

Civics & Economics CE.8 –

Political Parties (new 2023 standards)

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CE.8a – Origins, History, and Functions of Political Parties

a) describe the origins, history, and functions of political parties

What is a Political Party?

A **political party** is an organized group of people who share **similar ideas** about how the government should be run. They work together to **win elections, influence laws, and shape public policy**.

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

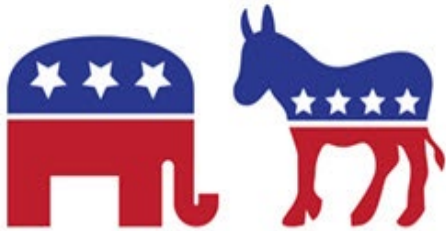
Origins in the U.S.

The first U.S. political parties began in the late **1700s**:

- **Federalists** – Favored a **strong national government** (led by Alexander **Hamilton**).
- **Democratic-Republicans** – Favored **stronger state governments** and more individual rights (led by Thomas **Jefferson**).



Republican vs. Democrat



Over time, these early parties changed or disappeared, leading to today's two major parties:

- **Democratic Party** (established in the 1820s)
- **Republican Party** (founded in the 1850s)

Third Parties – Smaller parties like the Green Party, Libertarian Party, and Constitution Party often focus on **specific issues**.

The American political process is driven by **two major political parties** with other **smaller parties** also participating.

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Functions of Political Parties

- Recruit and nominate **candidates** for public office.
- **Educate voters** about campaign issues.
- **Help candidates win** elections through fundraising and organizing.
- Monitor the actions of officeholders to **ensure accountability**.

CE.8b – Campaigns for Elective Office

b) analyze campaigns for elective office, with emphasis on the roles of candidates, volunteers, the media, voters, and poll watchers



Roles in a Campaign

- **Candidates** – The people running for office, presenting their **ideas** and **goals** to the public.
- **Volunteers** – Help distribute flyers, make phone calls, knock on doors, and get voters to the polls.
- **The Media** – TV, newspapers, online news, and social media **share information** about candidates and issues.
 - **Traditional media** covers debates and campaign events.
 - **Social media** allows candidates to directly connect with voters.
- **Voters** – Evaluate the information, **compare** candidates, and make informed choices.
- **Poll Watchers** – **Authorized observers** who ensure elections are fair and follow proper procedures.

CE.8c – Campaign Contributions and the Cost of Campaigns

c) explain the role of campaign contributions and the cost of campaigns

Why Campaigns Are Expensive

- **Advertising** (TV, radio, online, mailers)
- **Travel** for candidates and staff
- Organizing **rallies** and events
- Paying for campaign **staff** and **technology**

Where the Money Comes From

- **Individual donations** – Citizens giving to candidates they support.
- **Political Action Committees (PACs)** – Groups that **raise and spend money** to elect or defeat candidates, usually based on specific interests or values.
- **Fundraising events** – Dinners, rallies, and online drives.



Impact of Rising Costs

- Candidates need to spend more time **raising money**.
- **Wealthier candidates** may have an advantage.
- Some worry that **large donors** have too much influence.

CE.8d – Voter Registration History and Requirements

d) examine the history of and requirements for voter registration

Voting is a **basic responsibility** of citizenship.

Voter registration is **required** before a citizen may vote and there are specific **qualifications** to register to vote in Virginia.

History of Voter Registration

- Initially, many Americans were **excluded from voting** (e.g., women, people of color, those without property).
- Over time, amendments and laws expanded **voting rights**:
 - **15th Amendment** – Voting rights for **African American men**.
 - **19th Amendment** – Voting rights for **women**.
 - **26th Amendment** – Voting age lowered to **18**.
 - **Voting Rights Act of 1965** – Ended **discriminatory practices** like literacy tests.

Requirements to Register to Vote in Virginia

- U.S. citizen.
- Resident of Virginia and of your voting precinct.
- At least 18 years old by the day of the general election.

Ways to Register

- Online (via Virginia Department of Elections)
- At the DMV
- By mail
- In person at your local registrar's office

➔ KEY AMENDMENTS & LAWS – QUICK GUIDE

15th Voting rights for African American men.

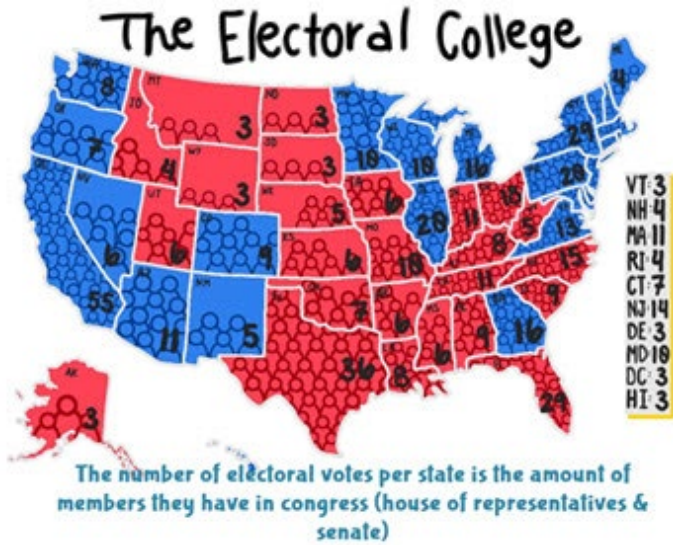
19th Voting rights for women

26th Voting age lowered to 18

Voting Rights Act of 1965 Ended discriminatory practices like literacy tests.

CE.8e – The Electoral College

e) describe the role of the Electoral College in the election of the president and vice president



The **Electoral College** is the process used to elect the **president** and **vice president**.

How It Works

Each state gets a number of **electors** equal to:

- **Number of U.S. Senators** (always 2) +
- **Number of Representatives** in the House (based on population)
- **Example:** Virginia has 2 senators + 11 representatives = 13 electoral votes. •
- The **number of electors** of each state is based on each **state's population**
- There are **538 electoral votes** total in the U.S.
- A candidate must win **270 electoral votes** to become president.

Key Facts

- Most states use a “**winner-take-all**” system: whoever gets the most popular votes in a state gets all of that state's electoral votes.
- It's possible to win the presidency **without winning the national popular vote** (this has happened in several elections, such as 2000 and 2016).