Parties in Motion

Trace changing ideas and party work across levels of government

USG.3.10 "Examine the progression of political parties and their ideologies and the broad political spectrum in the American governmental system, and analyze their functions in elections and government at federal, state, and local levels."

NAME _____ DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

YOUR JOB As you read, underline changes in political parties, circle contrasting political views, and write E beside election functions or G beside government functions. These marks will help you connect party history and ideas to what parties do.

From National Banks to Flood Plans

1. In the 1790s, arguments over a national bank helped divide leaders into Federalists, who favored a stronger national government, and Democratic-Republicans, who worried about concentrated federal power. Parties changed as new issues arose. The Federalists faded, the Democratic-Republicans split, and Democrats and Whigs competed in the 1830s and 1840s. In the 1850s, opposition to the spread of slavery brought together the new Republican Party. The Whigs collapsed. After the Civil War, Democrats and Republicans remained the major parties, but their coalitions and positions changed over time. A party name, therefore, does not guarantee one unchanging set of beliefs.

2. Imagine a river town debating how to prevent floods. Some residents favor more public spending on levees; others favor lower taxes and private solutions. Those choices can be placed on a broad political spectrum: liberals generally support a larger government role in solving economic problems, while conservatives generally prefer a smaller role. This is a useful guide, not a rule for every issue or person. People can hold views from different parts of the spectrum, and parties contain disagreements. Today, Democrats generally lean liberal and Republicans generally lean conservative, but their candidates may disagree over a particular flood plan.

3. Before an election, a party recruits candidates, organizes volunteers, raises money, and explains its priorities to voters. In the river town, a local party committee might support a candidate for county commissioner who promises better drainage. Local elections may also be nonpartisan, with no party labels on the ballot. At the state level, parties back candidates for governor and legislature, whose decisions can affect flood funding. At the federal level, they help elect members of Congress, who can debate disaster aid. After elections, elected party members can propose budgets, build voting coalitions, and challenge opposing plans at all three levels.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. How does the passage show that parties changed between the 1790s and the 1850s? Give one change and the issue connected to it.

2. How might liberal and conservative views lead to different flood plans? Why would those labels not tell you exactly what every candidate supports?

3. Compare one election function and one government function of parties at the state or federal level.

4. A local ballot has no party labels. According to the passage, how could a party still take part in that election, and what could elected party members do afterward?

3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

A town wants to keep its public library open later. In 70 to 90 words, describe two approaches from different parts of the political spectrum, explain how a party might act in a local election and how its elected members might act in state government, and note one limit of party labels.

Parties in Motion

PART 1 · READ AND MARK

As you read, underline changes in political parties, circle contrasting political views, and write E beside election functions or G beside government functions. These marks will help you connect party history and ideas to what parties do. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 · ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	How does the passage show that parties changed between the 1790s and the 1850s? Give one change and the issue connected to it.	**The Republican Party formed in the 1850s around opposition to the spread of slavery. Earlier parties had included the Federalists and Democratic-Republicans.**
2	How might liberal and conservative views lead to different flood plans? Why would those labels not tell you exactly what every candidate supports?	**A liberal approach might favor public spending on levees, while a conservative approach might favor lower taxes and private solutions. Candidates and party members can disagree on a particular plan.**
3	Compare one election function and one government function of parties at the state or federal level.	**At the federal level, parties help elect members of Congress. After the election, elected party members can propose budgets or build voting coalitions.**
4	A local ballot has no party labels. According to the passage, how could a party still take part in that election, and what could elected party members do afterward?	**A local party committee could support a candidate for county commissioner. Afterward, elected party members could propose budgets or build voting coalitions.**

PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

A town wants its library open later. A more liberal proposal could use tax revenue to pay for extra staff, while a more conservative proposal could seek donations or shift money already in the budget. A local party committee that favors the tax plan might recruit a council candidate and organize volunteers for the campaign. In state government, elected members of that party could propose a grant for libraries and build support for a vote. Party labels would not predict every member's position because members can disagree about the grant.

Accept other plausible contrasts across the spectrum that do not treat party positions as fixed. For the open task, look for distinct local election and state government actions, plus a clear limit of party labels.