

New Bedford Public Schools  
Division of Adult & Continuing Education

## **New Bedford High School Evening Extension**

2019 – 2020 School Year  
Trimester III

Learning Packet #4  
for  
**U.S. History I**

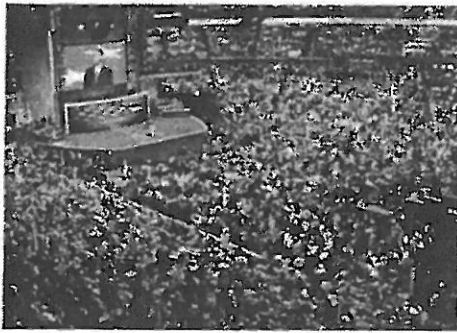
Teacher: *Ryan J. Mitchell, M.S.Ed*  
*Special Education Department*  
New Bedford High School  
230 Hathaway Boulevard  
New Bedford, MA 02740  
[rmitchell@newbedfordschools.org](mailto:rmitchell@newbedfordschools.org)

Email Mr. Mitchell with questions/concerns regarding  
this packet at the email address listed above.

Due date: May 11, 2020

# The Electoral Process

Name: \_\_\_\_\_



Barack Obama speaks at the Democratic National Convention in 2012.

## It's Election Time!

Every four years, our country holds a presidential election. The candidates debate, hit the road talking to voters, and put advertisements on television, radio, and the internet. All this hard work actually starts months or even years before Election Day in November. So what does it take to go from a hopeful candidate to a victorious president?

The first public step a candidate has to take is to **declare** to the nation that he or she wants to be the president. Then candidates must get support for their campaign, raise money, and get the attention of the leaders of his or her political party.

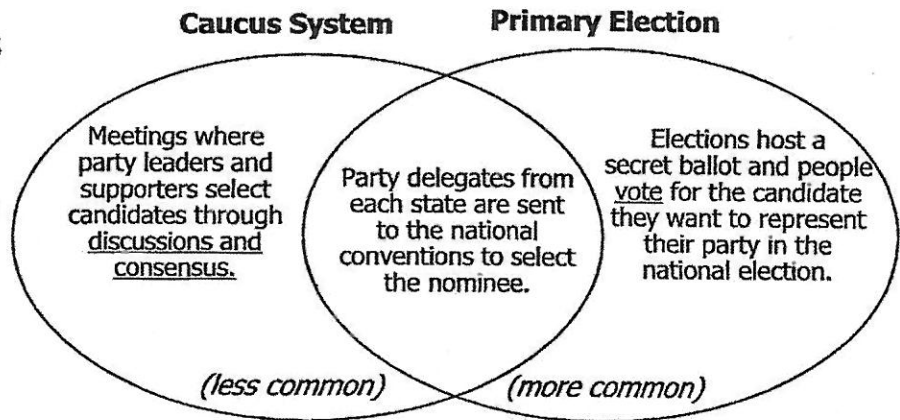
## Narrowing the Field

Candidates for the larger political parties are chosen at party meetings called **conventions**. The parties hold conventions at the local, state and national levels. There are two main ways the states send people to the national convention: the caucus and the primary. Both methods result in a set of **delegates** who will attend the national conventions. The delegates pledge that when they attend the convention, they will vote for the candidate the state political party supports.

**Q:** What if the president runs for re-election?

**A:** The nomination process still happens, but it is shorter because the incumbent rarely has anyone to run against!

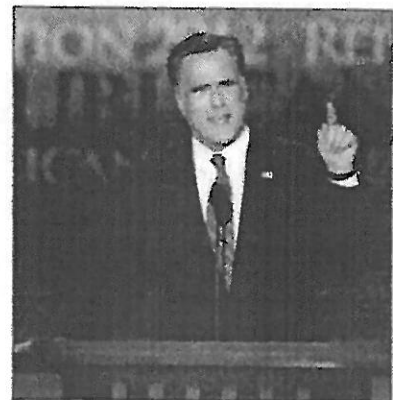
Iowa hosts the first caucus of the season and New Hampshire holds the first primary election, both in early February!



## And the Nominee is...

Each party holds its national conventions in huge arenas with balloons, confetti, funny looking hats, and lots of media coverage. Delegates chosen from each state discuss and debate the candidates, listen to speeches, and help create the party platform. Near the end of the multi-day convention, the delegates cast their votes for the party's **nominee** who will run in the national election.

The presidential and vice presidential nominees each make an **acceptance speech** that is meant to bring the party together to support the nominees and forget about the months of debate and arguments that led up to their nomination. This is the first major step in getting the national campaign for president up and running.

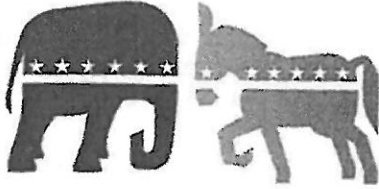


Mitt Romney at the 2012 Republican National Convention

# The Electoral Process

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

## On the Campaign Trail



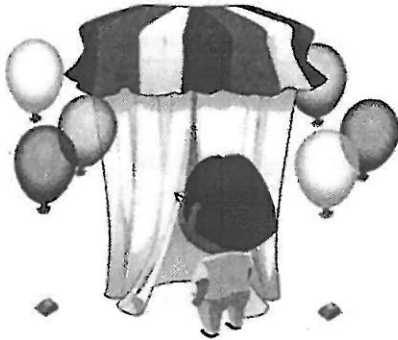
Millions of dollars are spent in the months leading up to the national conventions, but that is just the beginning! Once the field is narrowed to the two main party candidates, fundraising becomes even more important. There are only a few months before the general election, and each candidate needs to get his or her message out to the American public. The parties in each state help the candidates with paying the bills and organizing support.

## Get the Word Out!

A political **campaign** is the process of gathering public support for a candidate. The goal of a campaign is to deliver as much information about the candidate and the party's platform to as many people as possible. Candidates campaign in a variety of ways.

<b>Direct Mail :</b> Send information packets directly to voters	<b>Personal Appearances:</b> Radio & TV interviews, debates and speeches
<b>Printed Material:</b> Posters, bumper stickers, leaflets, buttons, t-shirts	<b>The Internet:</b> Emails, websites, videos, blogs, social networking

## Election Day!



All of these efforts lead up to Election Day in November. People across the nation go to the polls and select which candidate they want for the next president. As polls close from state to state, the news media reports who is getting the most votes. The next morning, the media announces a winner of the **popular vote**, which is a tally of all the votes cast. But that is just one step in the process of electing the president...

