

Political Parties Flashcards

Part of the AP U.S. Government collection

Overview

This resource contains a collection of 32 flashcards that will help students master key Political Party concepts that may be covered on the AP U.S. Government exam.

These are not actual test questions, nor do they involve much “application” of knowledge. Instead, they focus on the basic factual and conceptual knowledge that students must first internalize if they are to successfully formulate logical responses to multiple-choice or essay questions on the eventual exam.

Brainscape has created this content in partnership with several AP U.S. Government teachers and tutors, as well as ex-executives from test prep publishers such as Kaplan and The Princeton Review. The material is as comprehensive as possible, while still being broken down into small bite-sized chunks that make it easy to study. We have included a variety of question formats to help students’ minds encode the knowledge as deeply as possible.

How to Use This Resource

Teachers and students can use these flashcards in a variety of creative ways. Below are a few common use cases:

1. Post this PDF on your class website, so students can download it on their own, and potentially print their own copy as a study aid (and even *cut out* individual flashcards)
2. Use these questions as inspiration for your own quiz questions
3. Use these flashcards as a “game”, where one student (or group of students) asks another student (or group) a random question, and keeps score of how well the questions are being answered
4. Encourage students to use the digital version of the flashcards (see below)

Online and Mobile Version

All of these flashcards are available to study on the Brainscape website ([brainscape.com](https://www.brainscape.com)) and in our mobile app(s). Brainscape’s “smart flashcards” study system uses our unique “Confidence-Based Repetition” method, which repeats questions in a progressive pattern based on students’ personalized path of mastery. Teachers can track students’ progress and identify students who need more guidance.

Students can study a portion of Brainscape’s premium flashcards for FREE and can gain unlimited access for a small fee. Students can also use Brainscape to create & share their own supplementary flashcards (which is ALWAYS FREE).

If you are interested in a bulk class license for Brainscape’s web & mobile study system, please contact info@brainscape.com, and we can set up some time for a call.

#	Question	Answer
1	Define: political party	A political party is a group of people who share common political goals and who organize with the purpose of influencing policy through the electoral process.
2	What makes the development of American political parties unique?	Unlike much of the world, American political parties developed not based on issues of class, but on issues regarding the role of government. The earliest political parties, the Federalists and the Democratic-Republicans, debated the size and influence of the federal government, a debate which continues today.
3	What are the three types of party systems in modern governments?	The three types of party systems are: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Single Party: one political party controls the government (e.g. Cuba or North Korea) 2. Two Party: two major political parties vie for power 3. Multi-party: several smaller, non-majority parties with divergent interests seek power; most governments are controlled by a coalition of these smaller parties (e.g. Israel, Germany)
4	How many political parties existed at the time the Constitution was enacted in 1789?	At the time of the Constitution, there were no political parties. By Washington's second term as president, two political parties had developed around the dominant figures of the day: Alexander Hamilton (Federalist) and Thomas Jefferson (Democratic-Republican).
5	Define: the First Party System	The First Party system describes the two-party system, composed of Federalists and Democratic-Republicans, that existed in the United States from the late 1700s until the end of the War of 1812.
6	How did the Federalist Party envision the new national government's role?	The Federalist Party, led by Alexander Hamilton, supported a strong central government. The Federalists wanted a national bank, tariffs, and good relations with Britain. Hamilton and the Federalists argued that the Constitution provided implied powers; the sovereign duties of a government implied the right to use means adequate to its ends.



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7	Who were the Democratic-Republicans?	The Democratic-Republicans (aka the Anti-federalists and Jeffersonian Republicans) opposed the Federalists in the early years of the Republic and were led by Thomas Jefferson. Democratic-Republicans stemmed from opponents of the new Constitution, desired a weak central government, and admired France. The Democratic-Republicans strongly denounced Hamilton's creation of a national bank.
8	What was the Era of Good Feelings?	After the Federalist Party disintegrated during the War of 1812, the only national party was the Democratic-Republicans. President Monroe, who was in office for much of the period, sought to downplay partisan affiliation in making nominations with the goal of eliminating political parties altogether. The Era of Good Feelings was mostly a facade, and the Democratic-Republicans would be torn asunder during the 1824 election.
9	What were the two political parties of the Second Party System (1824-1854)?	The two major parties of the Second Party System were the Democratic Party and the Whig Party. Much as the Democratic-Republicans had done, the Democrats favored a limited central government. The Whig Party favored a strong central government and a national bank. During the period, most presidents were from the Democratic Party. Whig presidents, such as Harrison and Taylor, had a tendency to die in office.
10	Define: critical election	Critical elections are rare, and refer to a dramatic shift in the electorate, where the majority party is often replaced by the minority party and voting coalitions shift alignments. An example of a critical election is the election of Franklin Roosevelt in 1932, ending a long period of Republican dominance and enshrining the New Deal coalition.
11	Andrew Jackson was the first candidate elected president from the _____.	Democratic Party Jackson was the first president elected from the "continuous Democratic party," i.e. the Democratic Party that exists today. In opposition to Jackson, the Whig Party developed, which would elect its first president in 1840.



