



## Political Parties - Intermediate

### Overview

Students investigate the two-party system in the United States and analyze partisan priorities, then create political parties that speak to issues affecting young people.

### 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 Political Cartoons)
- [Primary source record](#)
- [What Do Parties Stand For?](#) Junior Scholastic
- [How Did the U.S. End Up with a Two-Party System?](#) NowThis World
- [2019 Public's Policy Priorities](#) Pew Research
- [2019 Partisan Priorities](#) Pew Research

### Materials

- Computer with Internet access & digital display
- Digital document, white/chalkboard or chart paper
- [Primary source](#) 1 for each pair
- [Primary source analysis tool](#) 1 for each student

### Implementation

#### Spark Inquiry (15 minutes)

1. Divide students into pairs and give each pair/group a copy of the primary source and each student a primary source analysis tool (see Materials). Instruct pairs 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. Write the questions below in a digital document, on the board, or on chart paper, directing students to copy them into their notebooks as you do so.
  - What did you learn about the two main political parties?
  - What role do political parties play in elections?
  - How are the two major parties similar and how are they different?
  - How have the different party platforms shaped America?
5. Instruct students to look for answers to the questions as they read an article and watch a video. Direct pairs to read the article, [What Do Parties Stand For?](#) Then show the video, [How Did the U.S. End Up with a Two-Party System?](#)
6. Display the [2019 Public's Policy Priorities](#) chart. Direct pairs to review the issues and come up with a list of what they think the top 5 priorities in 2019 were for members of each party: Democrats and Republicans.
7. Display the [2019 Partisan Priorities](#) chart and ask the following questions:
  - Were you surprised by anything?
  - What did you find most interesting?
8. Review student responses to the questions from step 4.

### Connect & Act (25 minutes)

9. Assign groups (or allow students to form their own groups) and direct them to collaborate to come up with a new political party that speaks to issues affecting young people. Each group should create the following for their party:
  - party name,
  - party slogan,
  - 5 top issues the party will promote.
10. Allow groups to present their parties to their peers.
11. Instruct students to respond to the following prompts to serve as exit tickets:
  - Describe the role of political parties in elections.
  - Name the two main U.S. political parties and briefly summarize the differences between them.

### Extending Learning

- [Gallopade Elections for Kids](#)