## The Electoral College

The U.S. Constitution requires an extra step in the process of electing the president. This step is called the **Electoral College**. Each state has a group of people called **electors** who cast the actual votes for president. When

you vote for a presidential candidate, you're really voting to decide which candidate the electors in your state will vote for.

In December after the election, the electors meet in their state capitols and cast their ballots. Even though you cast one vote for a president/vice-president team, electors cast two votes—one for each office. After the electors vote, president of the Senate collects the votes and counts them. There are 538 electors, and in order to win, the presidential and vice-presidential candidates must have an **absolute majority** of votes. That means more than half the votes—at least 270. Then, on January 20, the President-elect and Vice President-elect take the oath of office and are inaugurated.

But what if there's a tie? Or what if no candidate gets 270 votes? In that case, the House of Representatives votes to decide which candidate will become president. If they haven't done that by the time Inauguration Day rolls around, then the vice president-elect acts as president. The Senate decides who that will be by voting to choose one of the vice-presidential candidates. And if that's a tie, too? Then the current Speaker of the House becomes president. That's never happened, but the elections of 1800 and 1824 both had to be resolved by Congress.

You can find out how many electors your state has if you know how many representatives you have in Congress.

EXAMPLE: Illinois has two senators (like all states) and 18 members of the House of Representatives.

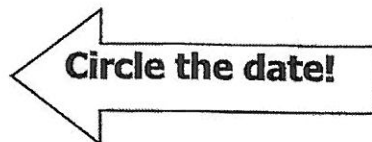
2 Senators  
 + 18 Representatives  
 20 Electors

# The Electoral Process

## When is Election Day?

November 2020						
SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
29	30					

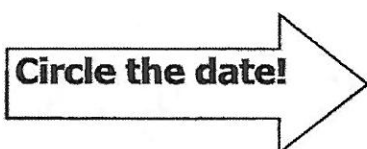
An act of Congress sets the day for presidential and congressional elections as the Tuesday after the first Monday in November.



When is Election Day, 2020?

\_\_\_\_\_

Electors meet at their state capitols to cast their ballots on the first Monday after the second Wednesday in December.



When do the electors meet in 2020?

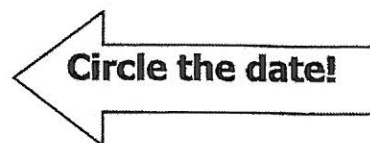
\_\_\_\_\_

December 2020						
SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
		1	2	3	4	5
6	7	8	9	10	11	12
13	14	15	16	17	18	19
20	21	22	23	24	25	26
27	28	29	30	31		

January 2021						
SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
					1	2
3	4	5	6	7	8	9
10	11	12	23	24	15	16
17	18	19	20	21		
24/31	25	26	27	28		

The new president and vice president are sworn into office on January 20th.

The President of the Senate (current Vice President) counts the electoral votes on January 6, unless it falls on a Sunday.



When are the electoral votes counted in 2021?

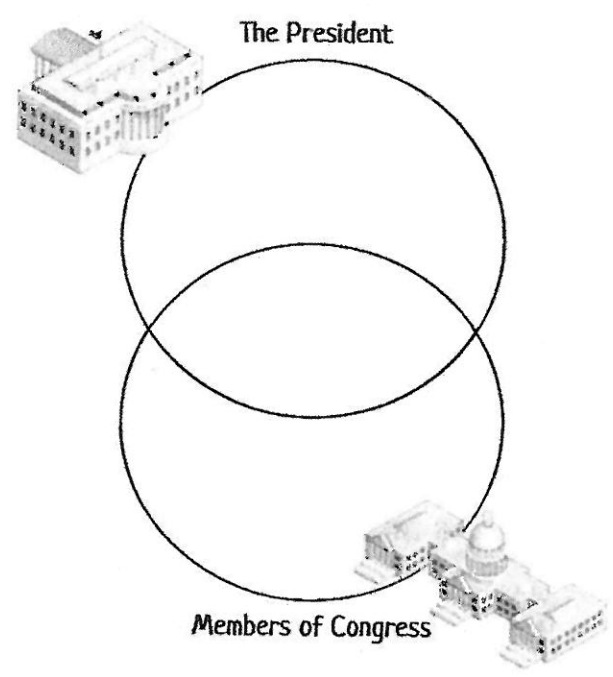
\_\_\_\_\_

# The Electoral Process

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

**A. What's different when there are elections for U.S. Congress?** Candidates for the Senate and House of Representatives have a smaller audience for the campaigns, since they are elected by districts within a specific state. Congress also goes back to work earlier than the President. How do the processes compare? Using this information and what you learned in the lesson, complete the Venn diagram with the letters from the list.

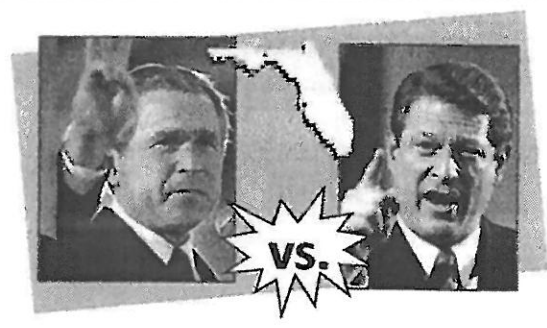
- A. Candidates declare that they want to run for office
- B. Political parties select their nominee for the national election in primaries and caucuses
- C. Candidates run campaigns to inform the public about their agendas and positions on the issues
- D. The winner is directly elected through popular vote.
- E. Officially selected through the Electoral College
- F. Takes office on January 3.



**B. Recount!** Occasionally, election results end up very close and a candidate may call for a recount of all the votes to make sure the winner actually is the winner. This happened in 2000 when Al Gore and George W. Bush ran for the presidency. The election came down to one state — Florida — where the votes were too close to call.

Bush was declared the winner in Florida, but there were lots of problems with the ballots. Gore pushed the courts to allow a recount in Florida. Bush tried to prevent it. The Florida Supreme Court ruled there should be a recount in the districts where the ballots were in question. Bush appealed that ruling to the U.S. Supreme Court.

Which controversial 5 - 4 decision did the U.S. Supreme Court make?



- Decision A:** Get those ballots out and count again! Bush ends up behind in the recount of ballots. Gore wins!
- Decision B:** No recounts! The Florida Supreme Court can't order a recount in some districts of the state but not others. There isn't enough time anyway! Bush wins!
- Decision C:** Recount ALL the votes in Florida, not just in the messed up districts, fast! Bush takes more of a lead in the recount and Gore concedes (gives up). Bush wins!

