



American Government

POLITICAL PARTIES

John Perritano

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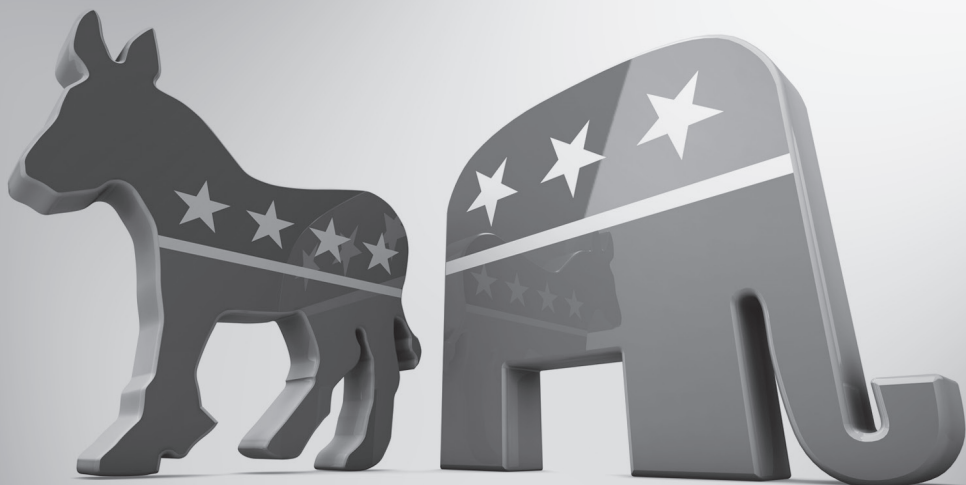




TABLE OF CONTENTS

Introduction

Chapter 1

Family Feud | 12

Chapter 2

Party On | 20

Chapter 3

How Political Parties Work | 32

Chapter 4

Republicans | 44

Chapter 5

Democrats | 60

Chapter 6

Time for a Change? | 74

Glossary | 84

Primary Sources

We the People

of the United States, in order to form a more perfect Union, insure domestic Tranquillity, provide for the common defence, promote the general Welfare, and secure the Blessings of Liberty to ourselves and our Posterity, do ordain and establish this Constitution for the United States of America.

Article 1

Section 1. All legislative Powers herein granted shall be vested in a Congress of the United States, which shall consist of a Senate and House of Representatives.

Section 2. The House of Representatives shall be composed of Members chosen every second Year by the People in each State, the Electors in each State shall have the Qualifications requisite for Electors of the most numerous Branch of the State Legislature. No Person shall be a Representative who shall not have attained to the Age of twenty five Years, and seven Years, and who, when elected, be an Inhabitant of that State in which he shall be chosen. Representatives and direct Taxes shall be apportioned among the several States which may be included within this General Enumeration, according to their respective Numbers, which shall be determined by adding to the whole Number of free Persons, including those bound to Service for a Year or more, the three fifths of all other Persons. The actual Enumeration shall be made within three Years after the first Meeting of the Congress, and within every subsequent Term of ten Years, in such Manner as they shall by Law direct. The Number of Representatives shall not exceed one for every thirty thousand, but each State shall have at least one Representative, and until such enumeration shall be made, the States of Virginia, North Carolina, South Carolina, and New York, shall be entitled to three Representatives each, Massachusetts eight, Rhode Island and Providence Plantations one, and the State of Delaware one. No Person shall be a Representative who shall not, when elected, have attained to the Age of twenty five Years, and seven Years, and who, when elected, be an Inhabitant of that State in which he shall be chosen. When vacancies happen in the Representation from any State, the Executive thereof shall issue Writs of Election to fill such Vacancies.

Section 3. The Senate of the United States shall be composed of two Senators from each State, chosen by the Electors in each State for a Term of six Years, so that one third may be chosen every second Year; but the Electors in each State shall have the Qualifications requisite for Electors of the most numerous Branch of the State Legislature. No Person shall be a Senator who shall not have attained to the Age of thirty Years, and seven Years, and who, when elected, be an Inhabitant of that State in which he shall be chosen. The Vice President of the United States shall be chosen in the same Manner, and shall hold Office for a Term of four Years, and shall be eligible for a second Term, but no Person shall be elected President or Vice President who shall not, when elected, have attained to the Age of thirty five Years, and seven Years, and who, when elected, be an Inhabitant of that State in which he shall be chosen. The Senate shall have the sole Power to try all Impeachments, and no Person shall be convicted without the Concurrence of two thirds of the Members present.

Section 4. The Times, Places and Manner of holding Elections for Senators and Representatives, shall be prescribed in each State, but the Congress may at any time by Law make or alter the Rules and Regulations, and may, by Law, provide for the Election of Senators in the Cases of Vacancies, but the Congress shall not extend further the Term of any Senator or Representative than the Term for which he was elected.


