

What's the Role of Primary Elections and Caucuses?

Lesson Objective: Students will be able to identify the roles that primary elections and caucuses play in presidential elections and explain their significance.

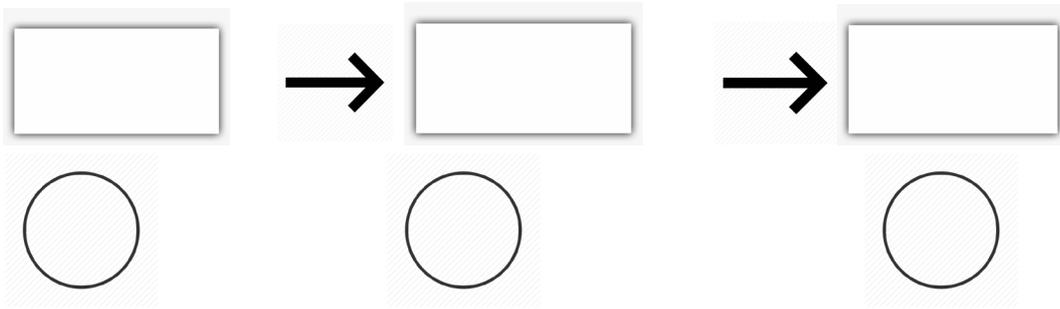
1. Have students watch [this Khan Academy video](#) and use [these resources from PBS LearningMedia](#) about the Primary and Caucus processes.
2. Have students answer the following discussion questions from the video:
 - What is the difference between a Primary and a Caucus?
 - What are party conventions?
 - In what ways do Democrats and Republicans differ in how they send delegates to the party conventions??
 - Explain what type of activities occur during the caucuses and the purposes of these caucuses.
3. After students finish answering their questions, choose a few to share their answers and have a class discussion.

(Note that all Khan Academy content is available for free at [khanacademy.org](https://www.khanacademy.org))

4. Have students define the following terms of the Presidential election by using [this link from USA.gov](#):
 - Primaries and Caucuses: _____
 - National Convention: _____
 - Presidential Election: _____
 - Electoral College: _____
5. Texas will be one of several states holding its primary on March 3. The date is called "Super Tuesday" because of the large number of delegates to be chosen by those states on a single day. Look at [this presidential election calendar](#) from *The New York Times* and discuss why Super Tuesday and other March primaries and caucuses play a big role in deciding party nominations. Add up the total number of delegates at stake in March elections and compare it with the number to be chosen in later months

6. Have students fill in the Road to Presidency Graphic Organizer below, to identify the process for choosing a president.

*Please place the following terms in the correct order and include one fact about each of the terms below: **national conventions, primaries & caucuses, and the presidential election.***



7. To end this assignment, have students write a written response to the following prompt:

Prompt: Please write a brief essay explaining how candidates run for the presidency through primaries, caucuses, party conventions, and the general election. How do those steps narrow the field of candidates to two in the November presidential election?

Additional Resources:

- [U.S. Vote Foundation](#)
- [Texas Tribune voter guide](#) for the statewide ballot on Super Tuesday



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