occurs when information that is easy to understand and beneficial for a candidate is shared, while other difficult information is omitted.

Politicians also use their platform to influence public opinion. They stage rallies and bring in popular members of society to show support for a particular policy or action. Some people feel connected to certain celebrities, so seeing them support a particular issue can often change their opinion.

Political parties can impact public opinion. The political ideology the party represents is the backbone of the actions they take. Every action political parties take is done with the purpose of advancing their ideology.

**Obtaining the Support of the People**

Interest groups and political action committees are attentive to public opinion. If public opinion favors their interest, then these groups will be more effective in their lobbying efforts. Interest groups often use issue advocacy to appeal to individuals and influence public opinion.

Prior to making marketing decisions, interest groups research how individuals will react to certain information. This creates a list of words, images, and phrases that should be used or avoided.

A public opinion poll can be used to understand and manipulate public opinion. Public opinion polls are a series of questions presented to the public that are designed to gather information that represents the opinions of the population. Some groups choose to poll the public to measure support for an initiative. This information can be used when seeking legislative support.

**The Power of the Media**

Media in all its forms is a powerful tool to influence public opinion. Media is often the gatekeeper of information and guilty of coverage bias. Coverage bias is the spotlighting of what people should know and the focusing of their attention on certain topics while diverting attention from others.

Print media, like magazines and newspapers, often rely on headlines and images to attract the attention of the public. At times, headlines can be misleading, and simply bait for readers to click on an article or buy a magazine. The information can be presented to trigger the reaction of individuals. If people only read the headlines, the perception of what is occurring can be skewed, as it may not represent the true story.

All media are part of a business, meaning more viewers leads to greater profitability. This has created news outlets that seek to appeal to the greatest number of viewers. News media can be biased because of selective exposure. Selective exposure is the theory that people tend to look for information that aligns with their views and ideology.

Digital and social media also tend to target specific readers and viewers. By gathering information about what individuals look for and read, these companies can make suggestions on what individuals would like. This information is often shared with companies or interest groups to target specific individuals. These groups can place advertisements that can help gather support for an action. These actions can further people’s confirmation bias. Confirmation bias occurs when individuals look for and interpret information to support their views.

**Key Words**

* **concision bias** – the sharing of information that is easy to understand and beneficial while omitting other difficult information
* **confirmation bias** – the tendency to look for and interpret information to support one’s views
* **coverage bias** – the spotlighting of what people should know and the focusing of their attention on certain topics
* **issue advocacy** – an advertisement that supports a cause and raises awareness of a specific interest
* **public opinion** – the general view of the people public opinion poll – a series of questions presented to the public that are designed to gather information that represents the opinions of the population s
* **elective exposure** – the theory that people tend to look for information that aligns with their views and ideology

**Quick Check**

Question 1: Which of the following best describes the influence private institutions have in framing public policy?

* Private institutions endorse candidates who support their policy agenda.
* Private institutions invite experts to a congressional hearing to discuss the benefits of a policy.
* Private institutions work with state and local officials to hold rallies and town halls.
* **Private institutions provide information and funding to support legislation that matches their goals.**

Question 2: Which of the following accurately describes a relationship that is illustrated by the iron triangle?

* Executive agencies provide funds to members of Congress in exchange for favorable legislation.
* Executive agencies provide favorable regulation to interest groups in exchange for campaign funding.
* Members of Congress help fund interest groups to make legislation and regulation.
* **Members of Congress create bills that support an interest group in exchange for campaign funding.**

Question 3: Which of the following accurately analyzes President Jackson’s use of bias in his 1830 message to Congress?

* President Jackson compares the removal of Indigenous Americans to European immigrants in order for people to understand the negative effects of the policy.
* **President Jackson uses positive words to describe the government’s policy, giving a one-sided and positive account of the government’s actions.**
* President Jackson uses the same words to describe the government, its people, and Indigenous Americans, ensuring everyone is treated equally.
* President Jackson describes how the Indian Removal Policy can bring negative effects for the U.S. government.

Question 4: Which of the following best analyzes how interest groups use bias to frame public opinion?

* Interest groups can create a party platform that will gather the support of party members and the public.
* Interest groups can use coverage bias to influence the opinion of voters by attracting or diverting attention.
* Interest groups can draft legislation that is beneficial to the public and reflects public opinion.
* **Interest groups can use focus groups to determine what phrases to use to obtain a favorable response from the public.**

Question 5: What is a bias that results from being exposed to like-minded information that agrees with one's views?

