



# Studies Weekly

2012  
★ SPECIAL ★  
**ELECTION**  
ISSUE

Path to  
Presidency

## So, You Want to Run for President?

So, you want to be president of the United States. Hang onto your hat, because it's going to be quite a ride! The amazing thing about this great country is that dreams of becoming president can actually come true. Any citizen who follows some simple rules really can grow up to be president. With a few great ideas, a lot of hard work and a little good luck, the presidency could be yours! Oh, and don't forget the cash. These days, it costs between \$50 and \$100 million dollars to pay for a presidential campaign. Campaigning includes speeches, rallies, radio and television commercials and special events used to convince people to vote for you. Still interested?

The process takes at least a year or more, from start to finish. First, a candidate (someone who is running for political office) begins traveling across the nation, meeting people and talking about

ideas for running the country. Next, party members get together to choose the candidate they believe will have the best chance of winning the election. Some states hold primary elections, while others hold caucuses (meetings to choose candidates) to make this decision. Once all the states have made their decisions, national conventions are held to make the final choice for a presidential candidate. These conventions are like huge celebrations for each political party. Once the convention picks a candidate, he or she accepts the nomination (suggestion) to run for president. Then the candidate chooses a running mate, or vice presidential candidate, to join him or her in running for the presidency.

What happens next? Once the party conventions have made their choices, the presidential candidates hit the campaign trail hard. They put up billboards and posters, record television and radio ads, shake hands, kiss babies and make speeches. They don't want to lose a single vote!

Election Day finally arrives and citizens vote for the candidate of their choice. The candidate in each state who receives the most votes is finally declared the winner by the Electoral College in mid-December (see page 3). The new president of the United States is inaugurated (officially sworn into office) on January 20th. The election process is finally over and the work of running the country can begin. Do you still want to be president? It's never too early to start planning your campaign!



### Connections

## Make Your Vote Count!

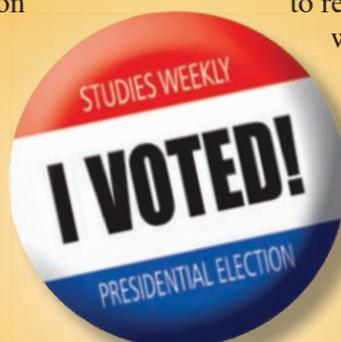
While you may be too young to vote in the general election this year, don't miss your chance to be part of the Studies Weekly 2012 Presidential Election! The election will take place on October 30, exactly one week before the November 6 general election day. In 2008, 1.5 million elementary school students just like you voted in the Studies Weekly election. This year, more than 6 million

student voters are expected to cast their ballots! How do you get involved? That's the easy part. There are no special rules and you don't have to register. Just ask your teacher to visit [www.studiesweekly.com](http://www.studiesweekly.com) for more details and you're on your way.

Your teacher will receive a letter with instructions and "I Voted" stickers for every student in the school. Then you will be all set to make your voice heard in choosing our next president. Your

vote won't actually count, of course, but you may be surprised at how closely your opinions match those of the adults in our country. Studies Weekly students have correctly predicted our next president in the last two presidential elections!

Would you like to get the word out about the importance of voting? Ask your teacher or principal to call your local newspaper or TV station. Invite a reporter to do a story about your school voting in the Studies Weekly election. Who knows? You may end up in the news!





# Path to Presidency

*In this issue, we will learn more about the election process and what it takes to elect a new Commander in Chief. There is a lot more to choosing a president than just heading to the voting booth!*

## Political Parties

You may know that the president is usually chosen from one of our two major political parties. A political party is an organized group of people who share the same ideas about what government should do. In this country, the two main political parties are the Democrats and the Republicans. Here's how the Democratic Party's website describes their group:

*Democrats believe that we're greater together than we are on our own—that this country succeeds when everyone gets a fair shot, when everyone does their fair share, when everyone plays by the same rules.*

Here's how the Republican Party's website describes their group:

*With a core belief in the primacy [importance] of individuals, the Republican Party, since its inception, has been at the forefront of the fight for individuals' rights in opposition to a large, intrusive government.*

You may have heard of other political parties such as the Libertarians, the Green Party and the Constitution Party, but the Democratic Party and the Republican Party are the two most powerful political parties in America.

## Caucuses and Primary Elections

The candidates from each major party are chosen by the people of each state at caucuses or in primary elections. Before 1972, most states held caucuses, or meetings, to choose presidential candidates. These caucuses

were often open only to leaders of the major political parties and not to everyday citizens. Changes were made at this time that allowed more people to have a say in choosing who would run for president. Today, most states hold primary elections to choose candidates, although there are still some very powerful states that use the caucus system.

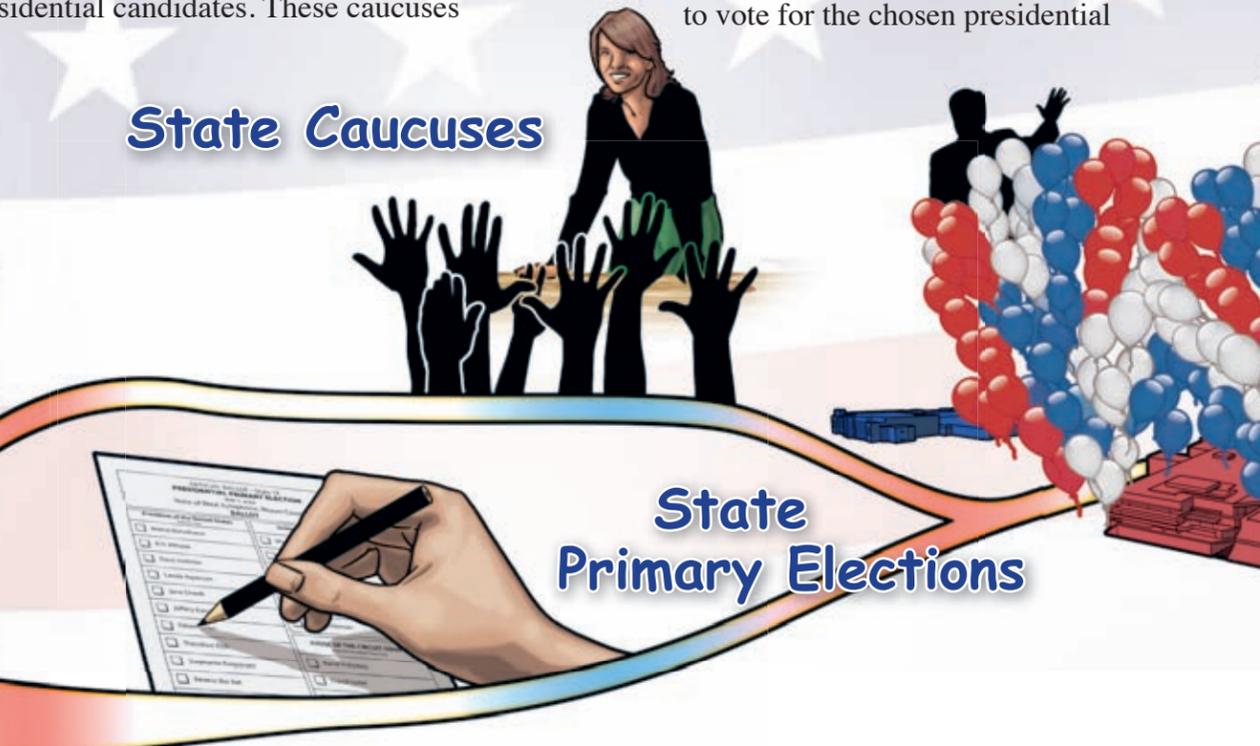
## Caucuses

Caucuses are usually held in public places such as schools, town halls or gymnasiums. Party members gather together to choose a candidate to represent the party in the presidential election. The caucus members then vote for delegates, or people to represent the party at the national convention. These delegates will travel to the national convention to vote for the chosen presidential

## Political Parties

## State Caucuses

## State Primary Elections



## Voter Requirements



It is the responsibility of all qualified citizens of the United States to help choose a president by going to the polls and voting. It is not just your right, but also your responsibility to vote! What requirements must you meet in order to vote?

- Be a United States citizen
  - Be at least 18 years old
  - Live in the state in which you are voting
  - Not be serving a prison term or have been ruled by a judge to be mentally incapable of voting
- (Most states also require citizens to register, or sign up, to vote several weeks before the election takes place.)



