From Ballot to Bill

How parties connect candidates, elections, and governing

9-12.GOV.16 "Explain the role and evolution of political parties in governing and in the recruitment/election of political candidates and the importance of and difference between primaries, caucuses, and general elections."

NAME _____ DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline two examples of political parties changing over time, circle the names of three election stages, and number two ways parties affect governing.

A Party's Work Before and After Election Day

1. Imagine a candidate seeking a seat in the U.S. House. A party can help that person find volunteers, raise money, and reach voters. Parties also give voters a way to compare broad policy goals. The Constitution does not establish political parties, but they emerged soon after the new government began. In the 1790s, Federalists and Democratic-Republicans organized around competing ideas about federal power. The Federalists faded, Democrats emerged from the Democratic-Republicans in the 1820s and 1830s, and Republicans formed in the 1850s amid conflict over slavery. Party coalitions and priorities have continued to change.

2. Suppose two people want the same party's nomination for that House seat. The party might recruit both or favor one, but nomination rules give voters a role. In a primary, eligible voters cast ballots to choose a nominee; who may vote depends on state rules. In a caucus, participants meet at a set time to discuss candidates and choose a preferred candidate or delegates, depending on the rules. Caucuses require joining a meeting, while primaries use ballots, sometimes with early voting. In the general election, voters choose among the parties' nominees and any other qualified candidates to fill the seat.

3. After the general election, the winning House member must help govern, not just campaign. Members of the same party often choose leaders, seek seats on committees, and coordinate votes on bills. If the member's party controls the House, its leaders usually have more influence over which bills reach a vote. A member of the minority party can still propose ideas, negotiate, and vote, but has less control over the agenda. Imagine a bill to fund local buses: party leaders might promote it, revise it to win support, or set it aside. Parties connect campaigning to governing, though members can disagree with their party.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. How do the parties named in the passage show that political parties can change over time?

2. How can a party influence a House race before voters choose its nominee?

3. How does choosing a nominee in a primary differ from choosing one in a caucus?

4. Why might the general election result change a party's influence over bills in the House?

3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

Invent a House candidate and a party whose priorities have changed over time. In five or six sentences, describe how the party helps the candidate, compare how a primary and a caucus could nominate the candidate under different rules, explain what the general election decides, and show how the party might shape work on a specific bill.

ANSWER KEY

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HIGH SCHOOL · 9-12.GOV.16

PART 1 · READ AND MARK

Underline two examples of political parties changing over time, circle the names of three election stages, and number two ways parties affect governing. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 · ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	How do the parties named in the passage show that political parties can change over time?	**Federalists faded, Democrats emerged from the Democratic-Republicans, and Republicans formed later during conflict over slavery.**
2	How can a party influence a House race before voters choose its nominee?	**A party can recruit or favor a candidate and help that person find volunteers, raise money, and reach voters.**
3	How does choosing a nominee in a primary differ from choosing one in a caucus?	**In a primary, eligible voters cast ballots. In a caucus, participants meet to discuss candidates and choose a preferred candidate or delegates, depending on the rules.**
4	Why might the general election result change a party's influence over bills in the House?	**If the election gives a party control of the House, its leaders usually gain more influence over which bills reach a vote.**

PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

The invented Civic Alliance once focused on road repairs but now prioritizes flood protection. It recruits Maya Chen, a neighborhood organizer, and helps her raise campaign funds. If her state uses a primary, eligible voters could choose her as nominee by ballot. If party rules instead call for a caucus, participants could meet and choose delegates who support her. In the general election, voters decide whether Chen or another qualified candidate wins the House seat. If she wins, party leaders could put her flood-control bill on the agenda, although other members might oppose it.

Accept different invented parties, candidates, and bills if the response accurately distinguishes the two nomination methods from the general election. The governing example should show party influence without claiming that party leaders control every member's vote.