# The Electoral Process

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

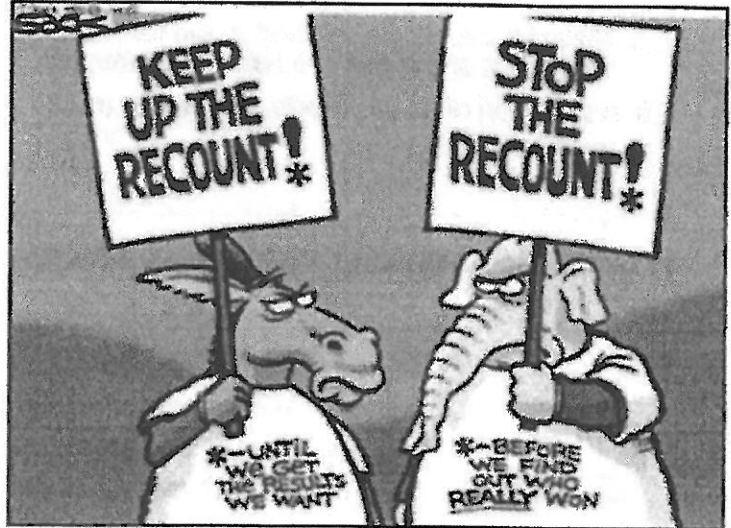
**C. In the Funny Pages** The battle over the results of the 2000 Presidential election between Al Gore (D) and George W. Bush (R) lasted well over a month after Election Day. The confusion over the ballots, recounts, and election rules gave cartoonists a lot of material! Look closely at the cartoon below and answer the questions that follow.

(Remember, the donkey is the symbol for the Democratic Party and the elephant represents the Republican Party.)



1. What is the Democratic message? (Look at the sign and t-shirt.)

2. What is the Republican message? (Look at the sign and t-shirt.)



Cartoon by Steve Sack, The Minneapolis Star-Tribune

3. What is the purpose of this cartoon?

4. What makes you think that's the purpose?

- Support the Republican Party's call to end the recount.
- Support the Democratic Party's call for a recount.
- Point out that there is a problem with how both parties are dealing with the election.

5. Political cartoons often have captions at the bottom that title, summarize, or explain the cartoon. Create *two* different captions for this cartoon, using what you know about the 2000 election.

Caption 1

Caption 2

# The Electoral Process

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

**D. Vocabulary.** Match the definitions to the words they describe.

- |   |                      |
|---|----------------------|
| __1. When a candidate states that he or she is planning to run for office                                     | A) delegate          |
| __2. Party meetings where candidates are selected and the platform is created                                 | B) nominee           |
| __3. Someone who represents the party views of a state at a national convention                               | C) campaign          |
| __4. The person who is chosen to run as a party's candidate in the national election                          | D) declare           |
| __5. Given by the people selected to run for President and Vice President at the end of a national convention | E) convention        |
| __6. A collection of all the efforts a candidate makes to win an election                                     | F) acceptance speech |

**E. Something's Missing!** Fill in the paragraph with the correct terms in the

Electoral College    popular vote    absolute majority    electors



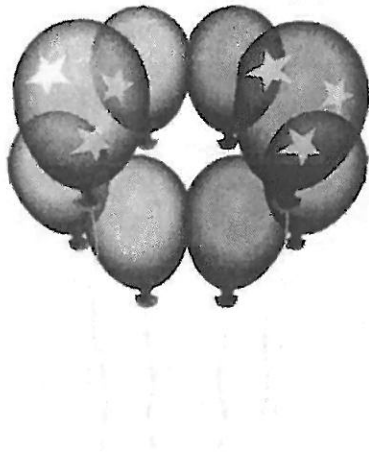
Every four years on Election Day, the American public elects the president of the United States. The first set of election results tallies the \_\_\_\_\_, a count of every vote cast. These results determine whom each state's \_\_\_\_\_ will support when they meet and participate in the \_\_\_\_\_. In order to win, a candidate must have 270 out of a total of 538 electoral votes. This number is half of 538 (269) plus one, which is considered a(n) \_\_\_\_\_.

**F. Ooops!** A candidate made a to-do list for his run for the presidency, but he dropped it and everything got mixed up. Help him out by numbering the items so the list can be put in the right order.

- 1. Attend the national convention for my party! Hopefully, I will be nominated.
- 2. Yay! I'm the nominee! As part of my national campaign, I'll make speeches, show up on tv, send out mailings, and attend rallies.
- 3. Wait for the results of the Electoral College and prepare my acceptance speech for inauguration!
- 4. I want to be the President, and I hope my party will support me!
- 5. Hang out with family and friends to await the results of the popular vote on Election Day.
- 6. Campaign for the primary and caucus season by making speeches and talking to voters.

**Parties, Primaries, Caucuses & Conventions** Name: \_\_\_\_\_

It's almost election time and candidates are throwing their hats in the ring left and right, beginning campaigns to be the next president of the United States. It's a tough job to step into, and many feel they've got what it takes to do it the best. So how do we go from a pool of potentials to two main candidates—a nominee for each major party—whose names make it to the final ballot? The answer is in everything that happens *before* the actual election. Enter the *primary*, the *caucus*, and the *convention*.



**It's Party Time**

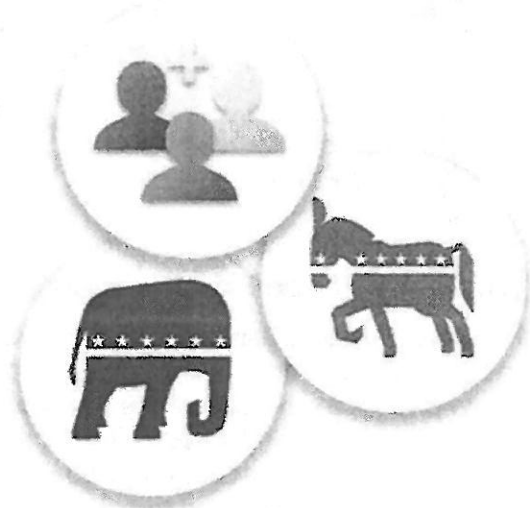
The United States has a **party system** where the two major political parties—**Democratic** and **Republican**—campaign for and hold the majority of elected offices across the country. A **political party** is an organized group of people who share similar political views about how government should run and how societal problems should be solved. They work to influence the government in support of those views.

