

TITLE OF LESSON

American Government Unit 2 Lesson 20 – Political Parties
What is a political party?

TIME ESTIMATE FOR THIS LESSON

One class period

ALIGNMENT WITH STANDARDS

California – History 12.6

MATERIALS

Current Events Presentation – Student Page
Political Beliefs Matrix Poster – Teacher created
Political Party – Student Page
‘Round the Clock – Student Page

LESSON OBJECTIVES

- To be able to define and distinguish between political parties
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FOCUS AND MOTIVATE STUDENTS – WARM-UP ACTIVITY

- 1) Homework Check – Stamp/initial complete homework assignments. Pass back graded work (particularly the **Service Requirement Check-in 2** – which will become part of their portfolio) and have students place in the appropriate section of their binders.
 - 2) **Agenda** – Have students copy the goal, agenda, and homework onto the next clean page in a notebook.
 - 3) Current Events – Collect the overhead transparencies from the Current Events presenters for today. Below the goal/agenda, copy the titles for three current events stories that they have chosen. Have students copy these and prepare to take notes.
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ACTIVITIES – INDIVIDUAL AND GROUP

1. Current Events Presentations – Have students come to the front of the class one at a time to present their articles. At the end of each presentation the students should turn in their **Current Events Presentation** sheet, stapled to a copy of the news article. Grades and comments should be written on the back of the **Current Events Presentation** sheet and returned to the students the next lesson. Choose the presenters for the next day that current events are due and give them a copy of the **Current Events Presentation** sheet to complete.
2. “T” Activity – For this activity draw on the board or overhead a large cross or “T” with the letters A and B written above the “T” but on either side of the middle line. Explain to students that you are going to give them items (for this activity it will be names) to categorize and that they must try to determine, first, which column they go in and, second, what the title for the columns A and B are. Students may have a difficult time understanding this at first, so usually it is just best to begin and have students learn as they go. The first name you should give them is Al Gore. Ask random students where they think his name should go (Column A or Column B?). Have them give you a reason why. Tell them Al Gore goes in Column A. Quickly give them the next name – Arnold Schwarzenegger – and have them guess which column and why. Tell them he goes in Column B. At this point, students will be wanting to know what Column A and B stand for. Explain to them that this is the goal of the activity. They need to figure out the titles for each column. Give the next name – Bill Clinton – and have them guess which column and why. Tell them he goes in Column A. Some students may now be attempting to guess what the titles are, but keep these guesses at a minimum. Continue this process through the following names:

Dianne Feinstein – Column A



Dick Cheney – Column B
George Bush – Column B
John Kerry – Column A
Colin Powell – Column B

At this point, the chart should look like this:

Column A	Column B
Al Gore Bill Clinton Dianne Feinstein John Kerry	Arnold Schwarzenegger Dick Cheney George Bush Colin Powell

For a final name, tell the students to categorize Ralph Nader (it's a trick question, he belongs in neither A nor B). Finally, ask students if they could guess the titles of the columns. It is possible that they won't be able to. If they can't, tell them that Column A is Democrats and Column B is Republicans. Nader is neither a Democrat nor Republican, so he doesn't belong. Tell students that Democrats and Republicans are names of political parties. Ask them, given the information they know and names on the board, if they could give you a definition of a political party (e.g., *a group of people with similar political beliefs on social and economic issues*). Have them write this definition on their vocabulary sheet.

3. **Matrix Analysis** – Refer to the Political Beliefs Matrix Poster somewhere in the room (this teacher-created matrix should be a semi-permanent fixture in the room). Ask students to predict which Quadrant they think is the home to most Democrats and which is the home to most Republicans. Use students' initials on the poster to identify possible Democrats and Republicans in the class. Ask them where a conservative Democrat might be located on the chart. What about a liberal Republican? Next, ask students if they think (or know) of any other political parties besides Democrats and Republicans. If they know of any, could they tell you where they might be located on the matrix (remember – a political party is a group of people with similar beliefs)?
4. **Pair Work** – Pass out to the students the **Political Party** sheet and tell them that their goal is to use the information on the sheet to determine where each of these political parties would be located on the matrix. They will have to read the information carefully, use their knowledge of liberals and conservatives, as well as social and economic issues to find the appropriate place. When students understand what is expected of them, have them take out their **'Round the Clock** sheets and get with their partner after the teacher has chosen a random time.
5. **Homework** – With a couple of minutes left in class, tell students that they are to complete this handout for homework.

HOMEWORK

1. Complete the **Political Party** sheet.
2. Continue service requirement work.

GROUP ROLES

None

DOCUMENTATION FOR PORTFOLIO

Unit 1

Action Plan

Persuasive Essay or Flash Argument: Why should government care...?

American Government Unit 1 Final Exam

Unit 2

Political Beliefs Project