* selective exposure
* coverage bias
* **confirmation bias**
* focus group

**Lesson 15 – Political Opinion**

**Objective 1**: Identify the social demographics that influence individuals’ political opinions.

**Big Ideas**:

**Social Demographics Influence Political Beliefs**

Many demographic characteristics, such as age, gender, religion, occupation, education, geographic location, race, political affiliation, and economic status, have a profound effect on people’s political opinions. Each of these affects a person’s beliefs and leads them to act accordingly. It will also affect the way they vote.

**Main Political Influencers**

Everyone’s political socialization is strongest when they are young and with their family of origin. As a person grows up, they hear political discussions. This socialization will last long into adulthood because it is so strong.

As people grow, they become socialized by their peers. Once they leave school, they continue to be politically socialized by their work environment, their religion, their friends, their income, and the region where they live.

**Cross-Cutting Cleaves Allow Individual Political Opinions**

Although these social demographics exist, many people fall into two or more opposing demographics. People do not always fit the social demographic that is slated for them based on a single characteristic. They may have one or more dominant characteristics and choose to vote according to that one trait. A variety of factors go into their choices.

The value of democratic voting is that people can also change their minds as they move through their lives and are continually socialized by different circumstances.

**Key words**:

* **cross-cutting cleavage** – a division in society that occurs when people are part of opposing political or social demographics
* **demographic** – a specific characteristic having to do with human populations, often as an identifying feature
* **political ideology** – a system of beliefs, ideas, or values that serve as the foundation of how a government should function and as a guide for policy initiatives
* **political socialization** – the process that every individual undergoes to form their political beliefs

**Objective 2**: Analyze how political opinions are influenced by demographics and intersectionality.

**Big Ideas**:

**Demographics and Intersectionality**

Americans often view politics according to the groups to which they belong. Intersectionality looks at the interconnected nature of identity categorizations within individuals and groups. The term was first introduced in 1989 by feminist legal scholar Kimberlé Crenshaw. Crenshaw looked at how gender and race intersect to define the social and political experiences of women of color.

**Key Words**:

* **demographics** – the statistical data relating to the population and specific groups within it
* **gender gap** – a voting pattern that show women are more likely to support the Democratic Party than men
* **intersectionality** – the interconnected nature of identity categorizations within individuals and groups

**Objective 3**: Evaluate the ways in which stratification influences political outcomes.

**Big Ideas**:

Grouping People Assists Political Actors to Achieve Their Desired Outcome

Age Provides a Continuous Influence Over Political Party Identify and Ideology:

* A person’s age usually influences their political ideology. For example, when a person is young, they are guided by their family’s political ideology and usually share that political identity.
* If a person goes to college, statistics show that they are typically the most liberal they will ever be upon graduation.
* Once a person graduates from college, they may begin to shift toward a more conservative point of view. Many factors lead to this shift will happen. For example, job choice, income, and what government benefits a person may require all need to be factored in to determine that person’s political outcome.

Race and Ethnicity Impacts Political Outcomes: Political scientists use voter data to reason effectively about how political identity affects voting.

* According to statistics, some Cuban Americans may develop a more conservative political identity rather than a liberal one. In the 2020 elections, 58 percent of Cuban Americans identified as Republicans and voted Republican.
* In a 2021 survey, more than 50 percent of Black Americans, Indigenous Americans, and other people of color in the U.S. identified with liberal ideology. While only around 16 percent identified with conservative ideology. In the same survey, a majority of White Americans identified as conservative.
* Political scientists have noted that intersectionality makes it difficult to accurately predict how someone will vote based on their race.

Gender Gap

* In the 2020 election, more than 60 percent of people who identified as a woman also identified as a liberal. Between 41–45 percent of conservatives identified themselves as women in that same election.
* Until this election, the majority of women consistently identified as liberals and voted Democrat.
* The gender gap is decreasing. In the 2020 presidential election, almost half of women voted for the conservative candidate.

Socioeconomic Class Forms Political Identity and Ideology

* People from lower socioeconomic backgrounds often identify with liberal ideologies.
  + In a 2021 poll, 36 percent of people identified as committed Democrats also identified as lower income. Only 15 percent of the people in the same income group identified as conservative.
* People from middle or upper socioeconomic backgrounds often identify with conservative ideologies.
  + In the same 2021 poll, more than 65 percent of people who identified as conservative also identified as middle or upper income.