People join political parties as a way to move the government towards following their political views. Why? Because more people means more strength. Political parties gain power when their candidates are elected to public office. The more officials they have voting in favor of and working towards similar outcomes, the more likely the country is to be shaped according to their views.

**The More the Merrier**

The Democratic and Republican parties aren't the only parties in the United States. There are many **minor parties** (or **third parties**), such as the Libertarian Party, Green Party, Reform Party, and Constitution Party, that sponsor presidential candidates, too.

Even though third parties haven't produced a presidential election win, they have influenced the outcome of presidential elections on many occasions. For example, when Teddy Roosevelt created the Progressive Party in 1912, he took enough votes away from Republican candidate William Howard Taft that the Democratic candidate Woodrow Wilson won the election. (Roosevelt came in second place!)



Source: Pixabay  
One of the major third parties in the U.S. is the Libertarian Party, whose mascot is a porcupine.

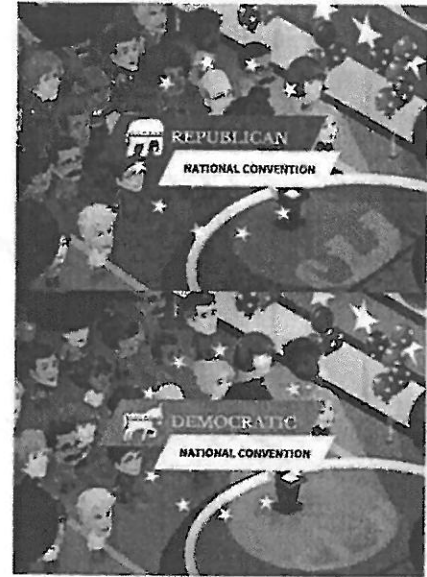
Third parties often bring attention to issues that the major parties ignore. In the past, these were issues like the abolition of slavery, child labor, and the 40-hour workweek. Today, it's issues like climate change and limitations on the government's influence on people's lives. But third parties are kept off the "main stage" due to rules that favor the Democratic and Republican parties only. These rules include the "winner-take-all" nature of the Electoral College and the complicated state requirements to get on the presidential ballot. To top it all off, many people are told they are "throwing away" their vote if they choose a third party candidate who doesn't have a chance to win.



**Parties, Primaries, Caucuses & Conventions** Name: \_\_\_\_\_

**And the Nominee Is...**

Running for president takes a lot of work before the election even begins. That's because to be a major contender, you have to win your party's nomination first. A **nomination** is each party's formal choice of who their official presidential candidate will be. Each party holds a convention in the summer before the election to determine their nominee and that's how two names get on the ballot. The national **convention** is a meeting of delegates of a political party to choose candidates for elected office.



But before Republicans and Democrats go head to head in the big or **general election**, Republicans and Democrats duke it out first. Only one candidate can be their party's nominee and take the official spot on the ballot. And guess what? The Constitution doesn't have any rules for how this part of the election process or the nominations have to run. States and political parties made it up along the way. Here's how it's done.

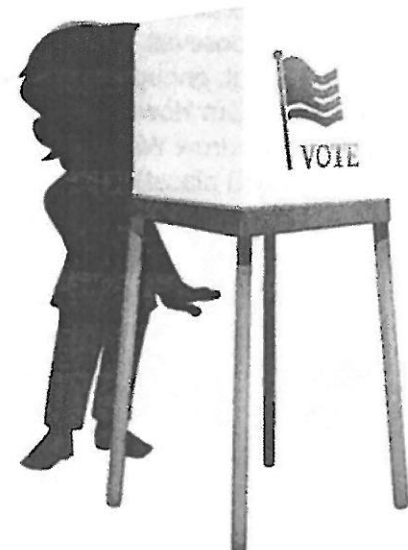
**Primarily Speaking**

Before the presidential election and before the convention, each state lets the people vote on the pool of potential candidates. Think of this as a way of "narrowing the field." States hold either a **primary election** (generally just referred to as a **primary**) or a **caucus** to select the candidate that the state wishes to nominate for each party in the national election. Parties hold their primary or caucus separately, starting in February of an election year through the summer. And candidates campaign way before that to gain the name recognition and support they need to win. The results determine three things: 1) the state's preference by party for a nominee; 2) how many delegates the state will send to the convention; 3) and who those delegates will vote for.



**Why Do We Have Primaries Anyway?**

Primaries were originally developed to take power away from what was seen as a corrupt system where the political parties used a rigged process to choose political candidates. Candidates were hand-picked by party "bosses," often as a result of bribes and an agreement to do whatever was asked of them once elected. Sound democratic? No. Bribery and threats to obtain votes were also common—the "bosses" used jobs, housing, food, heat, and police protection to convince voters to vote for their candidate. Voting fraud, such as voting more than once or in multiple places, was common, too. Progressive Era reforms in the 1890s through the 1920s, such as the use of primary elections and **secret ballots** (a way to vote where no one but the voter knows their selections) gave the voters more power to choose who they wanted to run the government. After all, shouldn't the people themselves be the ones responsible for narrowing the field of nominees?



**Parties, Primaries, Caucuses & Conventions** Name: \_\_\_\_\_



**Primaries vs. Caucuses**

Primary elections are administered by state governments, making them very affordable for the political parties, but quite expensive overall. Voters go to the polls and cast their ballots similarly to how they would in any other election.