Introduction

The United States Constitution is over 225 years old. It says nothing about **politics**. Not a word about political parties. Why? It didn't have to. People knew who the first president would be. It was a fact. George Washington. No political parties needed. Everyone got along. Or did they? Then Washington retired ...

Leaders were ready to fight. Would people like the Constitution? Some wanted a strong central government. Others wanted the states to lead. The groups were called factions. Political parties were born.

What is a political party? A political party is a group of people. They have the same ideas. People work together to win elections. They want to control the government. Why? So their ideas can be put into action. There are two main parties. The Democratic Party. The Republican Party. They compete for power. Each wants to win. Parties help us know what **candidates** stand for. Some say they make it easier to vote.






There have been six party systems. What's that? A label. It describes the history of American politics. One party dominated each of the six eras. Party ideas change over time. Things happen to alter people's thinking. People switch parties.


1. 1790s–1820s. Federalists vs. Democratic-Republicans. 1796 was an election year. John Adams vs. Thomas Jefferson. Adams won. He became president. Four years passed. Time for another election. People gave speeches. The **campaign** was ugly. Each side insulted the other. Jefferson won. His party ruled. Adams's party faded away. The Federalists were gone. Only one party was left.

2. 1820s–1850s. Democrats vs. Whigs. Jefferson's party split. There were many groups. The Democrats was one. Another was the Whigs. Four men ran for president



in 1824. It was a big mess. There was a tie. Congress had to decide. John Quincy Adams was named president. Andrew Jackson won in 1828. People called him a king. Party members met. Meetings were called **conventions**. Campaigns used sayings. Called **slogans**. They were catchy. But war was coming.

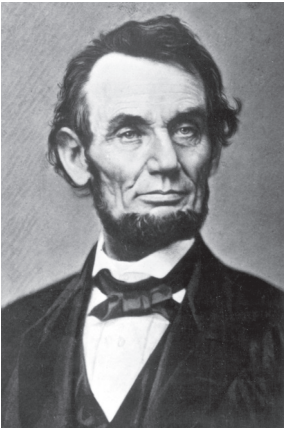
3. 1850s–1890s. Democrats vs. Republicans. Many did not like slavery. It ended the Whig Party. The Republican Party was born. Abraham Lincoln was its candidate. He became president. The country went to war. 750,000 men died. Slavery ended. The South was rebuilt. It was expensive. And it took time. People lost interest. Republicans left the South. **Jim Crow** laws were passed. They were unfair to people of color. The country grew. People emigrated, 25 million of them.



4. 1890s–1930s. Democrats vs. Republicans. Republicans were pro-business. They won elections. No Democrat won until 1912. Third parties formed. They rarely won elections. But Americans liked some of their ideas. The two main parties liked them too. They adopted them. Working conditions improved. Child labor laws were passed. Women got the right to vote.

5. 1932–1968. Democrats vs. Republicans. The stock market crashed. Workers lost their jobs. Shops closed. Banks failed. Democrats won in 1932. Franklin D. Roosevelt became president. He had plans to help. It was called the New Deal. The government grew. It spent money. Other presidents followed. The War on Poverty. The Great Society. Those were Democratic programs. They cost trillions.

6. 1968–now. Democrats vs. Republicans.
Split government. Nobody agrees. Working together is not easy. Are we in a new era? Some say yes. Others say no. It happened in 1968. The South voted Republican. The Midwest too. Republicans today don't want too much government. Democrats like social programs. Who will win on the next Election Day?



*A house divided against
itself cannot stand.*

—Abraham Lincoln

CAMPAIGN SLOGANS

William Henry Harrison, 1840	Tippecanoe and Tyler Too
Abraham Lincoln, 1864	Don't Swap Horses in the Middle of the Stream
Calvin Coolidge, 1924	Keep Cool with Coolidge
Herbert Hoover, 1928	A Chicken in Every Pot and a Car in Every Garage
Franklin Delano Roosevelt, 1932	Happy Days Are Here Again
Dwight D. Eisenhower, 1953	I Like Ike
Jimmy Carter, 1976	Not Just Peanuts
Ronald Reagan, 1984	It's Morning Again in America



The background features a stylized illustration of the U.S. Capitol building in shades of blue and grey against a yellowish-orange sky. On the left side, there is a partial illustration of a woman with dark hair, wearing a red dress and a white collar, looking towards the right. The text is overlaid on a white rectangular area.

Chapter 1

FAMILY FEUD

Theodore Roosevelt and William H. Taft were good friends. They belonged to the same political party. A political party is a group of people. They have the same ideas. Working together, they win elections.