## The First Voting Machine

## Trades & Technology

The first voting machine used in an actual election was built by Jacob H. Myers, an inventor from Rochester, New York. His machine was used in a city election held in Lockport, New York, in 1892. Other machines had been invented before, but none had ever been tried in a real election.

Myers' machine was built to let citizens vote in secret. It also made it possible for those who couldn't read to vote without the help of others. The machine had a series of knobs arranged in rows so that voters could choose to vote for all the candidates from a single party (Democrat, Republican, etc.), or they could choose to vote for each candidate separately. Symbols or pictures on the knobs let voters who couldn't read know which knob to choose. To protect the voter's privacy, the door to the voting booth automatically locked when the voter entered and unlocked again, ready for the next voter, once he or she exited out a separate door.



candidate. Caucuses are usually exciting events where party members try to convince others to support their candidate. Even though they are now open to more party members, caucuses are usually controlled by those who are actively involved in their political parties.

### Primary Elections

Most states now choose presidential candidates through primary elections. Primary means first, or earliest, so a primary election is an election that is held before the actual presidential election. There are two types of primary elections, open and closed. In an open primary, all registered voters may vote for a candidate, but they can only vote in one primary, either the Democratic or the Republican. In a closed primary, only voters who are registered members of that specific party may vote in the primary. This means that only voters who have registered, or signed up, as members of that political party can vote in that party's primary election.

Many more people participate in primary elections than in caucuses because it is easier and takes much less time. It may take several hours to drive to a caucus meeting and take part in the activities held there. Primary elections are usually held close to home and it only takes the voter a matter of minutes to cast a ballot.

### Results

Once the results of the caucuses or primary elections are in, each state knows which candidate it will be supporting to run for president. Now it's time to head for the national convention.

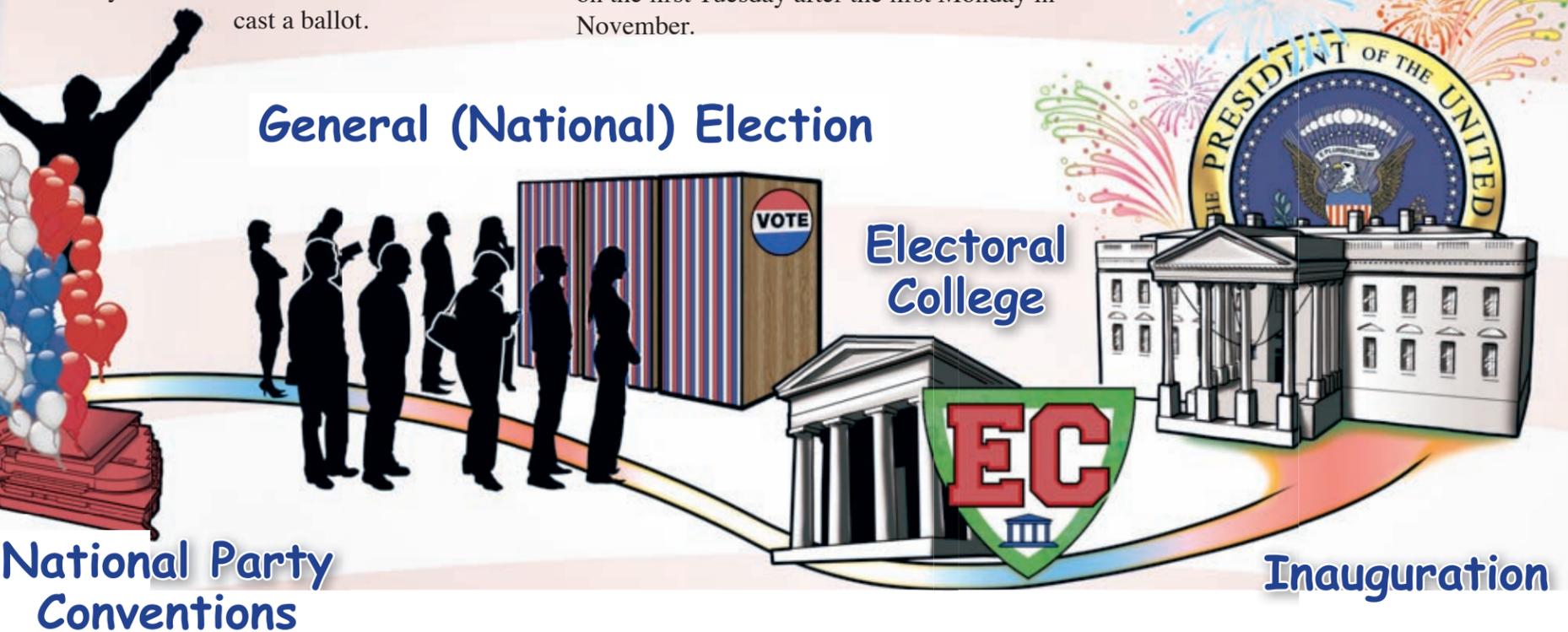
### National Party Conventions

The national party conventions are usually held in the late summer or early fall of an election year. Delegates from all over the country come together to choose their party's candidate for president. The delegates also vote on a platform, or a statement of the party's goals. National conventions help unite the party behind one candidate and create support for the party in the upcoming election. National conventions are loud and exciting! Delegates and party members can be seen wearing crazy costumes, waving signs and singing patriotic songs. Often, several votes must be held until one candidate finally receives a majority of the votes. Once this happens, that candidate is officially nominated, or chosen to run, and he or she gives an acceptance speech. In this speech, the candidate also names his or her running mate, or vice presidential candidate. Now it is time to prepare for the general election, held on the first Tuesday after the first Monday in November.

### Electoral College

After the election is held and the results are counted, there is still one more step in choosing a president. The results of the election are not final until the Electoral College meets and the presidential electors cast their votes. These men and women have been chosen by their states to meet together and cast the final votes for president. Each state has the same number of presidential electors as the number of United States Senators and Representatives from that state. The District of Columbia also has three representatives in the Electoral College. There are currently 538 presidential electors. The Electoral College meets in mid-December and the electors cast their votes for the candidate who won the most votes in their state during the presidential election. There is no law stating that the electors have to vote for the person who received the most votes, but they would face some serious consequences back in their home states if they chose to vote differently. Once the Electoral College meets, an official winner is declared and the new president is inaugurated on January 20 of the following year.

## General (National) Election

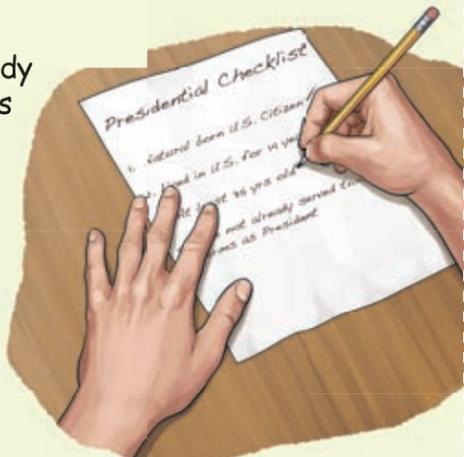


## Who can run for president?

### This Week's Question

Candidates for president must meet the following qualifications:

- Must be a natural-born citizen of the United States. (Candidates cannot have been born in a foreign country, even if they are now U.S. citizens.)
- Must be at least 35 years old
- Must have lived in the United States for at least 14 years
- Cannot have already served two terms as president (No U. S. president is allowed to serve more than eight years in office.)



