

Party Systems Icivics Answer Key

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.

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

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.

Election Day!

All of these efforts lead up to Election Day in November. People across the nation go to the polls and select who 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...



For the final step we have to go back to the state results.

How many electors does your state have?

Each State has TWO Senators
+
The number of Representatives in the House is based on population
State Electors

Follow this example!

Illinois

Senators + Representatives
 $2 + 18 = 20$ Electors

iCivics

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 people vote for a presidential candidate, they are really voting to decide which candidate the electors in their state will vote for.

In December after the election, the electors meet in their state capitols and cast their ballots. The President of the Senate collects the votes and counts them. In order to win, a candidate must have an **absolute majority** of the electoral votes, which means more than half the votes.

But what if there's a tie? If the electors' votes are split, then the full House of Representatives votes. If that results in a tie, then the Senate votes. The elections of 1800 and 1824 both resulted in ties that were resolved by Congress.

On January 20, the President-elect and Vice President-elect take the oath of office and are inaugurated.

Reading p.2

Party systems icivics answer key is a crucial topic for understanding the dynamics of political parties and their impact on governance in the United States. The iCivics platform, founded by former U.S. Supreme Court Justice Sandra Day O'Connor, provides educational resources that help students learn about civics, government, and the role of political parties in a democratic society. This article will explore the concept of party systems, their characteristics, and the implications for American politics, alongside a look at how iCivics aids in the educational process.

Understanding Party Systems

A party system refers to the way political parties are organized and interact within a political framework.

It encompasses the number of parties, their influence, and how they compete for power. In the United States, the party system is predominantly characterized by the presence of two major parties: the Democratic Party and the Republican Party. However, other parties do exist and can influence political discourse and elections.

Types of Party Systems

Political scientists generally categorize party systems into four main types:

1. **Single-party system:** In this system, one political party dominates and controls the government. Other parties may exist but have little to no power. This system is often seen in authoritarian regimes.
2. **Two-party system:** This is the most common system in the U.S., where two major parties dominate the political landscape, often leading to a winner-takes-all electoral dynamic.
3. **Multiparty system:** In this system, multiple parties exist and compete for power. This often leads to coalitions, where parties must work together to form a government.
4. **Multi-ethnic party system:** This system involves political parties organized along ethnic lines, where parties represent the interests of specific ethnic groups.

The Two-Party System in the United States

The United States operates predominantly under a two-party system, which has significant implications for its political culture and electoral processes. The two parties—Democrats and Republicans—have distinct ideologies, platforms, and voter bases.

Characteristics of the Two-Party System

1. **Winner-Takes-All Elections:** In most elections, the candidate with the most votes wins, discouraging third-party candidates and leading voters to support major party candidates to avoid "wasting" their votes.
2. **Ideological Spectrum:** The two parties represent a broad ideological spectrum, with Democrats typically leaning towards liberal and progressive policies, while Republicans tend to favor conservative and right-

leaning ideologies.

3. **Party Identification:** Most voters identify with one of the two major parties, which influences their voting behavior and political engagement.

4. **Institutional Barriers:** Various laws and regulations, such as ballot access requirements and campaign finance rules, create barriers for third parties, further entrenching the two-party system.

The Role of iCivics in Understanding Party Systems

iCivics is an educational platform designed to teach students about civics and government through interactive games and engaging content. Understanding party systems is a critical aspect of civic education, and iCivics provides various resources to help students grasp these concepts.

iCivics Resources Related to Party Systems

1. **Interactive Games:** iCivics offers games like "Win the White House," where students simulate running a campaign, making strategic decisions that reflect the realities of a two-party system.

2. **Lesson Plans:** Educators can access lesson plans that explore the role of political parties, the electoral process, and the implications of a two-party system.

3. **Quizzes and Assessments:** iCivics provides quizzes that test students' understanding of party systems, including how they function and their impact on democracy.

4. **Discussion Prompts:** The platform encourages critical thinking through discussion prompts that challenge students to consider the advantages and disadvantages of the two-party system.

Implications of the Two-Party System

The two-party system has significant implications for American politics, governance, and citizen engagement. Understanding these implications is crucial for students and citizens alike.

Advantages of the Two-Party System

- **Stability:** A two-party system can create political stability by providing clear choices for voters and

reducing the likelihood of coalition governments that may lead to deadlock.

- **Simplified Choices:** Voters have a straightforward choice between two primary candidates, which can enhance voter participation and engagement.
- **Accountability:** With only two major parties, it is easier for voters to hold a party accountable for its policies and actions in government.

Disadvantages of the Two-Party System

- **Limited Choices:** Voters may feel constrained as they often have to choose between two candidates who may not fully represent their views.
- **Marginalization of Third Parties:** Third parties struggle to gain traction, which can lead to important issues being overlooked in the political discourse.
- **Polarization:** The two-party system can lead to increased political polarization, where parties become more extreme and less willing to compromise.

Conclusion

Party systems icivics answer key is an essential theme for understanding the political landscape of the United States. The two-party system, while providing certain advantages such as stability and simplified choices, also presents challenges like limited representation and increased polarization. iCivics plays a vital role in educating students about these concepts, providing interactive resources that foster engagement and understanding. As citizens navigate the complexities of our political system, a solid grasp of party systems will empower them to participate meaningfully in democracy. Through platforms like iCivics, future generations can develop the knowledge and skills necessary to engage with and influence their political environment effectively.

Frequently Asked Questions

What are the main types of party systems identified in political science?

The main types of party systems are one-party systems, two-party systems, and multi-party systems. Each type reflects the number of political parties that have a significant chance of gaining power.

How do party systems influence voter behavior in elections?

Party systems influence voter behavior by shaping the options available to voters, establishing party loyalty, and affecting how candidates campaign and interact with constituents.

What role do third parties play in a two-party system?

Third parties in a two-party system often serve as a voice for alternative viewpoints, influence the platforms of the major parties, and can impact election outcomes by drawing votes away from the main candidates.

How do party systems affect the legislative process?

Party systems can affect the legislative process by determining the majority party, influencing coalition-building, and shaping the agenda and priorities of legislation based on party ideologies.

What are the advantages and disadvantages of a multi-party system?

Advantages of a multi-party system include greater representation of diverse viewpoints and increased voter choice. Disadvantages can include political fragmentation, instability, and difficulties in forming a majority government.

How can changes in party systems impact democracy?

Changes in party systems can impact democracy by altering representation, affecting voter engagement, and potentially leading to shifts in public policy and governance styles. A stable party system typically supports democratic stability.

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