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12	Which party replaced the Whig Party as the primary opposition to the Democratic Party?	<p>After the Whig Party disintegrated due to slavery and sectionalism, the anti-slavery Republican Party replaced it beginning in 1854.</p> <p>The birth of the Republican Party marked the dawn of the Third Party System, which lasted until the 1890s. During this period, Republicans were the dominant political party. President Lincoln was the first president from the Republican Party.</p>
13	Which political party was dominant during the Fourth Party System, that lasted from the mid-1890s until 1932?	<p>During the Fourth Party System, the Republican Party was dominant, and there was only one Democratic president, Woodrow Wilson.</p> <p>During the era, Republicans focused on restraining big business, limiting federal spending, and foreign policies. The Democrats' power was concentrated in the South, where they enjoyed strong support from segregationists.</p>
14	In 1912, the Republican Party split between William Howard Taft and Theodore Roosevelt. What was Roosevelt's new party called?	Roosevelt took a number of Republican voters with him into the Progressive Party, which newspapermen nicknamed the Bull Moose Party. The Progressive Party elected members to Congress in 1912, although it failed as a lasting political movement.
15	The era of Republican dominance ended with the election of which president in 1932?	<p>In 1932, President Franklin Roosevelt was elected. Roosevelt's New Deal era inaugurated the Fifth Party System, and saw an unprecedented expansion of the Democratic Party that lasted roughly until 1968.</p> <p>During the period, only one Republican president (Eisenhower) was elected and Congress mostly had Democratic majorities.</p>
16	What was the New Deal coalition?	The New Deal coalition was an alignment of interest groups and voting blocs that supported the New Deal and the related expansion of the federal government. The New Deal coalition dominated national elections from 1932 until 1968.

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17	What characteristics of party affiliation in Congress have existed since the mid-1980s?	<p>Although American history has typically seen one party or the other control Congress for extended periods, from the mid-1980s to the present congressional control has fluctuated.</p> <p>In 1980, Republicans took control of the Senate, followed by a seesaw between Democratic and Republican control.</p> <p>In 1994, Republicans took control of the House, which they lost in 2006 and regained in 2010.</p>
18	Which party is thought to be more supportive of environmental issues?	Voters concerned about the environment typically support the Democratic Party.
19	In terms of political parties, what is meant by divided government?	Divided government is when one party controls the presidency and another party controls one or both houses of Congress. One of the hallmarks of divided government is legislative gridlock.
20	Define: gridlock	Gridlock refers to the difficulty of passing laws when the legislative and executive branches are controlled by different parties. Gridlock typically arises when the House and Senate are controlled by different parties, or when one or both are controlled by a different party than that of the president.
21	In the political context, what is party dealignment?	<p>In political science, party dealignment takes place when a large number of voters abandon association with a political party without developing a new party to replace it, or joining a different, existing party.</p> <p>Many scholars contend that declining political affiliations in recent U.S. elections indicate that the U.S. is entering a period of dealignment.</p>
22	In the political context, what is party realignment?	<p>Party realignment occurs when a large segment of the voting populace shifts party affiliation, often due to dramatic changes in issues, changes in party leadership, and party demographic shifts.</p> <p>As examples, scholars cite the elections of 1932 and 1980.</p>

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23	What difficulties are faced by third parties in national and local elections?	Third parties face numerous difficulties in seeking to place their candidates in office. National elections cost millions of dollars, and even local elections require a significant organizational structure. Election laws make it difficult for third parties to place their candidates on the ballot and often require a large petition drive.
24	What is the difference between ideological and single-issue third parties?	Ideological third parties, such as Libertarians and Communists, are based upon a set of social, political, and economic beliefs. In contrast, single-issue parties, such as the Anti-Masonic Party or the Prohibition Party, focus on one single electoral issue.
25	What are personality-driven third parties?	Personality-driven third parties coalesce around a single leader. Examples include Theodore Roosevelt's Progressive Party in 1912 and Ross Perot's 1992 presidential campaign.
26	What are splinter parties?	Splinter parties are offshoots from major political parties, that often arise to fill a void left by the major political parties. As an example, George Wallace's American Independent Party was a splinter party from the Democratic Party, and appealed to voters opposed to desegregation.
27	Within the two major political parties, which organizations are responsible for developing and promoting the party platform and coordinating election strategy and fundraising?	These party tasks are typically carried out by the Republican and Democratic national committees, who are also responsible for organizing party conventions.
28	What takes place at a presidential nominating convention?	At presidential nominating conventions, the party's official nominee is selected, and a party's platform is selected. Today, the nomination of a presidential candidate is merely ceremonial, as primary elections typically ensconce a party's nominee before the convention. The last presidential convention whose result was doubtful was the Republican 1976 convention.

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29	What are superdelegates?	<p>Superdelegates are delegates to national conventions who don't have to run in primaries or caucuses, and are commonly governors, congressmen, or state legislators.</p> <p>While the Republican Party has only a few superdelegates, roughly 20% of the Democratic Party convention voters are superdelegates. The Democratic Party apparatchiks enacted the superdelegate system after the 1972 election to offset the efforts of more radical convention delegates.</p>
30	Which short-lived political party held the first national political convention?	<p>The Anti-Masonic Party, dedicated to removing Free Masons from public office, held the first national political convention at Baltimore in 1831. The convention nominated William Wirt for president. Wirt carried Vermont in the 1832 election, but the Anti-Masonic Party disintegrated shortly thereafter.</p>
31	What is the role of a political party's national chairperson?	<p>The national chairperson is responsible for directing the national committee's work, fundraising, and recruiting potential candidates for office. The chairperson is typically the face of the national committee.</p> <p>Reince Priebus is the Republican National Committee's chairperson and Debbie Wasserman Schultz is the Democratic National Committee chairperson.</p>
32	What is the task of the congressional campaign committees for each party?	<p>The congressional campaign committees seek to elect members of their political party to the House of Representatives. The two congressional campaign committees are headed by members of the House, who recruit candidates and raise funds.</p> <p>Senatorial committees perform much the same work for their respective parties in the Senate.</p>