Power and Parties

Compare party priorities from campaigns to Congress

USG.C.5.2 "Compare political platforms of major contemporary political parties and describe how political parties influence both policymaking and the election of like-minded candidates to public office."

NAME _____ DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline one energy priority for each party. Circle two ways parties help candidates in elections, then number two ways parties can shape policy after an election.

From Energy Plans to Public Policy

1. Imagine a town considering how to power a new public library. National party platforms do not decide that local project, but they show contrasting priorities that can shape national energy policy. In recent national platforms, Democrats have emphasized cutting greenhouse gas emissions and expanding clean energy, including wind and solar. Republicans have emphasized increasing domestic oil and gas production and reducing rules they say raise energy costs. Both parties discuss reliable, affordable power, yet they differ on which energy sources to promote and how much regulation to use. Individual candidates may disagree with parts of their party's platform.

2. A platform also helps voters see which candidates share a party's broad goals. Party primary elections usually narrow the field before the general election. After a candidate is chosen, party organizations can raise money, recruit volunteers, and contact voters to help that candidate win. A Democrat running on cleaner energy might highlight a plan to expand renewable power; a Republican focused on energy prices might call for more domestic fuel production. These messages link candidates to party priorities, but voters choose individuals, not platforms alone. A party's endorsement and campaign support cannot guarantee that its candidate will win.

3. Winning an election gives a party more chances to shape policy, but no party can pass a bill alone simply by announcing a platform. In Congress, members of a party may introduce bills that reflect its priorities, organize support, and use a majority to decide which proposals receive attention. On energy, a Democrat might back tax credits for clean power, while a Republican might back faster permits for oil and gas drilling. Bills still need enough votes in both chambers and the president's approval, or enough votes to override a veto. Some members cross party lines or negotiate changes.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. How do the two parties' energy priorities differ, even though both discuss affordable power?

2. How might each party's energy priorities shape its candidate's message in a general election?

3. Compare one energy bill a member of each party might support in Congress.

4. How could a party help elect a candidate, and why would that victory not guarantee its preferred energy bill becomes law?

3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

Invent a candidate for Congress whose town wants cheaper electricity and cleaner air. In 4 to 5 sentences, compare the parties' energy priorities, propose a campaign action the candidate's party could organize, and describe a bill the candidate might propose that is not named in the passage. Explain why the bill might not pass.

ANSWER KEY

Power and Parties

HIGH SCHOOL · USG.C.5.2

PART 1 · READ AND MARK

Underline one energy priority for each party. Circle two ways parties help candidates in elections, then number two ways parties can shape policy after an election. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 · ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	How do the two parties' energy priorities differ, even though both discuss affordable power?	**Democrats emphasize cutting emissions and expanding clean energy. Republicans emphasize more domestic oil and gas production and fewer rules they say increase costs.**
2	How might each party's energy priorities shape its candidate's message in a general election?	**A Democratic candidate might promote renewable power, while a Republican candidate might promote more domestic fuel production.**
3	Compare one energy bill a member of each party might support in Congress.	**A Democrat might support tax credits for clean power. A Republican might support faster permits for oil and gas drilling.**
4	How could a party help elect a candidate, and why would that victory not guarantee its preferred energy bill becomes law?	**A party could raise money, recruit volunteers, or contact voters. A bill would still need enough votes in both chambers and the president's approval, or enough votes to override a veto.**

PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

Democrats prioritize clean energy and lower emissions, while Republicans emphasize more domestic oil and gas and fewer energy rules. My invented Democratic candidate wants to cut power bills by improving home insulation. Her party could organize volunteers to visit voters and ask about their energy costs. If elected, she could propose grants to help households insulate their homes. The bill might stall if lawmakers disagree about its cost.

Accept accurate comparisons that describe party priorities as broad positions rather than views held by every candidate. For the open task, accept a plausible original campaign action and bill that connect to the chosen candidate's stated priorities.