Geography Plays a Part in One’s Political Identity and Ideology

* Ex: People from the South and from the West tend to closely associate with conservative ideology. In a 2020 poll, 42 percent of voters from the South identified as conservative. While 19 percent identified as liberal from that region.
* Most people from major cities lean liberal in their identity. Most people from more rural areas tend to find more commonality with conservative ideology.

**Key Words**:

* **conservative** – a political philosophy that supports socially traditional ideas, free enterprise, and private ownership
* **liberal** – a political philosophy that supports individual rights, civil liberties, democracy, and free enterprise
* **political identity** – the location of a person on the political spectrum. Political identity is shaped by several influences including family background, geographic region of the country, and personal experiences.
* **political ideology** – a set of ethical ideals or principles that one may believe about how society should work and function
* **socioeconomic** – a term used to describe people’s social and economic situations
* **stratification** – the arrangement of something into different groups

**Quick Check**

Question 1: Identify the factor that most influences an individual’s political opinion when they are a young child.

* religion
* school
* peers
* **family**

Question 2: Identify a time when peers are most influential in a person’s political socialization.

* when a person goes back to school as an adult
* when a person works from home
* **when a person is in high school**
* when a person is retired

Question 3: Which statement best analyzes the role of demographics in determining political opinions?

* Young voters support Democrats while older voters support Republicans.
* Gender is the most important demographic when forming political opinions.
* **Understanding how demographic attributes intersect best describes how people form their political opinions.**
* Race is the most important demographic when forming political opinions.

Question 4: Which of the following statements best describes Latino voters?

* The Latino voting bloc is homogenous.
* Latino voters only support Democratic candidates.
* Latino voters represent a shrinking proportion of the electorate.
* **Latino voters represent the fastest-growing voting bloc in the U.S.**

Question 5: Evaluate the importance of stratification on political outcomes.

* **Political scientists can better predict political outcomes if they understand how people are stratified.**
* Political campaigns would appeal to a broader base of people if they used stratification.
* Government leaders would be able to please all Americans when making collective policy decisions if they understood stratification.
* Political scientists could assist government to pass laws that would please the country as a whole if they used stratification.

**Lesson 16 – Historical Influences**

**Objective 1**: Analyze a few of the critical historical figures and groups whose contributions influenced political structures and decision making today.

**Big Ideas**:

The American government is a combination of many different people’s and groups’ political theories. The United States Constitution’s ideals and decision-making processes are a result of contributions from critical historical figures.

**Early Influences**

At the Constitutional Convention, the Framers created a constitutional republic. This is a system of government in which particular principles are embodied in a constitution that establishes separate branches. Under this system, the public can influence those who hold power through regular elections.

The Framers valued preventing tyranny and protecting individual liberties. They looked to European Enlightenment thinkers such as John Locke and Charles Montesquieu when writing foundational documents such as the Declaration of Independence and the Constitution.

John Locke’s belief that humans were born with natural rights to life, liberty, and property was reflected in the theme of the Declaration of Independence: “All men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness.”

Charles Montesquieu’s theory on the separation of powers and checks and balances inspired two important systems of the U.S. Government.

**The Constitutional Convention and Beyond**

There were many interests and voices attempting to influence the new U.S. government. Leading the Constitutional Convention to be full of debate. Issues debated include:

* representation
* the size of the national government relative to the states
* individual liberties
* the selection of a president
* the term length of a president
* slavery

George Washington established himself as a leader. He created an atmosphere that would allow members to reach compromises that were necessary for creating a new government.

James Madison is known as the “Father of the Constitution” for his contributions to the formation of the new government. His goal was to unify the country.

George Mason did not sign the Constitution because he was concerned with the amount of power the federal government would have. He also wanted the slave trade to end.

After the Constitution was drafted, it needed to be ratified. This caused two sides to be formed. Those who wanted to ratify the Constitution were called Federalists. Those who did not want to ratify the Constitution were called Anti-Federalists.

Anti-Federalists believed that the Constitution gave too much power to the national government over the states and that it lacked a list of individual liberties, or a Bill of Rights.

James Madison, John Jay, and Alexander Hamilton were prominent Federalists who wrote The Federalist Papers, a series of essays defending the Constitution and advocating for its ratification.

The Constitution was ratified two years after it was drafted at the Constitutional Convention. Anti-Federalists’ influences were evident. The first 10 amendments were added to the Constitution and were called the Bill of Rights. The Bill of Rights listed individual liberties and increased power for the states.