## Presidential Trivia

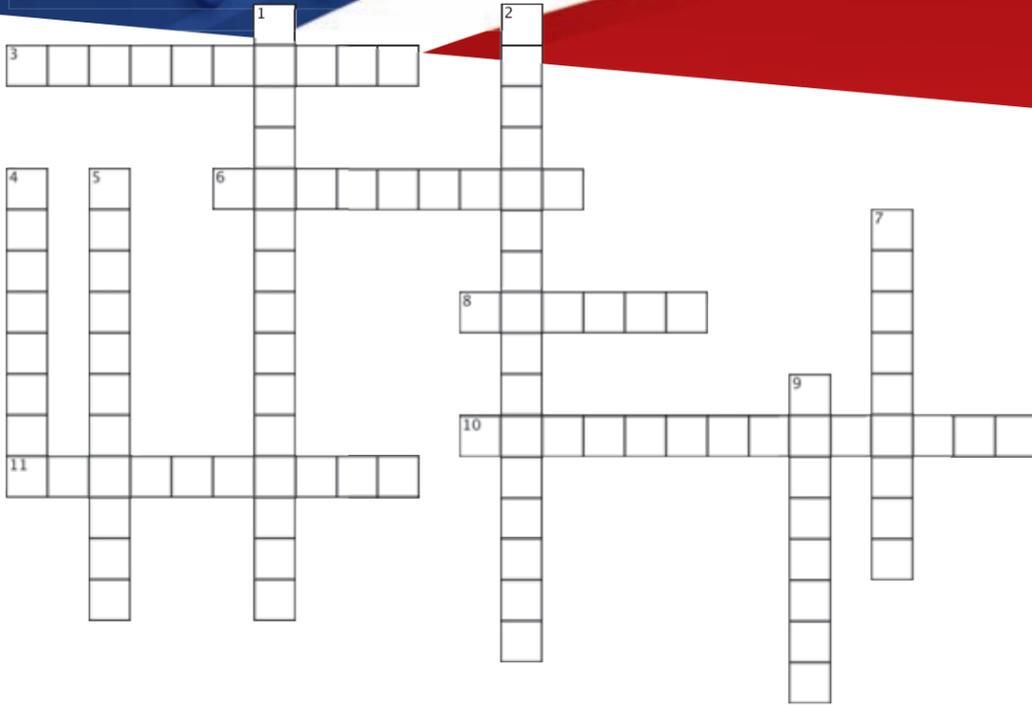
- Tallest president: Abraham Lincoln, 6'4", shortest: James Madison, 5'4"
- First African American to be elected president: Barack Obama; Born in Hawaii, he was also the first president not born in the continental United States.
- Fathers and sons who have served as president: John Adams and his son, John Quincy Adams, George H.W. Bush and his son, George W. Bush
- First president to die in office: William Henry Harrison; He caught pneumonia at his inauguration and died after serving only 31 days.
- Heaviest president: William H. Taft, who weighed over 300 pounds; Taft had a special larger tub installed in the White House.

## Citizenship

- Lightest president: James Madison, who weighed less than 100 pounds
- Careers before becoming president:  
Jimmy Carter—peanut farmer  
Ronald Reagan—movie actor  
James Garfield—preacher/teacher  
Herbert Hoover—mining engineer



# FUN And Games



### ACROSS

3. to officially swear into office
6. someone who is running for political office
8. meeting to choose a candidate
10. an organized group of people who share the same ideas about what government should do
11. suggestion or proposal that a candidate should run for president

### DOWN

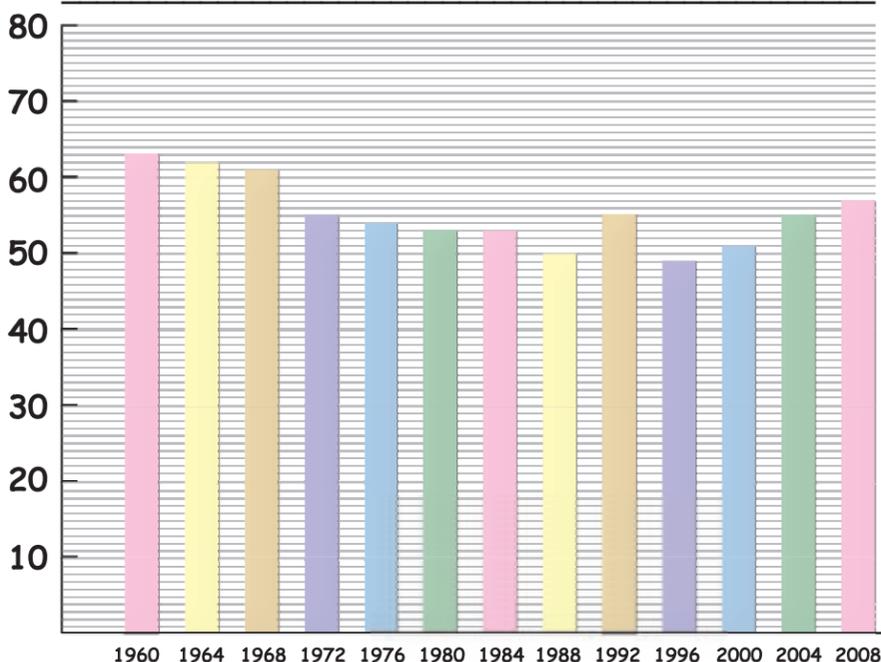
1. an election held to choose a candidate before the actual presidential election takes place
2. group of people chosen by each state to meet together and cast the final votes for president
4. speeches, rallies, commercials and events used to convince people to vote for a candidate
5. vice presidential candidate
7. people chosen to represent their political party
9. a statement of a political party's goals

## Activity

### Getting out to Vote

The graph below shows the percentage of voters who turned out to vote in each presidential election held over the last 60 years. Use the graph to answer the following questions.

1. In which year did the greatest number of Americans vote in a presidential election?  
\_\_\_\_\_
2. What percentage of voters voted that year?  
\_\_\_\_\_
3. In which two years did the fewest number of voters vote in a presidential election?  
\_\_\_\_\_
4. What percentage of voters voted in those years?  
\_\_\_\_\_
5. What was the percentage of voters who voted in the 2008 presidential election?  
\_\_\_\_\_
6. Over the last few years, has the percentage of voters who turned out to vote in presidential elections gone up or down?  
\_\_\_\_\_
7. Based on the trend over the last few years, do you think the percentage of voters in the 2012 presidential election will go up or down? Why?  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_



Imagine that you have been nominated to be your party's candidate for president of the United States. Using correct grammar, spelling and punctuation, explain some of your ideas for creating a better country. What is your political platform? How will you make a difference in the future of our country if you are elected president?



## Did You Know?

Before the 12th Amendment to the Constitution was passed in 1804, the presidential candidate who received the second highest number of votes became the vice president of the United States. The two candidates who had been competing against each other were then forced to work together as president and vice president!

## Think & Review

1. Name the two ways that states choose a candidate to represent each major political party in a presidential election.
2. Where is the final decision made about who will be each party's presidential candidate?
3. After the presidential election is over, who makes the final decision about who will be the next president?
4. What is the difference between an open and a closed primary?
5. Name at least three requirements that a candidate must meet in order to run for president.
6. How did Jacob Myers' voting machine help voters?
7. Who was our tallest president? Our shortest?
8. What are the two major political parties in the United States?
9. List at least three requirements that must be met in order to vote in a presidential election.
10. How many presidential electors currently serve in the Electoral College? How is the number of presidential electors decided?

## Web Surfers

To learn more about the presidential election process, visit <http://www.govspot.com/election/electionprocess.htm> or <http://www.whitehouse.gov/our-government/elections-and-voting>

To see a "history in pictures" of voting machines over the years, visit <http://americanhistory.si.edu/vote/votingmachine.html>

To read more fun presidential trivia, go to <http://www.whitehouse.gov/about/white-house-101/fun-facts/>

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Government

## Government of the People

The United States Government is a government of the people. When the Founding Fathers wrote the Constitution, the first words they wrote were, “We the People ...” Why do “we the people” need government?

One of the most important jobs of a government is to make laws and enforce them. Enforcing laws means making sure that people obey them. If there were no rules, or laws, in our society, what would life be like? People could do anything they wanted, even if it hurt someone else. Laws make communities safer and protect everyone’s rights.

Governments provide important services. Our federal (national) government builds national highways and keeps them in good repair. It also helps pay for public schools, local roads and programs that help people in need. State governments provide services like state police departments and driver’s licenses. Local governments make sure trash is picked up and sometimes offer recycling programs. They also provide local police, rescue, ambulance and fire departments to help keep citizens and their property safe.

Governments protect the rights of citizens. In the United States, citizens have the right to free speech, the right to own property, the right to own guns, the right to worship as they choose and other rights. Along with these rights come responsibilities. A responsibility is something that is your duty to do. For example, you have the right to speak your

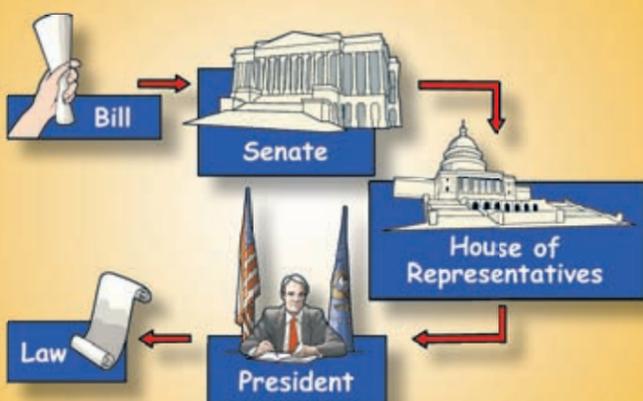
mind, but you also have the responsibility to be honest and avoid hurting others when you speak.