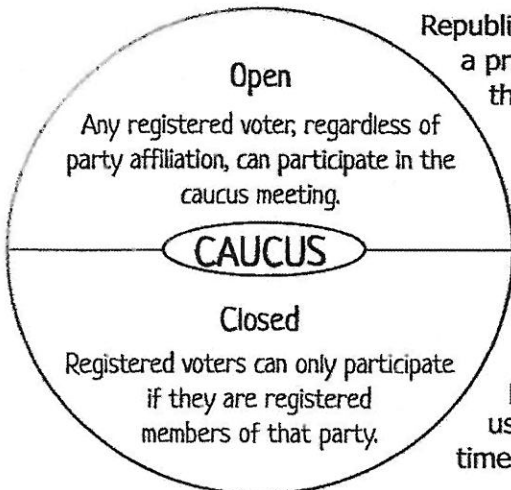
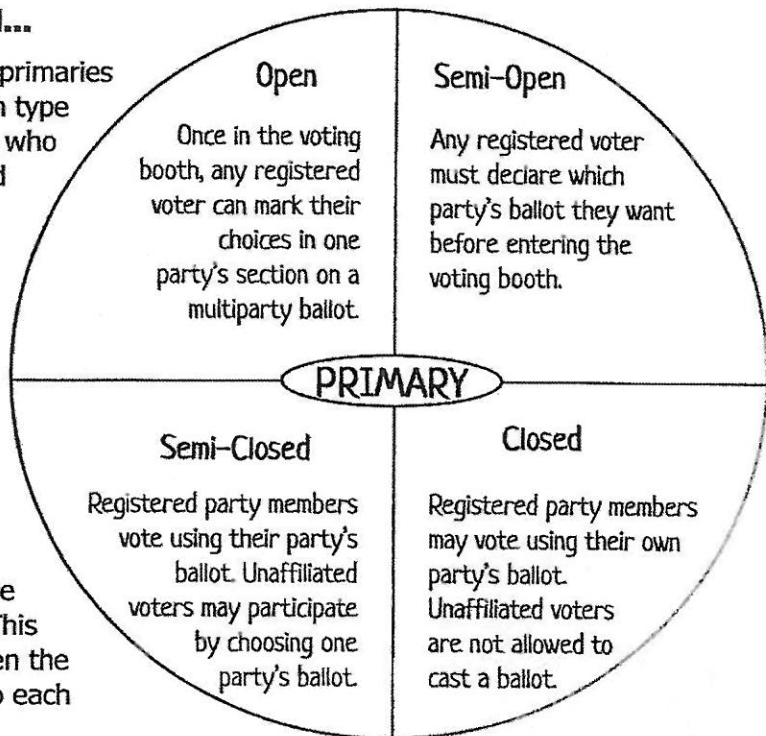
Caucuses, on the other hand, are conducted by the state party organizations. They are part of the primary season, but they're not run like your typical election. A caucus is a meeting where party leaders and supporters select candidates through discussions and consensus. They are relatively inexpensive for parties to run because they are usually held in a public location such as a school, library, or church, and because there's little need for specialized equipment like ballots, voting booths, and electronic counting machines.

**Just to Make it More Complicated...**

There are a number of different types of primaries and two different types of caucuses. Each type differs based upon whether or not voters who are unaffiliated with the party are allowed to participate.

**Can We Caucus Over Here?**

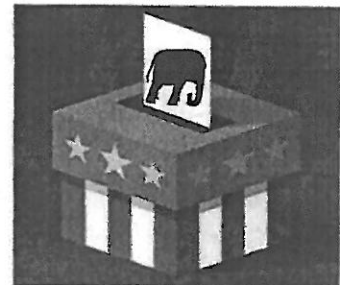
Sure thing, but each party does it differently. Caucus-goers for the Democratic party break into groups that support one specific candidate (or choose to be undecided) and a count is taken. Any candidate's group that doesn't have at least 15% of the total number of caucus-goers disbands, and those supporters (and the undecideds) are courted by the other candidates to join. This keeps up until the groups are settled. Then the delegates are distributed proportionally to each candidate who is left standing.



Republican caucus-goers vote by secret ballot. It may sound a lot like a primary, but candidates or their representatives usually address the voters first before they are allowed to vote.

Caucuses are loud, involve a great deal of listening and sometimes deal-making, and generally take a considerable amount of time to complete.

They're held at specific times, and if a voter can't make it, then he or she is out of luck. Very few states vote by caucus and prefer primaries instead since there is usually a longer window of voting time and more people can participate.



**Parties, Primaries, Caucuses & Conventions** Name: \_\_\_\_\_

**All About the Delegates**

*Spoiler Alert:* A person's vote in a primary or caucus doesn't actually go to a candidate. Their vote goes towards a delegate. **Delegates** are individuals chosen to represent their state and vote for its nominee at the national convention. You can become a delegate by working or volunteering for your party.

Some states have different rules allowing their delegates to be split among the top vote-getters in the primary or caucus, and others have a "winner-take-all" system. Regardless, the delegates are required to cast their votes (in the first round of voting, at least) according to the will of the people.

A delegate's job may be exciting for them, but in the grand scheme of the convention their role is pretty run of the mill. But there are exceptions—such as when a clear majority on the party's nominee can't be reached. If no candidate achieves a majority of delegates on the first vote, the rules (sort of) go out of the window and the delegates are free to vote for any of the remaining candidates, which could mean that the voters' preferences are disregarded.

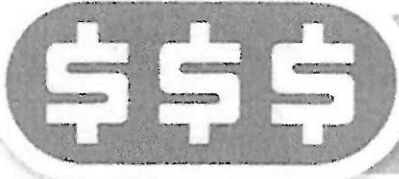
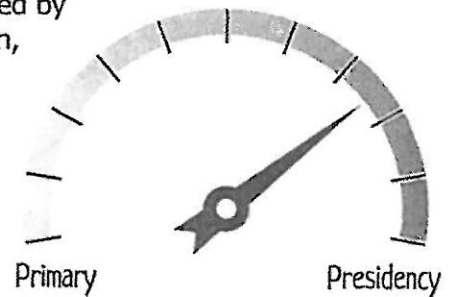
**Superdelegates**, on the other hand, can pledge their votes for whomever they choose. They are usually state-level elected officials and only the Democratic party has them.

**Let's End Where We Started: The Convention**



So if the nominee is pretty much chosen *before* the convention, what's the point of having a huge convention? Well, a big part of it is to energize the party members before the election. It's like a pep rally and a pat on the back all at the same time. At the convention, the presidential candidate's vice presidential running mate is announced, the party reinforces the values they believe in through their platform, and rising stars in the party (usually future presidential hopefuls) get to test their voices in front of a crowd. There is also an advantage for the nominee immediately following the convention. They get what is known as the "convention bounce," where their polling numbers go way up. It is something the candidate can hopefully build on to carry them and their party to victory in November.

People aren't generally surprised by what happens at the convention, and that's a good thing. It means that parties honor the voices of their members and their selections for who the party nominee should be. It's a reminder of how our electoral process reflects the will of the people from primary all the way to presidency!



The convention offers a tourism boost to whatever city hosts it. Thousands of people flock to the hotels, restaurants, and shops, spending millions of dollars in a matter of a few days.

**Parties, Primaries, Caucuses & Conventions** Name: \_\_\_\_\_

## Spotlight On: Iowa and New Hampshire



You may have heard that when it comes to the primary season, Iowa and New Hampshire matter A LOT! But why do two states—that really don't reflect the racial makeup of the rest of the country and are relatively small and rural—get all the attention? The easy answer is tradition. The tougher answer is politics.