**Objective 2**: Analyze historical figures and events that contribute to contemporary debate as they relate to issues of local/state/national politics.

**Big Ideas**:

**The Past: Balance of Power**

The Constitutional Convention was a response to the failure of the Articles of Confederation, which gave too much power to the states.

The result was a federal system. In a federal system, the national government shares some responsibilities and powers with the state governments but is seen as the supreme law.

The national government has the power to make policy in some areas, while the Tenth Amendment reserves the right for states to regulate in other areas.

This historical debate over how much power the national government should have relative to the states has been long-lasting and is still present today.

**The Past: Historic Landmark Cases**

* *McCulloch v. Maryland* (1819) allowed the national government to make policy in areas not explicitly stated in the Constitution.
* *Gibbons v. Ogden* (1824): In this case, the interpretation of the supremacy clause stated that the U.S. Congress had exclusive control over interstate commerce. This interpretation expanded the economic powers of the national government over the states.

**The Present: Contemporary Public Policy Issues**

The issue of the national government’s and states’ roles in public policy remain contentious. National, state, and local governments frequently clash on who has the power to keep order and ensure individual liberty protections. The following contemporary issues demonstrate these debates: gun control, public safety, and public health.

**Quick Check**

Question 1: Which of the following statements best analyzes how James Madison contributed to the U.S. political

structures and decision making today?

* **Madison wrote the Virginia Plan, which served as the basis of debate over representation in Congress at the Constitutional Convention.**
* Madison was the first U.S. president and supported a strong executive.
* Madison wrote the Connecticut Compromise, which served as the basis of debate over representation in Congress at the Constitutional Convention.
* Madison’s theory on the separation of powers and checks and balances inspired two important components of the U.S. government.

Question 2: Which of the following critical figures was an Anti-Federalist?

* **George Mason**
* Alexander Hamilton
* James Madison
* John Jay

Question 3: Which statement best analyzes how James Madison contributed to contemporary debate as it relates to issues of local/state/national politics?

* Madison authored Brutus 1, which advocates for a small republic to prevent government encroachment on individual beliefs.
* Madison authored Federalist, no. 10, which advocates for a Bill of Rights.
* **Madison authored Federalist, no. 10, which advocates for a large republic to prevent tyranny of the majority.**
* Madison authored Federalist, no. 10, which advocates for a small republic to prevent government encroachment on civil liberties.

Question 4: Which statement accurately describes the due process clause of the Fourteenth Amendment?

* **The states must recognize the legal rights of individuals.**
* The powers not delegated to the federal government nor denied to the states belong to the states and to the people.
* The right to bear arms shall not be infringed.
* The Constitution and federal laws that follow the Constitution are the supreme law of the land.

Question 5: Which of the following Supreme Court cases limited the power of the national government?

* *McDonald v. City of Chicago*, in which the constitutional issue was interpretation of the due process clause
* ***U.S. v. Lopez*, in which the constitutional issue was interpretation of the commerce clause**
* *McCulloch v. Maryland*, in which the constitutional issue was interpretation of the supremacy clause
* *Gibbons v. Ogden*, in which the constitutional issue was interpretation of the supremacy clause

**Lesson 17 – Public Opinion**

**Objective 1**: Analyze the influence of political symbols on public opinion and public institutions.

**Big Ideas**:

**Using Symbols to Convey Messages**

Certain symbols, such as the American flag, the bald eagle, and official government seals, play an important part in government and politics in the United States. Such symbols can influence public opinion and political institutions. Political symbols enable individuals and politicians to convey meaning and elicit emotion, and they serve as rallying points to unite political actors. Throughout U.S. history, citizens have used symbolic speech to express approval or displeasure with government officials and policies.

**Political Symbols in History**  
Symbols are powerful representations of beliefs. Their purpose is to declare allegiance and express national unity.

* For example, Americans associate the American flag with the notion of freedom, democracy, and justice.
* Politicians pose with American flags and wear American flag pins on their lapels to emphasize their own legitimacy.
* Americans stand and face the flag at school and during sporting events and other large gatherings.

It is a citizen’s First Amendment right to engage in symbolic speech to express displeasure with governmental officials and policies. Sometimes, government officials attempt to stop or punish certain forms of symbolic expression. Then it is up to the Supreme Court to determine if the form of symbolic expression is constitutionally protected.

**Objective 2**: Evaluate the ways in which geography may influence public opinion or political beliefs.

**Big Ideas**:

**Political Identity and Geography**

Geography plays a pivotal role in American government. Geography, as an agent of political socialization, influences public opinion on political as well as economic issues and can predict political beliefs.

