Civics and Economics

STANDARD CE.5A
-- POLITICAL PARTIES

The functions of political parties

Political parties play a key role in government and provide opportunities for citizens to participate in the political process.

What roles do political parties play in the American political process?

Functions of political parties
- Recruiting and nominating candidates
- Educating the electorate about campaign issues
- Helping candidates win elections
- Monitoring actions of officeholders

STANDARD CE.5B
-- TWO-PARTY SYSTEM

Similarities and differences of political parties.

A two-party system characterizes the American political process.

Although third parties rarely win elections, they can play an important role in public politics.

How are the two major political parties similar, and how do they differ?

Similarities between parties
- Organize to win elections
- Influence public policies
- Reflect both liberal and conservative views
- Define themselves in a way that wins majority support by appealing to the political center

Differences between parties
- Stated in party platforms and reflected in campaigning

How do third parties differ from the two major parties?

Third parties
- Introduce new ideas and/or press for a particular issue
- Often revolve around a political personality (e.g., Theodore Roosevelt)

STANDARD CE.5C
-- ROLE OF MEDIA IN CAMPAIGNS

Campaigns for elective office, with emphasis on the role of the media.

Voters evaluate information presented in political campaigns to make reasoned choices among candidates.

The media play an important role in the political process.

How do citizens make informed choices in elections?

Strategies for evaluating campaign speeches, literature, and advertisements for accuracy
- Separating fact from opinion
- Detecting bias
- Evaluating sources
- Identifying propaganda

How does the media play a role in the political process?

Mass media roles in elections
- Identifying candidates
- Emphasizing selected issues
- Writing editorials, creating political cartoons, publishing op-ed pieces
- Broadcasting different points of view
**STANDARD CE.5d -- CAMPAIGN COSTS**

The student will demonstrate knowledge of the political process at the local, state, and national levels of government by

d) examining the role of campaign contributions and costs.

Running for political office is expensive. How has the high cost of getting elected changed campaigning for public office?

**Rising campaign costs**
-require candidates to conduct extensive fund-raising activities
- limit opportunities to run for public office
- give an advantage to wealthy individuals who run for office
- encourage the development of political action committees (PACs)
- give issue-oriented special interest groups increased influence.

**Campaign finance reform**
- Rising campaign costs have led to efforts to reform campaign finance laws.
- Limits have been placed on the amount individuals may contribute to political candidates and campaigns.

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**STANDARD CE.5e -- VOTER REGISTRATION**

The student will demonstrate knowledge of the political process at the local, state, and national levels of government by

e) describing voter registration and participation.

Voting is a basic responsibility of citizenship. Voter registration is required before a citizen may vote. The number of citizens who register and vote is related to how important election issues are to citizens.

**What are the qualifications for voter registration in Virginia?**

Only citizens who register may participate in primary and general elections.

**Qualifications to register to vote in Virginia**
- Citizen of the United States
- Resident of Virginia and precinct
- At least 18 years of age by day of general election

**How to register to vote in Virginia**
- In person at the registrar’s office, at the Division of Motor Vehicles, or at other designated sites
- By mail-in application

Voter registration is closed 22 days before elections.

**What factors influence voter registration and turnout?**

**Factors in predicting which citizens will vote**
- Education
- Age
- Income

**Reasons why citizens fail to vote**
- Lack of interest
- Failure to register

The percentage of voters who participate in presidential elections is usually greater than the percentage of voters who participate in state and local elections.

Every vote is important.
**STANDARD CE.5F**  
--- **ELECTORAL COLLEGE**

The role of the Electoral College in the election of the president and vice president.

The Electoral College process is used to select the president and vice president of the United States.

*How does the Electoral College select the president and vice president of the United States?*

**Electoral College process**
- A slate of electors for each state is chosen by popular vote.
- Most states have a winner-take-all system.
- The electors meet to vote for president and vice president.

The winner-take-all system leads to the targeting of densely populated states for campaigning, although candidates must pay attention to less populated states whose electoral votes may make the difference in tight elections.

The number of electors of each state is based on the size of the state’s Congressional representation, which is based on the state’s population.

The requirement for a majority vote to win in the Electoral College favors a two-party system.

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**STANDARD CE.5G**  
--- **PARTICIPATION IN ELECTIONS**

Participate in simulated local, state, and/or national elections.

All citizens can learn the importance of the individual’s participation in the political process either through direct involvement in campaigns or through simulations.

*How can students under 18 participate in the democratic process?*

Student participation in the democratic process can include
- participating in campaigns
- participating in classroom and online simulations.