The U.S. Constitution set up the federal government with three branches and listed the responsibilities and powers of each branch. Inside, you will learn more about these branches and how they protect and preserve the rights of the people.



### Connections

## How Does an Idea Become a Law in America?



If you had an idea for a new law, what would you have to do to get it to become a law? First of all, you would need to find a state or national representative who was interested in your idea. He or she would write it down to take to Congress. (Before a written idea for a law is passed, it’s called a bill.)

Let’s say you know a U.S. Senator who writes the bill. He or she would present it to the Senate. If a majority of Senators vote in favor of it, the bill would be sent to the House of Representatives. If a majority of this part of Congress votes in favor of it, the bill goes to the

president. The president can either sign it or veto it. If the president signs the bill, it becomes a law. A veto means the president has said no to the bill, and it does not become a law. What if Congress disagrees with the president’s veto? The bill goes back to Congress. If two-thirds of both houses of Congress vote in favor of the bill, it becomes a law without the president’s signature.

Most bills never become laws. They die along the way because they don’t get enough votes or because the president vetoes them. Laws are the lucky few that made it through a very hard process!



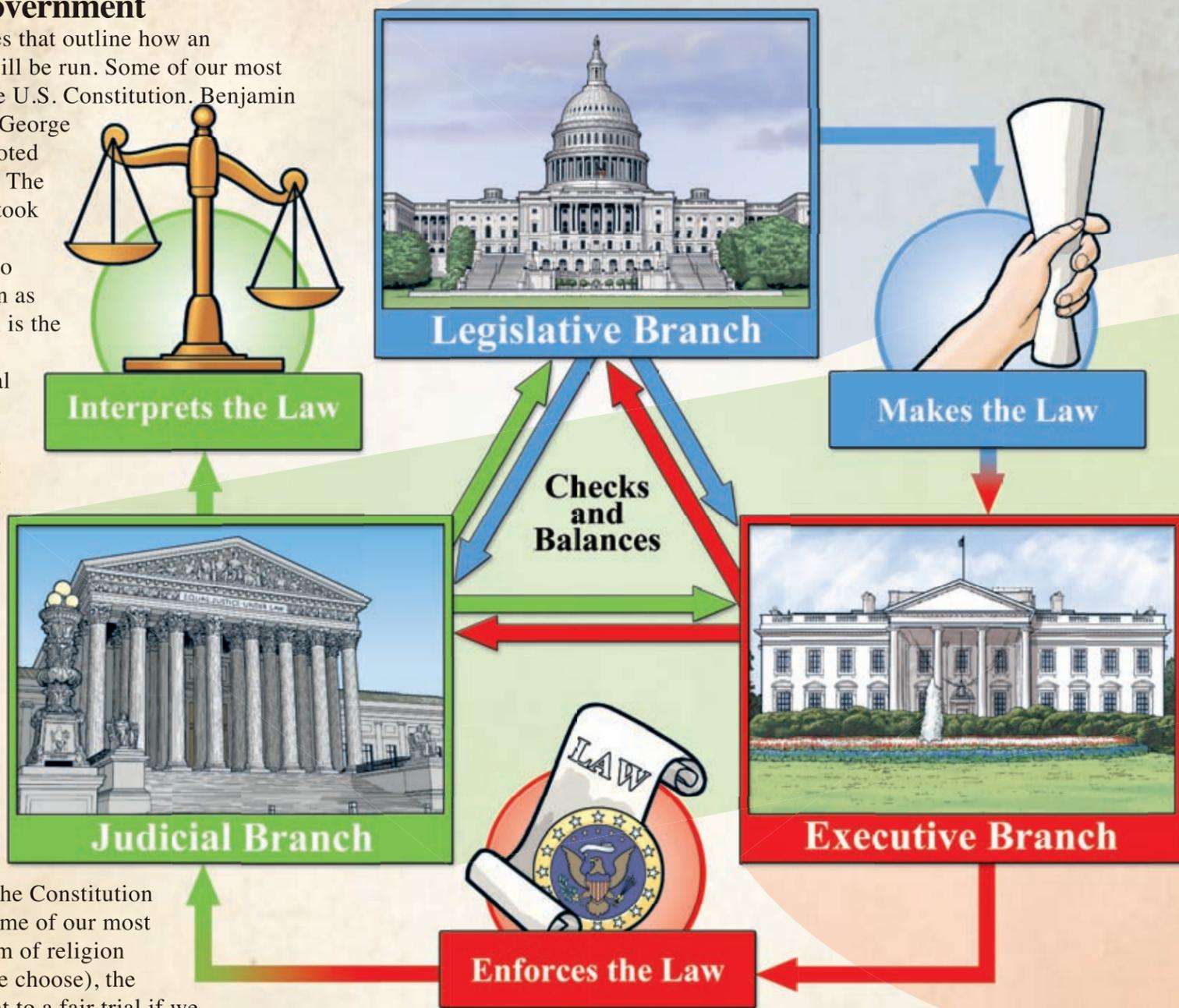
# Government

## Federal (National) Government

A constitution is a set of rules that outline how an organization, state or country will be run. Some of our most famous patriots helped write the U.S. Constitution. Benjamin Franklin was there, and so was George Washington. Washington was voted the president of the convention. The job of writing the Constitution took all summer and was a hot job. Finally, it was up to each state to ratify (agree to) the Constitution as it was written. The Constitution is the foundation of our democracy.

The men at the Constitutional Convention decided the government would have three branches, or parts. They did not want one branch to boss around the other branches. They decided that each of these branches would have their own jobs, but the same amount of power. This is called separation of powers. Each state would also make its own constitution, but the U.S. Constitution would be the most important. The Constitution could also be amended (changed) if people thought it needed to be.

The first 10 amendments to the Constitution are called the Bill of Rights. Some of our most important rights include freedom of religion (the right to worship the way we choose), the right to free speech and the right to a fair trial if we are accused of a crime.



## Civic Responsibility

Citizens have the right and the responsibility to participate in their own government. Civic responsibility often starts with voting. Civic responsibility also means that you obey the law and respect the rights of others. And it means you work for the common good (things that help everyone).

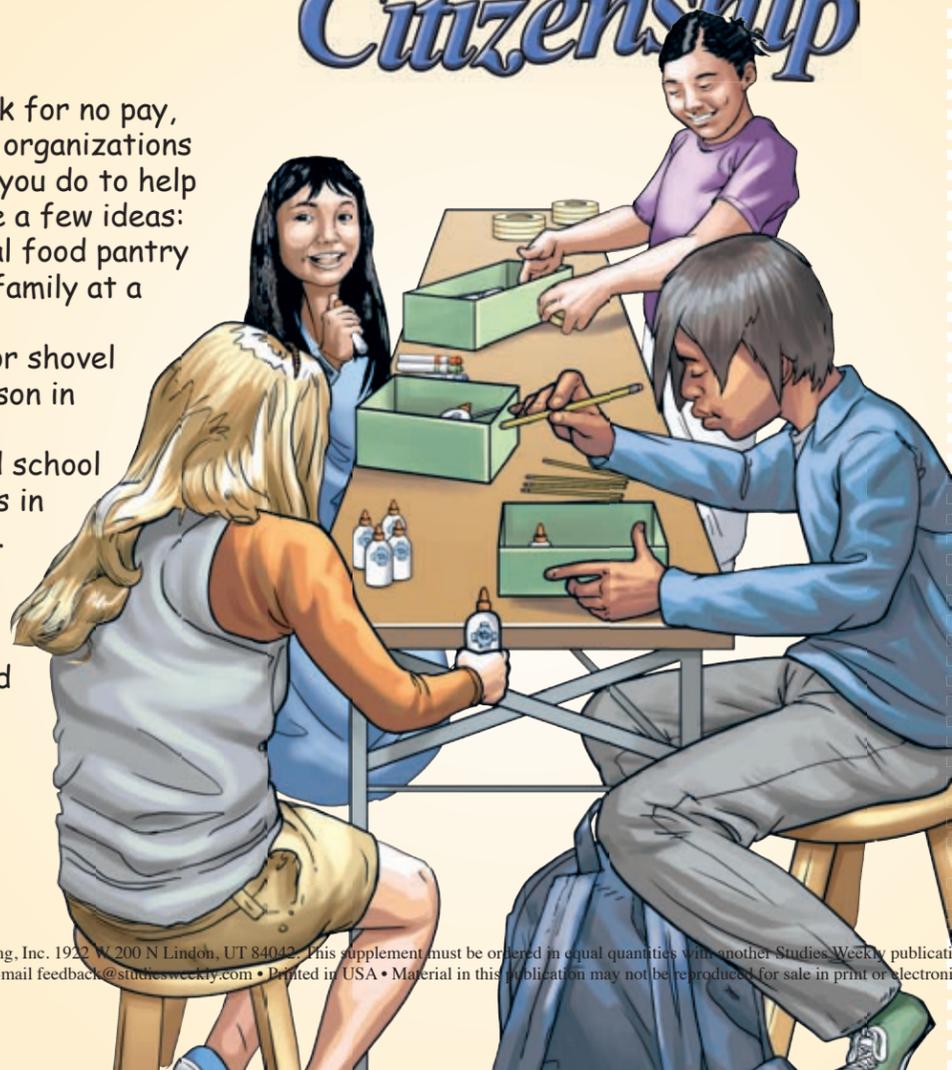
Civic organizations work for the common good. Government is a civic organization, since one of its purposes is to make things better in the community. There may be a historical association near you. That is a civic organization too.

