

Political Parties

Lesson Objective: Students will be able to identify what political parties are and how the third party system has influenced American politics.

Primary resource for the first exercise in this lesson:

- [PBS LearningMedia](#)

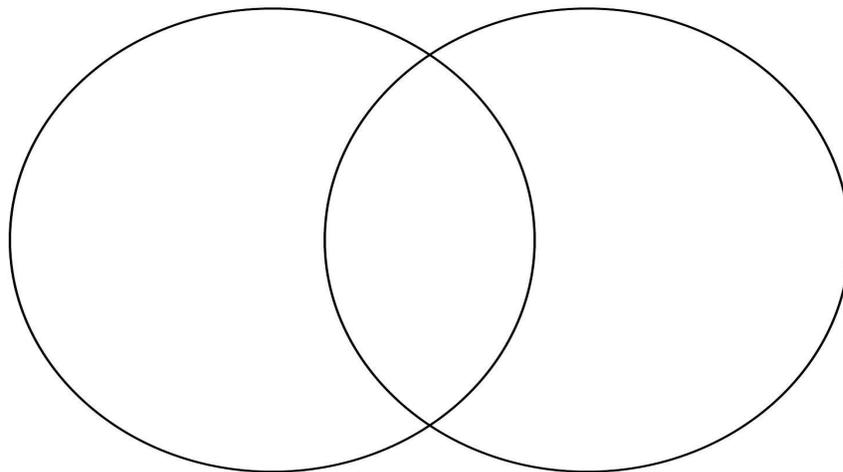
(Crash Course video about the Political Party process in the United States)

1. Have students answer the following questions based on the resource from above:

- Why did the United States not have political factions during the first election?
- What were some of the differences between the Federalists and the Democratic-Republicans?
- What is the main purpose of nominating conventions?
- When did the third party system come about? How long did it last?
- What were some of the concerns for the Populist party?
- Third parties often don't win elections. Why?

2. Have students research the two big political parties, the Democrats and Republicans, and fill in at least 3 points for each side on the Venn diagram about the core beliefs of each party.

Where Democrats and Republicans Stand on Major Issues



Afterward, the teacher can lead a discussion around the similarities and differences between the two political parties.

3. In order for students to get a better sense of each political party, allow them to take [this quiz from the Pew Research Center](#) to determine which party they might be more likely to identify with. It is important to note this doesn't determine anyone's actual party affiliation.

4. Have your students write a 1 paragraph reflection summary on the results of their political party quiz.

Reflection Question: *Do you agree with the results you received on the political party quiz? Be sure to explain why or why not.*

Additional resource for this lesson:

- [Library of Congress](#)

(This webpage has a quick history on the formation of American political parties.)



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