New Hampshire state law requires that their presidential primary happen at least one week before any other state. The tradition of going first developed gradually in the 1920s, and political parties helped to enforce the New Hampshire law by punishing states that tried to schedule their primaries earlier.

Iowa, on the other hand, goes first because caucuses are complicated. There are a number of steps to determine how the delegates are distributed, so it takes a long time. Iowa needs the extra time to complete their lengthy process. The people of Iowa take their first position really seriously and ask candidates to answer tough questions which help voters across the country learn about the candidates as well.



You might be thinking, so what? Who cares which states hold their primaries and caucuses first? Well, there's one very important reason to care. Candidates who don't do well in the earliest primaries and caucuses tend to drop out of the race, often before the majority of states get to hold their elections. It's like being last in the cafeteria line and missing out on pizza for lunch. By the time you get to select your meal, your choices are sloppy joe and mystery meat when what you really wanted to choose was pizza. Candidates aren't lunch choices, but you get the point. Later states may not get to show their support for the candidate of their choice. Instead those voters have to choose from who's left in the race.

So what do you think? Should Iowa and New Hampshire always go first? Some people say yes. And there are others who have proposed alternative plans. Check out a few here and list your thoughts.

<b>If It Ain't Broke</b>	<b>Share the Privilege</b>	<b>Make it National</b>	<b>It's a Regional Thing</b>
Iowa and New Hampshire continue to go first.	A new state goes first every election cycle.	Hold a national primary. Every state votes on the same day.	Divide the U.S. into regions. Assign each region a date and rotate which goes first.
<i>Notes:</i>	<i>Notes:</i>	<i>Notes:</i>	<i>Notes:</i>

**Parties, Primaries, Caucuses & Conventions** Name: \_\_\_\_\_

**A. State Snapshot.** Visit your state board of elections website. Then answer the questions below about the primary or caucus process in your state.

1. My state:

\_\_\_\_\_

2. My state holds a  primary /  caucus on:

a. Democratic Party date:

\_\_\_\_\_

3. The primary or caucus in my state is:

- Open
- Closed
- Semi-open
- Semi-closed

b. Republican Party date:

\_\_\_\_\_

4. Visit [www.270towin.com](http://www.270towin.com) to view the presidential election calendar.

How many states hold their primary or caucus before yours? \_\_\_\_\_

**B. Give It Some Thought.** Use what you learned about the primary election process to think through the questions below. There are no right or wrong answers, so use what you've learned and what you know to tell us what you think!

1. What are the benefits of holding primary elections and caucuses before the general election?



2. What disadvantages do primaries and caucuses offer to voters?

3. Voter turnout for primary elections is lower than turnout in the general election. What could be done to increase primary turnout?

**Parties, Primaries, Caucuses & Conventions** Name: \_\_\_\_\_

**C. Can I Vote?** Use the chart to determine whether or not these people will be able to vote in their state's primary or caucus. Some people may also need help figuring out what to do.

State	Dem. Party	Rep. Party
Alaska	P semi-open	C closed
California	P semi-open	P closed
Florida	P closed	P closed
Hawaii	P open	C closed
Illinois	P open	P open
Iowa	C closed	C closed
Maryland	P closed	P closed

State	Dem. Party	Rep. Party
Massachusetts	P semi-closed	P semi-closed
Michigan	P open	P open
Minnesota	P open	P open
New Jersey	P closed	P closed
New York	P closed	P closed
Texas	P open	P open
Washington	P open	P closed



My name is Malachy Bright, and I'm an independent living in Michigan. Can I vote in the presidential primary?

\_\_\_\_\_



I'm Vicki Wong, and I live in Washington state. I'm a Democrat, but I want to vote for a Republican candidate this time. Can I do that?

\_\_\_\_\_

Hi! I'm Reid Cummings, and I'm a Democrat in Iowa. I want to get involved in the first caucus in the nation. Is there anything else I need to do other than show up?



Hola! Me llamo Jay-Jay Guerrero. Born and raised in New York City. Can I vote in the primary? I'm not registered with either party.



Howdy y'all! I'm Norma Gonzales and I'm a Republican in Texas. I am interested in the Democratic candidates, though. Can I vote in the Democratic primary?

\_\_\_\_\_



What's up, I'm Kain Lewis, and I live in Chicago. I'm a Democrat; can I vote in the primary?

\_\_\_\_\_

Hey, I'm Tyreese McDougall, and I live in Massachusetts. I don't belong to either party, but I want to vote in the Republican primary. What do I need to do to vote?



Hi, I'm Sanjeev Acharya, and I live in Minneapolis. I want to participate in the primary, and I heard it's open. I'm not registered to vote. Can I register and vote on the same day?



My name is Anil Mohamed, and I'm from California. I don't belong to any party, and I want to vote in the Republican primary. Can I do that?