Civic organizations are often called service organizations. The American Red Cross, the American Cancer Society and the YMCA are examples of service organizations. Do you know of any service organizations in your community?

When you agree to work for no pay, you are a volunteer. Many organizations use volunteers. What can you do to help your community? Here are a few ideas:

- Donate food to your local food pantry or volunteer with your family at a local shelter.
- Mow lawns, rake leaves or shovel snow for an elderly person in your neighborhood.
- Organize a backpack and school supply drive to help kids in need in your community.
- Donate supplies or your time to your local animal shelter.
- Get a group together and visit elderly people at a local nursing home.
- Send letters or care packages of food and toiletries to soldiers overseas.

## Citizenship



## The Legislative Branch

The legislative branch is responsible for making laws. It is made up of two houses, the House of Representatives and the Senate. Together they are called the Congress. The House of Representatives is made up of 435 people. The number of representatives each state can send is based on how many people live in the state. The Senate is made up of 100 senators, two from each state.

## The Executive Branch

The executive branch enforces the laws. The president of the United States is part of this branch. One of his jobs is to approve the laws the legislative branch passes. If the president does not like the law, he can refuse to sign it. That is called a veto. If the legislature still wants that bill to be a law badly enough, they can vote for it again. Two-thirds of the members of Congress must vote against the president. Then that bill can become a law without his signature.

The president is also the Head of State. That means he gets to meet with other world leaders and even make treaties (agreements) with them. However, the Congress has to approve the treaty before it goes into effect. (See how the people who wrote the Constitution tried to keep a balance of power?)

The president is also in charge of all of the U.S. military. He can tell soldiers to fight overseas, but he cannot declare war without

the approval of Congress. (That's another example of balance of power. Pretty cool, huh?)

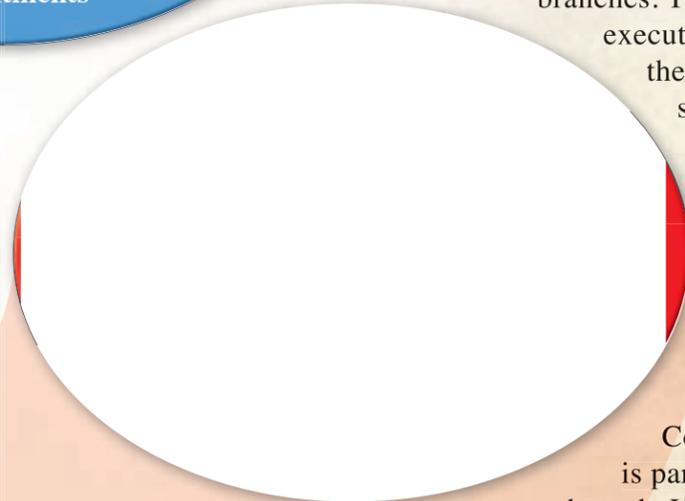
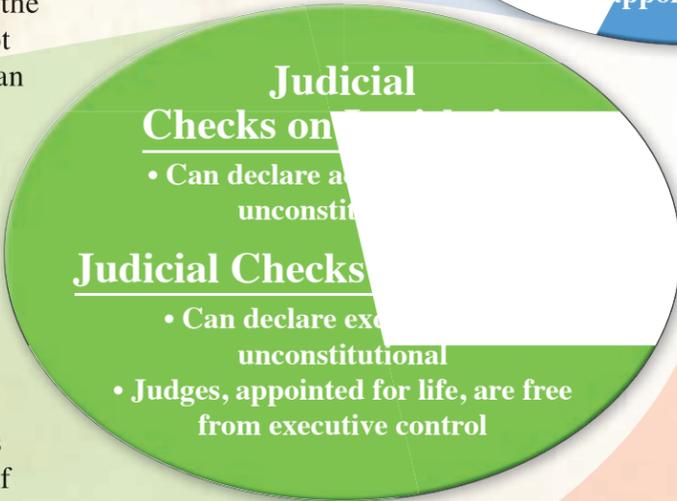
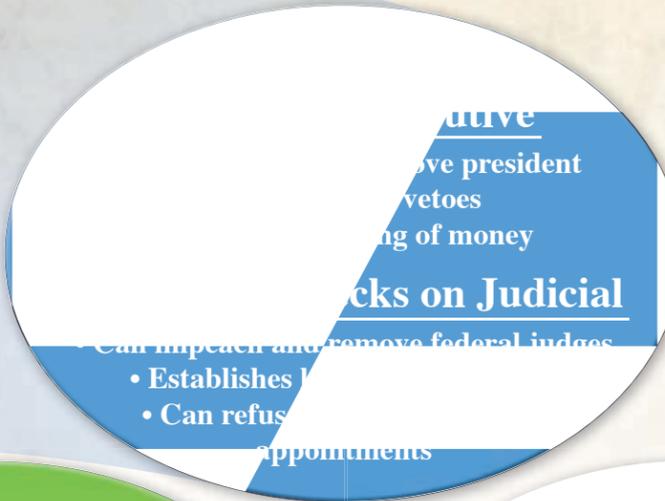
## The Judicial Branch

The job of the judicial branch is to interpret the laws. The Supreme Court is the highest court in the United States. Once the nine Supreme Court justices (judges) make a decision, it is final. The court's main job is to decide on cases that challenge the Constitution. If Congress passes a law and the Supreme Court says that law is against the Constitution, it can no longer be a law. (There's that balance of power again!)

## State Government

State government works a lot like the U.S. government. It has the same three branches. The head of the executive branch is the governor. In some states, the legislative branch is called the General Assembly instead of Congress. The Supreme Court of a state is part of the judicial branch. Your state capital is where most of the business of state government takes place. Can you name the governor of your state?

In many cities and towns, the local government is organized into three branches, too. The head of the executive branch is the mayor. Do you know who your mayor is? Your town probably has a group, often called a city council, that makes laws. There is also a court system that hears cases and decides whether the person on trial has broken the law.



### Checks and Balances

We have three branches and each one is just as powerful as the other. That means no branch can have too much power. This is the balance of power referred to in the article.

1. The legislative branch makes our laws.
2. The executive branch enforces laws.
3. The judicial branch interprets and applies the law.

The balance of power is also known as checks and balances. As shown above, each branch has checks on the other two.

## The Power of One

One important reason our country is a great place to live is that we have the freedom to have and share our own ideas, even if some people don't agree. This freedom lets us make a difference by standing up for what we believe. One person can make a difference. When one person takes action, other people take action, too. That's the power of one!