Population density is the biggest determinant in predicting political ideology of an area. Contemporary trends show that:

* people who live in rural areas of the United States are more likely to identify as conservative
* people who live in urban areas are more likely to identify as liberal
* suburban residents are less predictable

**Economic Geography**

Where people live matters, and it influences public opinion.

Each state has different priorities and interests than the next. For example, citizens in West Virginia rely heavily on the coal industry, as it employs many people and contributes to local economies. As a result, people who live in West Virginia do not support legislation that calls for phasing out coal use in the country. People who live in states that do not produce coal may have a different opinion about utilizing new energy sources to protect the environment.

**Objective 3**: Analyze methods of political participation other than voting that influence public opinion and political outcomes.

**Big Ideas**:

**Getting Involved**

The number one way that people participate in politics in the United States is by voting.

There are many other methods of political participation that influence public opinion and political outcomes. Those include participating in demonstrations, lobbying, and community organizing. Individuals who participate may be doing so because it benefits their own self-interest. Others may participate for a collective good and to strengthen democracy.

**Demonstration as a Form of Political Participation**

Many people participate in demonstrations to emphasize their support for or opposition to government policies. The First Amendment, the part of the Bill of Rights that protects religious liberty and freedom of expression such as speech, also protects the right to assemble. Demonstrations include rallies, marches, boycotts, and protests. Examples of political demonstrations:

* March for Our Lives
* civil rights movement

Although the First Amendment protects the right of individuals to gather in large groups, these groups are limited in how they may demonstrate. Illegal activities, such as blocking traffic, violent actions, and rioting are not protected by the First Amendment.

**Lobbying as a Form of Political Participation**

Lobbying is the organized process of influencing legislation or policy.

Grassroots lobbying attempts to rally the public around a specific issue. As its name suggests, grassroots lobbying comes from the ground up, meaning it starts with the people and moves up to government decision makers.

Direct lobbying may be professional lobbying in which there is communication by someone other than a citizen acting on his or her own behalf. It is directed at a governmental decision maker in the hope of influencing their decision.

**Community Organization as a Form of Political Participation**

Community organizing is the act of a group of people who live or work in close proximity coming together to organize, and effect change as well as to empower and encourage new leadership at the local level.

Community organizing strategies may rely on protest, direct action, education, or attracting media attention. Community organizers look for allies and identify opposition. They determine the resources that could be useful to their cause. They go door-to-door to link the community together, focusing on community-oriented areas such as churches, schools, and shopping centers.

**Quick Check**

Question 1: Which of the following statements best analyzes the influence of political symbols on public institutions?

* **The U.S. Supreme Court has ruled that symbolic speech is protected by the First Amendment’s free speech clause.**
* The U.S. Supreme Court has ruled that only verbal speech is protected by the First Amendment’s free speech clause.
* The U.S. Supreme Court has ruled that freedom of speech while working is protected by the First Amendment’s free speech clause.
* The U.S. Supreme Court has ruled that flag desecration is not protected by the First Amendment’s free speech clause.

Question 2: Which statement best evaluates how geography influences an individual’s political beliefs?

* Suburban areas are more likely to be conservative.
* Rural areas are most likely to be liberal.
* **Urban areas are most likely to be liberal.**
* Urban areas are more likely to be conservative.

Question 3: Which of the following economic differences best explains the reason for political polarization between regions?

* **Large industrial areas have higher rates of economic growth than more rural parts of the country, and resources are distributed unequally.**
* Federal funding is unlimited, so all parts of the country work together to ensure economic success.
* Large industrial areas have lower rates of economic growth than more rural parts of the country, and resources are distributed equally.
* Individuals who happen to live in battleground states are more likely to participate in democracy than those who do not.

Question 4: Which of the following best analyzes how a method of political participation affects public opinion?

* Amicus curiae briefs can provide education on an issue.
* Direct lobbying can help other individuals get involved with an issue.
* **Demonstrations can raise awareness of an issue.**
* Community organizing helps persuade policy makers on an issue.

Question 5: Which of the following forms of demonstrations would be protected by the First Amendment?

* A group of like-minded individuals block traffic on a major road.
* A group of like-minded individuals burn down a government building.
* **A group of like-minded individuals** **stage a rally outside of a government building.**
* A group of like-minded individuals attempt to stop votes from being counted during a congressional meeting.