\_\_\_\_\_

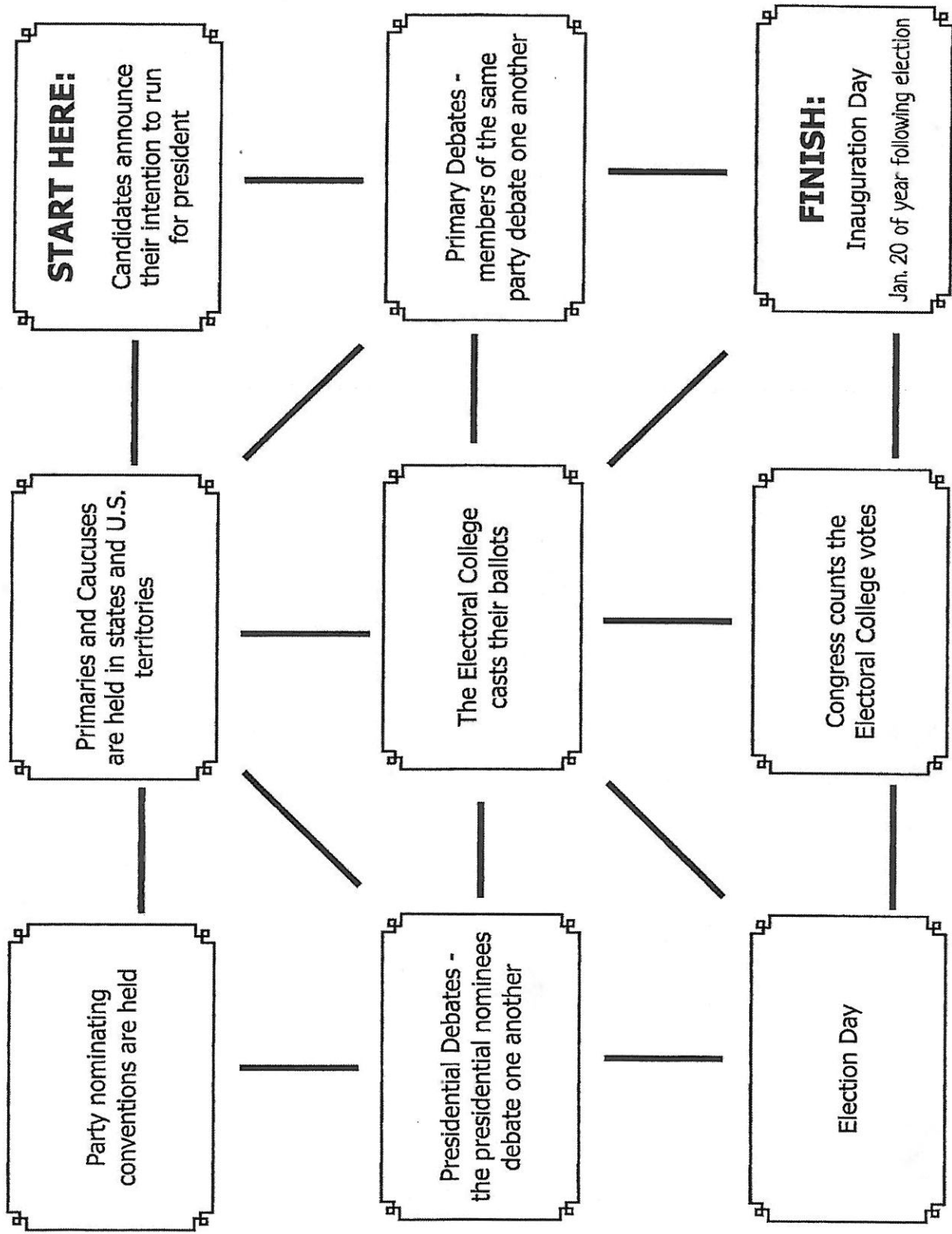


I'm Lacey Mendoza, and I'm from Miami. What do I have to do to participate in the primary?

\_\_\_\_\_

**Parties, Primaries, Caucuses & Conventions** Name: \_\_\_\_\_

**D. Election Craze Maze.** What are the major events during election season? Complete the maze by tracking the events in order. (Bonus: When do these major events occur? On the lines between each event, write the date or dates on which the events occur)



**Parties, Primaries, Caucuses & Conventions** Name: \_\_\_\_\_

**E. Delegate Simple Math.** Use the information below to determine how many delegates would be awarded in each state's elections.


**Democratic Party:** delegates are assigned in a proportional manner. In order to get a share of the delegates, the candidate must receive at least 15% of the votes cast in the caucus or primary. In a caucus, attendees can move to another candidate if their original choice doesn't receive at least 15%. With a Democratic primary, the votes for candidates receiving less than 15% are dropped and the totals are recalculated.

**Republican Party:** the states are allowed to choose how they will select delegates (following some nationwide Republican party rules), and it is done in one of three ways. They may use a proportional system like the Democrats, some states choose to allocate all delegates to the highest vote-getter (winner-take-all), and then some states use a combination of proportional and winner-take-all.

**Iowa Democratic Caucus**

Iowa selects 41 delegates with its caucus. There are 6 candidates in the race. Candidate A gets 27%, Candidate B gets 25%, Candidate C gets 18%, Candidate D gets 15%, Candidate E gets 9%, and Candidate F gets 6% of the caucus-goers in the original vote. Some of Candidate E's and Candidate F's supporters leave, but the rest move to support Candidates B and D. The chart reflects the new totals.


How many delegates does each candidate receive?



Iowa Democratic Caucus	Candidate A	Candidate B	Candidate C	Candidate D
Final vote totals	27%	31%	18%	24%
Delegates received				

**Florida Republican Caucus**


Florida selects 122 delegates with their winner-take-all primary. There are 3 candidates in the race. Candidate G gets 45%, Candidate H gets 32%, and Candidate I gets 23%.



Florida Republican Caucus	Candidate G	Candidate H	Candidate I
Final vote totals	45%	32%	23%
Delegates received			

**Michigan Democratic Primary**

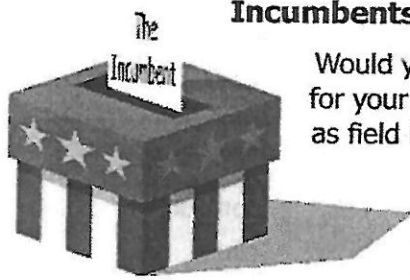
Michigan selects 125 delegates with its primary. There are 4 candidates in the race. Candidate A gets 14% of the vote, Candidate B gets 47%, Candidate C gets 32%, and Candidate D gets 7%.



Michigan Democratic Primary	Candidate A	Candidate B	Candidate C	Candidate D
Final vote totals	14%	47%	32%	7%
Delegates received				



**MEDIA MOMENT MINI: Incumbent Advantage** Name: \_\_\_\_\_



**Incumbents and Elections**

Would you be a little nervous if you knew a competitor might challenge you for your position—your job, your place in student government, your leadership as field hockey team captain or trombone section leader? Most legislators don't even break a sweat. That's because when it comes to congressional elections, **incumbency** has proven to hold the advantage.

You heard right: in + KUM + buhn + see. It's a fancy way of saying currently holding, in this case, congressional office. Your representative or senator is the **incumbent**. And if he or she is running for reelection, they're likely to win.

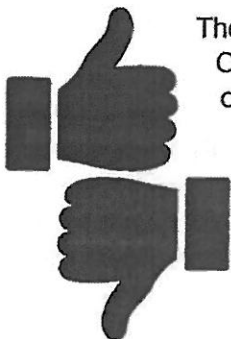
**Why Do Incumbents Have the Advantage?**

One reason incumbents have the advantage is because you probably already know their name. After all they've served you before. Maybe you read about them in the local paper or saw an interview on T.V. Media coverage means you know more about them and about what they've done in office. Incumbents also have the funding needed for a successful campaign. Advertising, polling, mailings, events, and staff are all essential to a campaign, and they all cost money. Incumbents have established relationships with donors who contribute to campaigns, and because of a special privilege known as *franking* they're able to send free mail to constituents to keep their name top of mind.