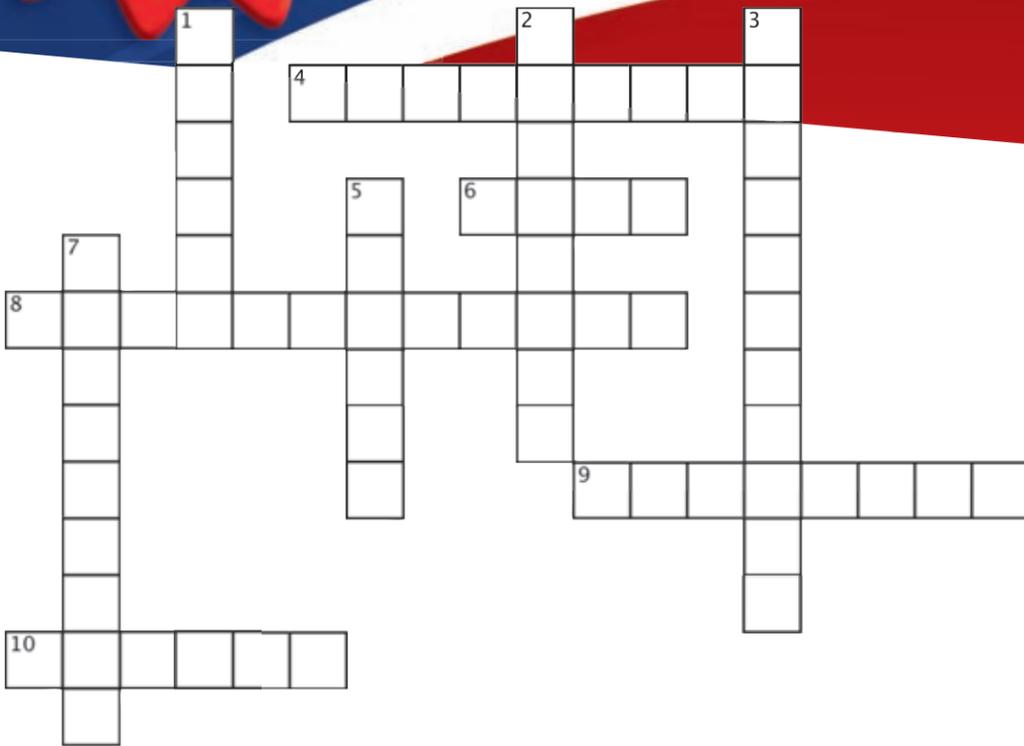
How can citizens change things? It depends on what you want to change. If you want to change something in your community, you need to go to your city council or county commissioners. They are the people who make and change laws in your town or county. If you want to change things at the state level, you can write or email your state senator or representative.

Thinking about changing something that affects the whole country? Contact your U.S. senator or representative by logging on to [www.congress.org](http://www.congress.org). Lawmakers might not be able to get things changed right away. They might not even agree with what you want to change. But it's their job to listen to citizens—even young citizens who can't vote yet.

Another way to try and get something changed is to start a petition. A petition is a written request to a government official signed by many citizens. You can also write letters to the editor in your local newspaper. If things don't change at first, don't give up. Keep working. You can make change happen through the power of one.



# FUN And Games



### ACROSS

4. the branch of government that enforces laws
6. an idea for a law
8. a set of rules that organize how an organization, state or country will be run
9. a written request to a government official signed by many citizens
10. the first few words of the Constitution: We the \_\_\_\_\_

### DOWN

1. first 10 amendments to the Constitution: Bill of \_\_\_\_\_
2. the branch of government that interprets laws
3. the branch of government that makes laws
5. agree to
7. someone who agrees to work for no pay

## Activity

Match the words on the left with the descriptions on the right. Put the letter of the correct answer on the line next to the number.

- |                         |  |
|-------------------------|--|
| _____ 1. mayor          | A. the executive in charge of a country      |
| _____ 2. president      | B. the executive in charge of a school       |
| _____ 3. representative | C. a person who interprets the laws          |
| _____ 4. principal      | D. the executive in charge of a state        |
| _____ 5. judge          | E. a person who makes the laws               |
| _____ 6. governor       | F. the executive in charge of a city or town |

**Bonus Questions** (The answers to these questions aren't in this paper. You will need to do some research to answer some of these questions.)

Who is the president of the United States?  
\_\_\_\_\_

Who is the governor of your state?  
\_\_\_\_\_

Who is the mayor of your city or town?  
\_\_\_\_\_

Imagine that you have just been elected the president of the United States. Now it's time to give a speech to the citizens of our country. Think about these questions before you write: What would you say to the people who voted for you? What would you say to the people who didn't vote for you? What would you promise to do as president? Write your speech and share it with your class.



## Think & Review

1. Name three jobs of government and give an example of each.
2. In your own words, explain how an idea becomes a law in the United States.
3. What is the main idea of the article, "The Power of One"?
4. What is the common good? Why do you think most people feel they have a responsibility to work for the common good?
5. Give an example of a way you can work for the common good.
6. What is a constitution?
7. What are the three branches of the U.S. government?
8. Name the main job of each branch.
9. What is the system of checks and balances? Give an example for each branch.
10. What do you think our country would be like if there were no government or laws?

## Web Surfers

You can learn more about the U.S. government and the Constitution at these websites:

- <http://bensguide.gpo.gov/>
- <http://kids.discovery.com/tell-me/people-and-places/who-travels-with-the-us-president>
- [http://www.archives.gov/exhibits/charters/constitution\\_founding\\_fathers.html](http://www.archives.gov/exhibits/charters/constitution_founding_fathers.html)
- [http://www.archives.gov/exhibits/charters/bill\\_of\\_rights.html](http://www.archives.gov/exhibits/charters/bill_of_rights.html)

If you'd like to make any editorial comments about our paper, please write to us at [feedback@studiesweekly.com](mailto:feedback@studiesweekly.com).



# Studies Weekly

2012  
★ SPECIAL ★  
**ELECTION**  
ISSUE

## The Candidates

# The Race is On!

*Did you know this is an election year? It's probably safe to say that you have heard at least one or two (or a hundred!) political commercials so far this year. What is everyone so excited about? It's time to elect the next president of the United States, and that's a pretty big deal! Be sure to remind your parents to get out and vote on November 6.*

A political party is an organized group of people who share the same ideas about what government should do. In this country, there are two main political parties, Republican and Democratic, but there are several other smaller political parties as well. Let's talk about the two main parties first.

**Republican** The Republican Party is also known as the Grand Old Party, or the GOP. It was created in 1854 by a group that wanted to end slavery. The Republican Party has always been very outspoken in favor of individual rights and voluntary giving. This party is considered conservative, which means that it wants to preserve traditional ideas and values. The symbol of the Republican Party is the elephant.

**Democratic** The Democratic Party was first called the Democratic-Republican Party. Thomas Jefferson and James Monroe started the party in 1792. The Democratic Party has always been very outspoken in favor of civil rights and helping others. This party is considered liberal, which means that it is very tolerant of different beliefs and values. The symbol of the Democratic Party is the donkey.

**Constitution** Formed in 1992 as the U.S. Taxpayers Party, the name was officially changed to the Constitution Party in 1999. The party believes in following the principles of the Constitution, Declaration of Independence and the Bill of Rights. It believes in small government and traditional family values and is against illegal immigration. (coming into the country without proper permission)

**Green** The Green Party was first started in the 1970s in Australia and New Zealand, but the movement has since spread around the world. The party is committed to protecting the environment and in working for non-violence and civil rights for all people. Greens believe in health care for everyone, fair

