



## Political Parties | Lesson Plan

What role do political parties play in the United States and how have their influence and functions evolved since the country's founding?

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Students will understand the origin and history of political parties in the United States. They will explore their purpose and role in the American political system.

### Learning Objectives:

- Describe the foundational role of political parties in the American political system.
- Analyze the development and evolution of the two-party system since George Washington's presidency.
- Evaluate the impact of political parties on the electoral process, including primary elections and the Electoral College.
- Reflect on the viewpoints and criticisms of the Founding Fathers regarding political parties.

### Key Vocabulary:

- **Political Parties:** Organized groups that attempt to influence government policy and elections.
- **Two-Party System:** A system where two major political parties dominate the political landscape.
- **Third Parties:** Minor political parties that challenge the two major parties on specific issues or during particular elections.
- **Electoral College:** The body of electors established by the Constitution, which formally elects the President and Vice President of the United States.
- **Grassroots:** The most basic level of an activity or organization, where the constituents of a political party, organization, or movement carry out actions.
- **Primary Elections:** Elections within a political party to select its candidate for the general election.

**Educational Standards:** CCRA.L.1, CCRA.L.2, CCRA.L.4, CCRA.L.5, CCRA.SL.1, CCRA.SL.2, CCRA.R.4, CCRA.R.6, CCRA.W.2, CCRA.W.4

**Academic Subject Areas:** Civics, U.S. History, Western Civilization

### What You'll Need

- Video: *Street Smarts: Political Parties* (Watch [Here](#))
- Worksheet: *Street Smarts: Political Parties* (Click [Here](#))
- Sticky notes or stickers

Scan to watch episode:



## Lesson Plan (45 minutes)

### Warm Up: (15 minutes)

1. Create a large poster or whiteboard divided into two columns: "Agree" and "Disagree."
2. Prepare a series of statements related to everyday topics or issues that might concern students, such as school rules, favorite school subjects, or extracurricular activities. For example:
  - Homework should be abolished.
  - Physical education should be a daily class.
  - School lunches should have more vegetarian options.
  - Students should have more say in school policies.
3. Provide each one with a small sticker or sticky note.
4. Explain that you will read out a series of statements, and students should place their stickers on the "Agree" or "Disagree" columns of the poster or whiteboard based on their personal opinions. Read aloud each statement one by one, giving students a moment to place their stickers accordingly.
5. After all the stickers are placed, allow students to discuss their selections.
6. Transition into the lesson on political parties by explaining that, like in the classroom activity, people in society often have varying opinions on important issues.