Political Parties - Beginning

Overview

Students investigate the major political parties in the United States and the role they play in U.S. elections, then create political parties focused on issues affecting students at their school.

Teacher Background

- [Elections . . . the American Way](#) Library of Congress presentation

- [Creating the United States: Formation of Political Parties Library](#) of Congress online exhibition

Digital Resources

- [Digital primary source analysis tool](#) (select format Prints & Photographs)

- [Primary source record](#)

- News for Kids texts

  o [Political Parties](#)

  o [Democratic Party](#)

  o [Republican Party](#)

- [Elections 101: This History of Political Parties](#) Fox News

Materials

- Computer with Internet access & digital display

- Digital document, white/chalkboard or chart paper

- [Primary source](#) 1 for each student pair/group

- [Primary source analysis tool](#) 1 for each student

Implementation

Spark Inquiry (15 minutes)

1. Divide students into pairs or small groups and give each pair/group a copy of the primary source and each student a primary source analysis tool (see Materials). Instruct pairs/groups to work together to analyze the primary source and to complete the primary source analysis tool individually.

2. Display the [primary source](#) and review student analyses, noting their observations, reflections and questions in a digital document, on the board, or on chart paper.

3. Display the [source record](#) to see if it can help answer any questions students raised.

Deepen Inquiry (20 minutes)

4. Tell students that they will be reading some short texts and watching a brief video in order to help them answer the following questions:

   - What did you learn about Democrats and Republicans?
   - What role do political parties play in elections?
   - How are the two major parties similar and how are they different?

5. Direct students to read the News for Kids texts (see Digital Resources).

6. Show the [Elections 101: This History of Political Parties](#) video, directing students to take notes so that they can answer the questions from step 4.

7. Review student responses to the questions, recording their responses.

Connect & Act (20 minutes)

8. Divide students into groups and direct them to collaborate to come up with a new political party that speaks to issues affecting students at their school. Each group should create the following for their party:

   - party name,
   - party slogan,
   - 3 ideas for the party platform that they want to promote.

9. Allow groups to present their parties to their peers.

10. Instruct students to respond to the following prompts to serve as exit tickets:

   - Name two U.S. political parties.
   - Describe the role of political parties in elections.

Extending Learning

   - [Gallopade Elections for Kids](#)