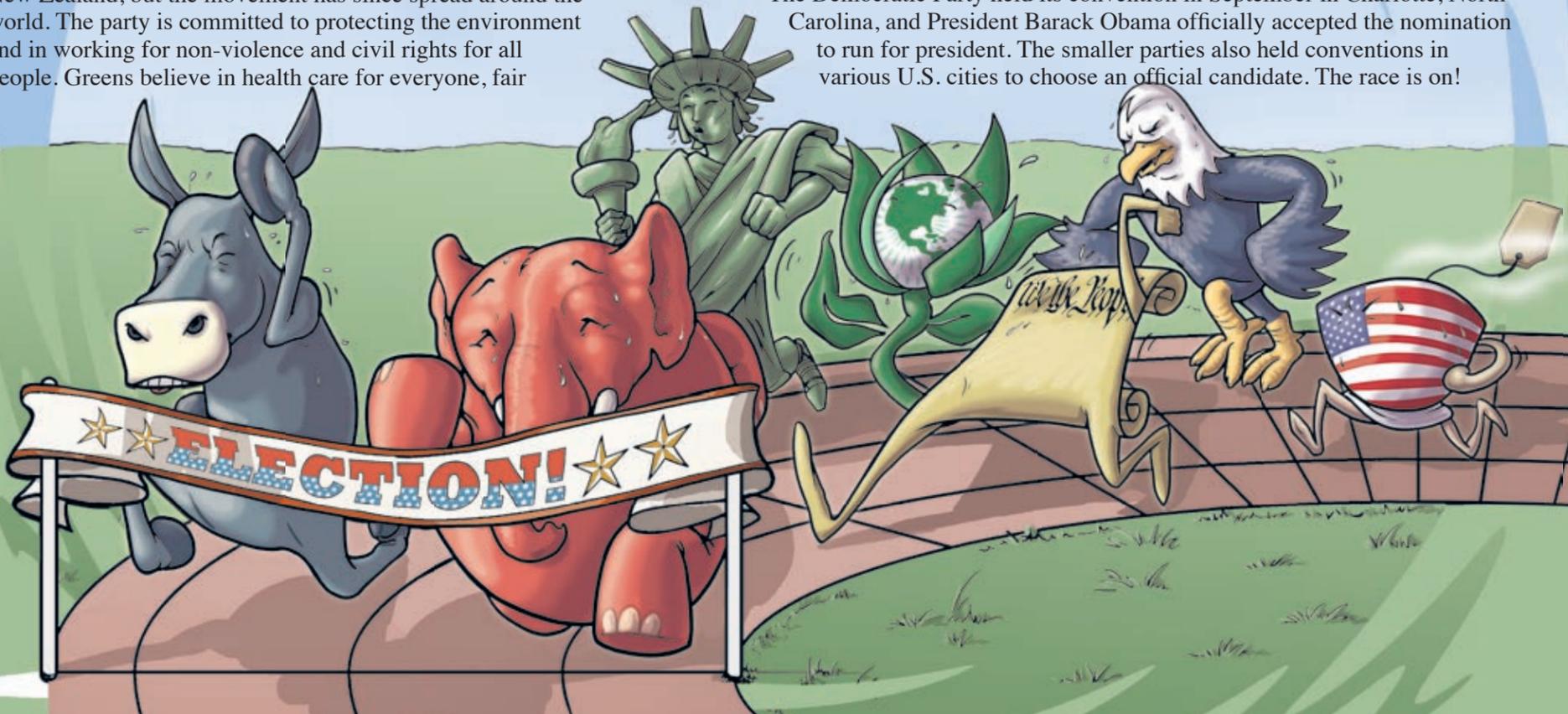
wages for all workers and in finding new, clean energy sources.

**Libertarian** This party was created in 1971 by a group that believed political parties had pulled away from what our Founding Fathers had in mind for this country. Libertarians believe that individuals should be free to seek peace, opportunity and prosperity in any way they think best. Libertarians favor civil rights, free migration across country borders and free trade and travel between nations.

**Reform** The Reform Party was started by Ross Perot in 1995. He believed that all of America's political parties were broken and unable to solve our nation's important problems. This party believes that the government should use a balanced budget, or a plan for government that prevents it from spending more money than it has available. It also believes in paying off the national debt, or the money our nation has borrowed. Reformers are against illegal immigration and they don't support free trade between nations.

**Tea** The Tea Party was organized in 2009 as a grassroots (involving ordinary people) political party. This party favors reduced government spending and is against high taxes. It also wants to reduce the national debt, balance the national budget and follow the principles of the Constitution.

**Election 2012** You probably already know who the main candidates are. The Republican Party held its convention in Tampa, Florida, in August, and the party officially chose Mitt Romney as its candidate for president. The Democratic Party held its convention in September in Charlotte, North Carolina, and President Barack Obama officially accepted the nomination to run for president. The smaller parties also held conventions in various U.S. cities to choose an official candidate. The race is on!





# The Candidates



**DEMOCRAT**  
**BARACK OBAMA**

## Early Years

Barack Obama was born on August 4, 1961, in Honolulu, Hawaii. His father was from Kenya and his mother was from Kansas. The two met while studying at the University of Hawaii. They divorced in 1964 and Barack's mother married a man from Indonesia. The family later moved to Jakarta, where Barack lived until he was 10 years old. In 1971, he moved back to Hawaii to live with his grandparents.

Barack graduated from high school in Hawaii and went to Occidental College in Los Angeles. He transferred to Columbia University in New York, graduated in political science in 1983 and began his career.

## Career

In 1985, Barack took a job as a community organizer in Chicago. He worked to set up job training programs and college prep classes for low-income residents and helped make sure that renters were treated fairly. In 1988, he began attending Harvard Law School. He graduated in 1991.

Barack began teaching at the University of Chicago Law School, where he taught for 12 years. He helped start Project Vote (an organization to help people get registered to vote) in Illinois and took a job as a civil rights attorney for a Chicago law firm. He met Michelle Robinson, a lawyer at the same firm, and the two were married in 1992. They later had two daughters, Malia and Sasha.

In 1995, Barack wrote his life story, "Dreams From My Father: A Story of Race and Inheritance," which was very successful. It has since been released as an award-winning audio book.

## Politics

In 1996, Barack Obama was elected to the Illinois State Senate. While serving as a state senator, he worked to improve health care, create early childhood education programs and give an income tax credit to the poor. He also helped to improve the criminal justice (court) system.

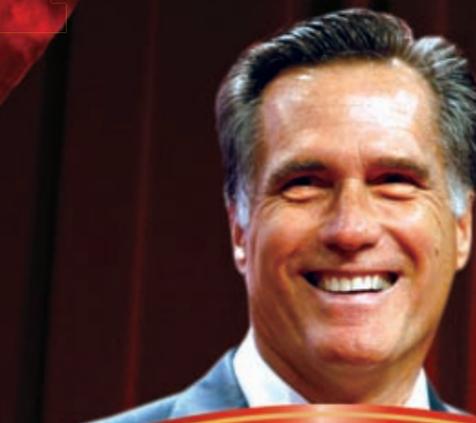
In 2004, Barack was elected as a United States Senator from Illinois. In 2008, he ran for president against Republican nominee John McCain and won, becoming the first African American ever to hold our country's highest office.

As president, Barack Obama has expanded health care, made loans to businesses and banks, improved relations with foreign countries, fought against Somali pirates and won the 2009 Nobel Peace Prize.

If he is re-elected, Barack Obama plans to boost job growth, find new ways of producing energy, raise taxes for the richest Americans and continue to improve health care.

## Family Life

Barack enjoys spending time with his family. His daughters keep busy with soccer, dance, piano and tennis lessons, while the whole family enjoys traveling and spending time together. Barack enjoys basketball and loves to start a good pickup game whenever he can. He enjoys making chili and he loves pizza from the Italian Fiesta Pizzeria in Chicago.



**REPUBLICAN**  
**MITT ROMNEY**

## Early Years

Mitt Romney was born on March 12, 1947, in Detroit, Michigan. His father was a successful businessman who went on to become the president of American Motors Company, as well as governor of Michigan. Mitt idolized his father and always wanted to be like him.

After high school, Mitt spent 2½ years serving as a missionary for the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints in France, where he learned to speak French fluently. When he returned home, he married his high school sweetheart, Ann Davies, and the two continued their education at Brigham Young University. After graduation, Mitt went to Harvard, where he graduated with degrees in both business and law.

## Businessman

Mitt has spent his career working to rebuild struggling businesses. He started out as a consultant, giving advice to companies who needed help, but later created his own company called Bain Capital. This company helped other companies such as Staples, Bright Horizons and Sports Authority to grow.

When the 2002 Salt Lake Winter Olympics were struggling, Mitt came to the rescue. The event was facing money problems, as well as serious worries about safety after the attacks of September 11, 2001. Mitt pulled the event together and helped make the Salt Lake City Winter Olympics one of the most successful games ever held in America.

## Politics

When Mitt became governor of Massachusetts in 2003, the state was in debt, taxes were on the rise and jobs were disappearing. When he left office in 2007, the state had paid off its \$3 billion debt without raising taxes and had put another \$2 billion into a state rainy day fund for emergencies. There was also a new health care plan in place for all citizens of the state.

Mitt decided not to run for a second term as governor, but he ran for president in 2008. He wasn't chosen to represent the Republican Party that year, but he did receive the party's nomination in 2012. If elected, Mitt plans to use his business background to create jobs and improve the nation's economy.

## Family Life

Mitt and his wife are the parents of five sons, and they have 18 grandchildren. Family time is very important to him. He says that when his children were growing up, when he got home from work, he set his briefcase by the door and didn't pick it up again until he left for work.

Mitt's favorite foods are hot dogs and his wife's meatloaf cakes. He enjoys running, and he and his sons have a yearly family triathlon (a long-distance swimming, biking and running race), which can get very competitive!