Both Taft and Roosevelt were Republicans. Roosevelt was the U.S. president. In 1904, he picked Taft to be secretary of war. Taft was loyal to Roosevelt. He supported Roosevelt's ideas. Roosevelt left office in 1909. Voters picked Taft as president. Roosevelt was happy. He thought Taft would continue his **policies**.



Theodore Roosevelt

Roosevelt was all smiles when he left the White House. He went hunting in Africa. The former president said he would never return to politics. Roosevelt came

back from Africa. He saw Taft ignoring all he had done. Roosevelt felt let down. He wanted Taft out of office.

Roosevelt took on his one-time friend. He wanted to be the Republican choice for president in 1912. One of them would face-off with a Democrat on Election Day. His name was Woodrow Wilson. He was a member of the Democratic Party. Wilson was the governor of New Jersey.

Think About It: *Does America need political parties?*



[CRAZY CONVENTION]

Roosevelt and Taft were loyal to their party. They each asked for the party's support. Republican Party members met in Chicago. Members were called delegates. They held a convention. It was to pick the party's candidate for president. Some wanted Taft. Others wanted Roosevelt.

Party members yelled. They fought. The party was split. Taft or Roosevelt? Roosevelt or Taft? In the end, the delegates picked Taft. Roosevelt was angry. He and his followers stormed out of the meeting. They left the Republican Party. A new party



Symbol of Progressive Party

was formed. It was called the Progressive Party. The newspapers called it the Bull Moose Party. Roosevelt once said he was as strong as a bull moose.

[THE RACE WAS ON]

The race for president was on. It was a three-way contest. Taft against Roosevelt. Both against Wilson. A Republican battling a Progressive. Both wanted to win over a Democrat.

All three parties had ideas. The Republicans wanted to tax imports. Goods coming into the U.S. would be taxed. The Democrats thought states should have more power. The federal government should have less power. The Progressives wanted women to vote. They could not at the time. The party also wanted workers to earn a minimum wage.

Roosevelt's friends were mad at the two main parties. They didn't like that the parties were afraid of change.


The new party's leaders had good ideas. They thought the other parties had ignored important issues. Those parties weren't looking out for the people. "They have become the tools of corrupt interests," the Progressives said.

[FATHEADS AND RADICALS]

The election was rough. Roosevelt called Taft names. He said Taft was a "fathead with the brains of a guinea pig." Taft said Roosevelt and his friends were "radicals." The Democrats were happy. Voters usually choose



Theodore Roosevelt campaigning



candidates from their own party. They wanted Roosevelt in the race. The Democrats knew it would split the vote. Republicans would be torn. Neither Taft nor Roosevelt would win. Wilson would become president.

That's exactly what happened. Some Republicans voted for Roosevelt. Others voted for Taft. No one had enough votes to beat Wilson.



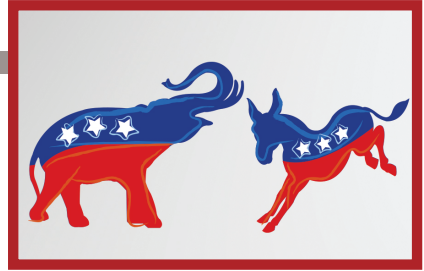
The Progressive Party didn't last very long. It disappeared by 1916. The Republicans are still around. So are the Democrats. They are the two main political parties in the U.S. Smaller parties exist too. They all fight one another on Election Day. Parties want to win elections. They want people to like their ideas. Their goal is to control the government.

FACES IN THE CROWD

Thomas Nast

Born: September 27, 1840

Died: December 7, 1902



The symbol of the Republican Party is an elephant. The symbol of the Democratic Party is a donkey. They were the work of Thomas Nast. Nast worked for *Harper's Magazine*. He drew political cartoons. They are drawings printed in newspapers and magazines. Political cartoons had power. They made tough issues easy to understand. Political cartoons still appear in print today.

It was 1870. Nast drew a cartoon. The image was of a donkey. It kicked a dead lion. Democrats were meant to be the donkey. The lion was Abraham Lincoln's former secretary of war. The man had just died. The drawing showed how Democrats were shaming Lincoln. "A live jackass kicking a dead lion." Those words were below the cartoon. The donkey was forever linked to the Democratic Party.

Nast once drew an elephant. It called out Republicans. The elephant was running toward a pit of "chaos." Nast implied the party was afraid.

American Government

POLITICAL PARTIES

Being an informed citizen is not a choice. It is a responsibility.

Political Parties are not mentioned in the Constitution. How did they come about? Why are they important? This handbook examines the two-party system in the United States and how it evolved, with relevant facts and interesting sidebars. Open-ended “Think About It” questions frame each topic.

- Does America need political parties?
- Are political parties a good thing for democracy?
- Do political parties help favored candidates win the nomination? Is the primary process fair?
- Are the two main political parties too radical?
- Is the two-party system bad for America?

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