

American Democracy
Study Guide – Parties, Voting, Interest Groups & Media
Chapters 5 - 9

Vocabulary

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| 1. political party | 22. public opinion | 41. political efficacy |
| 2. major party | 23. mass media | 42. split ticket |
| 3. third (minor) party | 24. opinion leader | 43. nomination |
| 4. partisanship | 25. mandate | 44. primary election |
| 5. party in power | 26. interest group | 45. open primary |
| 6. single-member district | 27. straw vote | 46. closed primary |
| 7. bipartisan | 28. public agenda | 47. caucus |
| 8. pluralistic society | 29. sound bite | 48. general election |
| 9. consensus | 30. gatekeeper | 49. plurality |
| 10. coalition | 31. watchdog | 50. coattail effect |
| 11. incumbent | 32. scorekeeper | 51. polling place |
| 12. faction | 33. public policy | 52. ballot |
| 13. ideological parties | 34. public affairs | 53. Australian ballot |
| 14. single-issue parties | 35. trade association | 54. political action
committee (PAC) |
| 15. splinter party | 36. labor union | 55. 527 Organization |
| 16. suffrage | 37. public-interest
group | 56. soft money |
| 17. franchise | 38. lobby | 57. hard money |
| 18. electorate | 39. grass roots | |
| 19. gerrymandering | 40. suffrage | |
| 20. political socialization | | |
| 21. straight ticket voting | | |

Discussion questions

1. Discuss political socialization. What is it? What are some (minimum 3) of the most influencing factors of our political socialization? How do they operate?
2. Suppose major officeholders from one particular party are not performing well, and the party is not monitoring these officeholders. In what ways could this situation affect the party as a whole?
3. The text states, "*America has a two-party system because America has a two-party system.*" Give evidence to explain and support the meaning of this statement.
4. What makes public opinion so difficult to ascertain?
5. How can an opinion held by the public NOT be a public opinion?
6. The text states that election results are seldom an accurate measure of public opinion. Explain why you agree or disagree with this statement.
7. How could an interest group's policies not be in the best interests of other Americans?
8. How does our government's system of checks and balances affect the work of interest groups?
9. How did the development of mass media relate to the expanded use of propaganda?
10. What does the use of propaganda show about propagandists' attitudes and beliefs about people?

11. In what ways does the existence of minor parties also work to strengthen the United States' two-party system?
12. Does the fact that the President gets a daily report of information from top news sources suggest undue influence of the media on government? Support your view.
13. What are the different types of primaries that a state might use? What are the advantages and disadvantages of each.
14. Many people would probably agree that as long as a country holds general elections, the country is a democracy. Is that true or false? Support your answer.
15. What would be the effect on the electoral process if each precinct did not have its own polling place?
16. Identify the major differences between presidential and congressional campaigns.
17. What factors have combined to make today's political campaigns as personal and individual as they have become?
18. Identify some of the ways that the local orientation of legislators has an impact on how policy is made. Why would anyone argue that this type of orientation is wrong?
19. Summarize what we know about money and winning in presidential and congressional campaigns.