*You have certainly heard the names Mitt Romney and Barack Obama, but what do you really know about these two presidential candidates? President Barack Obama is the incumbent, or the person who currently holds the office. Mitt Romney is one of the challengers, or people who want to take the office holder's place. On these two pages, you'll find out more about all of the candidates!*



## CONSTITUTION PARTY VIRGIL GOODE

Virgil Goode (born October 17, 1946) served as a Republican member of the U.S. House of Representatives from Virginia in 1997-2009. Before becoming active in politics, he worked as a lawyer. He grew up a Democrat, later became a Republican and is now a member of the Constitution Party.

If elected president, he hopes to stop illegal immigration, cut down on legal immigration, increase oil drilling here in the U.S., reduce taxes and preserve Social Security.

He and his wife, Lucy, are the parents of one daughter, Catherine. They love animals and have adopted several special-needs dogs from their local animal shelter. He says that if he is elected, he will be bringing several dogs and cats along with him to the White House!



## LIBERTARIAN PARTY GARY JOHNSON

Gary Johnson (born January 1, 1953) served as the Republican governor of New Mexico from 1995-2003. During this time, he earned the nickname "Governor Veto" for vetoing (saying no to) over 750 bills that came across his desk because he believed they would not be good for his state. He cut taxes and balanced the budget of the state of New Mexico.

Before becoming governor, Gary was the owner of a very successful construction company. He believes in running the government like a business and in considering the costs before going ahead with any decision.

In his free time, Gary enjoys biking, skiing and hiking and has even climbed Mt. Everest! He has two grown children and is currently engaged to be married.



## GREEN PARTY

The Green Party believes that the health of the entire world depends on reaching the following goals:

1. achieving social justice by making sure that all people are treated fairly and equally
2. establishing a grassroots democracy where government leaders are ordinary, everyday people
3. creating a community of nonviolence where people learn that there are ways of dealing with every problem without using violence
4. encouraging environmentalism so that the world and its resources will be preserved and protected from pollution and harm

To find out which candidate has been chosen to represent the Green Party, visit the party's website. It's listed on Page 4.



## REFORM PARTY

The Reform Party, started by Ross Perot in 1995, believes that both major political parties are broken and that the Reform Party can fix what is wrong with the American political system. Here are some of the party's goals:

1. balance the budget
2. pay down the national debt
3. limit the amount of money candidates can accept from supporters
4. enforce immigration laws
5. get rid of free trade between nations
6. limit how long U.S. Senators and Representatives can serve

To find out which candidate will be representing the Reform Party in the 2012 election, visit the party's website. It's listed on Page 4.



## TEA PARTY

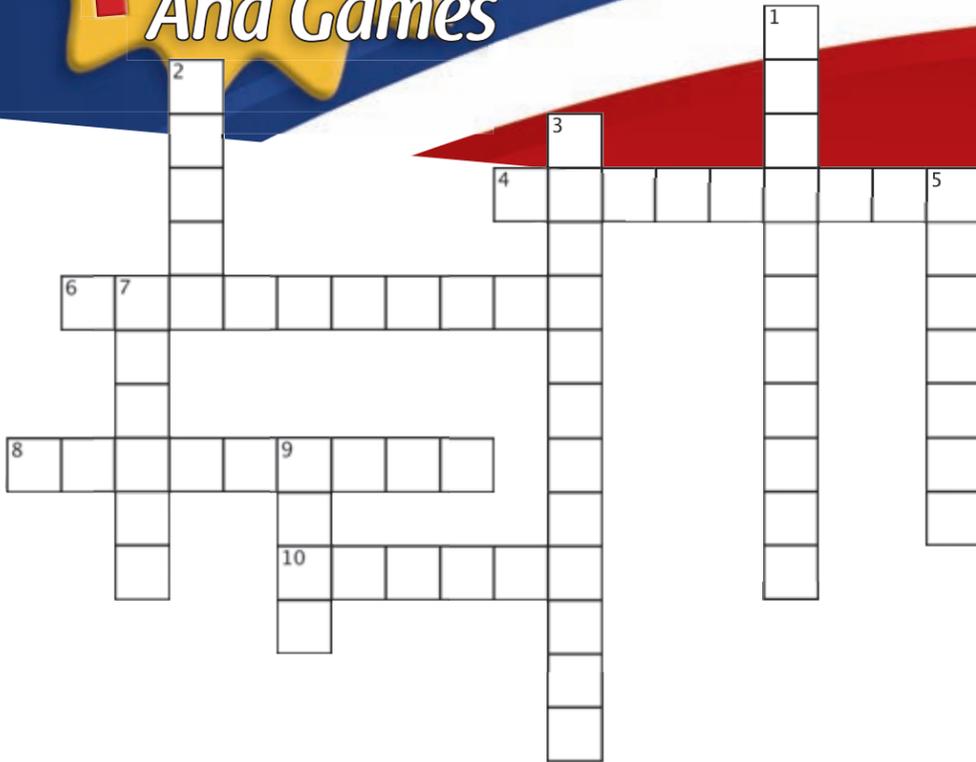
The Tea Party considers itself more of a political movement than a political party. It does not choose actual presidential candidates to represent the Tea Party, but instead chooses to support one of the candidates who is already running. The Tea Party decides which candidate to support by asking the following questions:

1. Is the candidate really conservative?
2. Does the candidate really support the Tea Party values?
3. Can the candidate win the election?

The Tea Party supports the candidate who is most likely to limit the powers of the federal government, protect individual freedoms, encourage personal responsibility, reduce taxes, encourage the free market system and return power to the people. The Tea Party is supporting Mitt Romney in the 2012 election.



# FUN And Games



### ACROSS

4. an organized group of people who share the same ideas about what government should do: \_\_\_\_\_ party
6. involving ordinary people
8. someone who is running for political office
10. a plan for government that prevents it from spending more money that it has available: balanced \_\_\_\_\_

### DOWN

1. coming into the country without proper permission: illegal \_\_\_\_\_
2. 2012 Democratic presidential candidate: Barack \_\_\_\_\_
3. in favor of preserving traditional ideas and values
5. very tolerant of different types of beliefs and values
7. 2012 Republican presidential candidate: Mitt \_\_\_\_\_
9. the money our nation owes: national \_\_\_\_\_

## Activity Compare the Political Parties

Take a few minutes to compare the different political parties you read about in Studies Weekly. Look at the chart below and check the boxes that apply to each party. Use the information in this week's magazine and what you already know to help you. The first one has been done for you. Think carefully and have fun!

Parties		Tea	Republican	Reform	Libertarian	Green	Democrat	Constitution
Beliefs	preserve traditional ideas and values	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
	tolerant of different beliefs and values	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	strong national government	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	strong local government	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	free trade	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	rights of workers	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	free migration across borders	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	no illegal immigration	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	balanced budget	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	pay off national debt	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	protect the environment	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	same rights and opportunities for all people	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Imagine that you are old enough to vote in the 2012 presidential election. After reading this week's newspaper, which candidate would you vote for? Explain your choice and tell why you think this candidate would be the best person for the job. Remember to check your work for correct spelling, punctuation and grammar.



## Think & Review

1. What is a political party?
2. Name the two main political parties in the United States.
3. List some of the other political parties that also have candidates in this year's presidential election.
4. When is Election Day always held?
5. Who is the Republican presidential candidate for 2012?
6. Who is the Democratic presidential candidate for 2012?
7. How does the Tea Party choose a presidential candidate?
8. Name the political party that believes in non-violence, protecting the environment and fair wages for all workers.
9. Compare the two main political parties. What are the main differences between the two? What are some similarities?
10. Name the symbols of the two main political parties.

## Did You Know?

Presidential elections are held on the first Tuesday after the first Monday in November. November was chosen as election month because it was a good time for farmers to get to the polls. By November, most of their crops were harvested and the weather hadn't yet turned cold enough to keep them from traveling.

Tuesday was chosen instead of Monday to prevent people from having to travel on a Sunday. (In the early days, citizens often had to travel long distances to get to the polls.) The first Tuesday after the first Monday was chosen to prevent Election Day from ever falling on the first day of the month. This was traditionally the day that businessmen settled their books for the previous month. Candidates didn't want businessmen who had a bad month to take it out on them when they came to the polls to vote.

Here's a list of websites for the political parties you learned about:



- Constitution: <http://www.constitutionparty.com/>
- Democrat: <http://www.democrats.org/>
- Green: <http://www.gp.org/index.php>
- Libertarian: <http://www.lp.org/>
- Reform: <http://reformparty.org/>
- Republican: <http://www.gop.com/index.php>
- Tea: <http://www.teaparty.org/>