Sometimes districting plays to the incumbent's advantage. A change in a state's population during the national census can change the number of representatives that state elects to the House. When this happens, states redraw their district lines so each district has an equal number of citizens. If those lines are drawn so certain districts purposefully have more Democrat or Republican voters, it tips the hat in favor of the candidate from that party. Drawing district lines like this is called **gerrymandering**. Some people choose to vote along party lines, so an incumbent running in a district gerrymandered towards their party is pretty much guaranteed to win term after term.

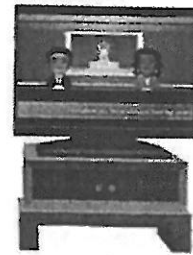
**Pros and Cons**

There are definite upsides to voting the incumbent into office. They've done the work before, which means they understand our congressional system. They've got an insider's view that a newbie legislator just won't have. Also, passing a bill through Congress can be a slow process. Bills can be reintroduced in different forms several times before they gain the support they need. An incumbent may find real advantage in returning to champion a particular bill term after term.



There are drawbacks too. With 80-90% of senators and representatives returning to Congress time and time again, that leaves less room for new opinions, insights, and causes to care about. The incumbent advantage can provide a pretty sure sense of security, and while it may sound crazy, that's not always a good thing. If you were guaranteed an A in class, would you feel the pressure to study? If your legislator wasn't so sure about the outcome of the next election, do you think they'd work even harder to produce the results that could win them your vote? And since the incumbent advantage means that congressional seats don't change hands easily, another drawback is that incumbency reduces the rate at which more women and minorities are elected to Congress.

**THE INCUMBENT ADVANTAGE!**





### Penny For Your Thoughts?

Are you happy with the job that Congress is doing? That's actually a very common poll question. And believe it or not most Americans say no. Given the statistics, the incumbent advantage is often summed up in one very famous sentiment: "Everyone hates Congress, but loves their Congressman." Hey, everyone is entitled to their own opinion. And so are you. You've probably noticed that opinion can often times be found right alongside the news. Or maybe you haven't because sometimes opinion is disguised to look like news. But let's get this straight: opinion is not news.

### Opinion Journalism

Objective news reporting gives you the facts about what's happening. Opinion gives you someone's thoughts about what's happening. See the difference? Objective news reporting is not opinion. But opinion can include news. Recognizing the difference is important. You don't want to be fooled into thinking someone's thoughts, no matter how well-reasoned, are facts when they're not. And you don't want to be influenced by someone presenting their opinions as news. Useful opinion is based on verified facts. *Opinion journalism* (note the word *journalism*) follows standards. That means setting and following practices to ensure reporters, contributors, and editors don't misrepresent the facts or the context in which things happened as they offer their opinion.



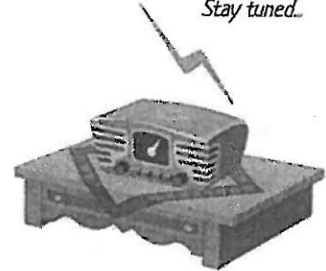
### Blurred Lines

The Society for Professional Journalists (SPJ) agrees that opinion should be clearly labeled, but not everyone follows SPJ standards. Depending on where you're getting your news—newspapers, the radio, TV, blogs, websites, YouTube, social media—it might not be so easy to spot opinion for what it is. Take these headlines for example. Are they news or opinion?

- "A time for congressional term limits" (The Hill, 4-3-17)
- "New term limits for members of US Congress" (American Military News, 8/11/17)
- "Term Limits Don't Work: States that have tried limiting lawmakers' time in office aren't better off." (U.S. News & World Report, 1-16-15)
- "Congressional term limits are a bad idea" (Vox, 10-18-16)

They're actually all opinion. And if you visited the site that published each story, you'd see a label like "opinion" next to each article. Some media outlets prefer to use labels like "op-ed", "commentary", or "analysis". That's okay, too, because you know that those labels still mean you're reading someone's thoughts, not objective news reporting.

We'll check in with political analyst Vanessa Dale next. Stay tuned.



### Reality Check

To be clear, opinions aren't bad. News-related opinions written by qualified authors can help you gain perspective, decide how serious a situation may be, or consider a point of view you never realized existed. People can agree or disagree with an opinion, think it helpful or worthless, but the opinion itself is not the problem. The possibility of mistaking someone's personal views for facts is. And as you saw, opinions *can be* worded to look like facts. Without clear labels, the difference could be easy to miss. If you think you're reading an opinion, check to see if that story has been labeled. If it hasn't, read carefully. You don't want to mistake someone's sneakily disguised opinion for something that it's not.

**MEDIA MOMENT MINI: Incumbent Advantage** Name: \_\_\_\_\_

**A. Headline Guessing Game.** Try to figure out whether these real-life headlines belonged to a news article or an opinion article. How? By looking closely at the headline's words, structure, and meaning. Make your best guess and explain exactly what influenced your choice. Circle the words and/or phrases that influenced you.

Headline	Type	Explain Your Choice
Race between Pete Sessions and Colin Allred could turn on their cultural, generational differences <i>(Dallas News)</i>	<input type="radio"/> News <input type="radio"/> Opinion	
Support for Scott, Wittman <i>(Daily Press)</i>	<input type="radio"/> News <input type="radio"/> Opinion	
N Carolina GOP congressman is first incumbent to lose seat <i>(KSL)</i>	<input type="radio"/> News <input type="radio"/> Opinion	
Trump is right -- NATO is obsolete, and he's delivering that message loud and clear <i>(Fox News)</i>	<input type="radio"/> News <input type="radio"/> Opinion	
How Maryland's tough campaign finance laws protect incumbents <i>(The Baltimore Sun)</i>	<input type="radio"/> News <input type="radio"/> Opinion	
No, Gasoline Prices Are Not 'Too High' <i>(Investor's Business Daily)</i>	<input type="radio"/> News <input type="radio"/> Opinion	
Trump tweets 'very nice note' from Kim Jong Un <i>(ABC News)</i>	<input type="radio"/> News <input type="radio"/> Opinion	
New York's future depends on the subways <i>(New York Post)</i>	<input type="radio"/> News <input type="radio"/> Opinion	
Meaningful midterm: Off-year election has consequences at all levels <i>(The Journal Gazette)</i>	<input type="radio"/> News <input type="radio"/> Opinion	
What's ahead in Supreme Court fight <i>(The Providence Journal)</i>	<input type="radio"/> News <input type="radio"/> Opinion	