Parties at Work

Trace party roles from campaigns to government decisions.

USG.3.11 "Analyze the functions of political parties in elections and government at national, state, and local levels of the federal system."

NAME _____ DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline party actions meant to help candidates win elections, and circle actions by elected party members that shape government decisions. Write N, S, or L beside each action to show whether it happens at the national, state, or local level.

Who Pays for Harbor City's Drains?

1. After two floods damage homes in Harbor City, residents ask who will pay for stronger drains. A national party adds flood protection to its platform, a statement of policy goals. Its leaders recruit congressional candidates, raise campaign funds, and organize volunteers to contact voters. Those efforts aim to win seats, not to repair drains directly. Once elected, party members in Congress may work together to pass a disaster aid bill or fund grants that cities can apply for. A party cannot simply order Congress to agree, and a federal grant may still require a city's own application.

2. At the state level, the same party's organization backs candidates for governor and the state legislature. It helps them explain how they would pay for flood protection, and it turns out supporters at election time. If those candidates win, the governor can propose a state budget, while legislators debate and vote on funding for drainage projects. Party members may negotiate a shared plan, but other legislators also have votes. A state's party leaders may prefer a different mix of taxes and spending than national party leaders. Their decisions affect which projects receive state funds and how much money Harbor City must find elsewhere.

3. In Harbor City, city council candidates debate whether to replace drains near the school first. If council elections are nonpartisan, candidates appear without party labels on the ballot, yet local party volunteers might still support a candidate and urge neighbors to vote. Once in office, council members decide how to spend the city budget and where repairs should begin. They must consider federal grant rules, state funding, and local costs. Party networks can connect people across levels, but the national party cannot cast a council vote. Voters can compare each party's campaign promises with what its elected members actually do.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. How do the national party's actions before an election differ from what its members in Congress may do after winning?

2. How could a state party's election work affect the funding Harbor City might receive?

3. In a nonpartisan city council election, what can local party volunteers do, and what decision belongs to council members instead?

4. Why can't the national party decide on its own which Harbor City drains get replaced first? Use actions at two levels of government in your answer.

3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

A town wants a safer crossing near its school. In 4 to 6 sentences, explain how parties could act in elections and how elected party members could act in government at the national, state, and local levels; include one limit on what a party can decide.

ANSWER KEY

Parties at Work

HIGH SCHOOL · USG.3.11

PART 1 · READ AND MARK

Underline party actions meant to help candidates win elections, and circle actions by elected party members that shape government decisions. Write N, S, or L beside each action to show whether it happens at the national, state, or local level. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 · ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	How do the national party's actions before an election differ from what its members in Congress may do after winning?	**Before an election, party leaders recruit candidates, raise funds, and contact voters to win seats. In Congress, elected members may work to pass disaster aid or fund grants.**
2	How could a state party's election work affect the funding Harbor City might receive?	**The party backs and turns out voters for state candidates. If elected, those officials can propose, debate, and vote on a state budget that funds drainage projects.**
3	In a nonpartisan city council election, what can local party volunteers do, and what decision belongs to council members instead?	**Volunteers can support a candidate and urge neighbors to vote, even without party labels on the ballot. Elected council members decide how to spend the city budget and where repairs begin.**
4	Why can't the national party decide on its own which Harbor City drains get replaced first? Use actions at two levels of government in your answer.	**Members of Congress may fund grants, but a city may need to apply and follow grant rules. Harbor City's council decides where local repairs begin and how to spend the city budget.**

PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

A national party might support congressional candidates who promise safer streets, and its elected members could vote for a transportation grant program. A state party might help legislative candidates campaign on road safety, and elected legislators could fund grants for safer crossings. Local party volunteers could support city council candidates, including in a nonpartisan election, and elected council members could approve a crossing near the school. The town might apply for a grant, but it would still need to meet the program's rules. A party cannot install a crossing by itself because government officials must make and carry out the decision.

Accept other accurate election and government actions at each level. Responses should distinguish party support for candidates from decisions made through government institutions.