Ideas That Stayed

The Tea Party's economic ideas and their influence on political parties

USH.C.9.2.A "Describe the economic philosophy of the Tea Party movement and how its ideas currently influence political party systems."

NAME _____ DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline three Tea Party economic goals, circle how activists influenced Republican candidates, and write a 1 beside one example of the movement's influence today.

A Movement Inside a Party

1. In 2009, crowds gathered at rallies carrying signs about taxes and federal debt. The Tea Party movement grew as activists opposed federal spending, economic stimulus measures, and later the Affordable Care Act. Its name referred to the Boston Tea Party, but its economic argument focused on the present: lower taxes, less federal spending, and a smaller role for the national government. Supporters said people and businesses could make better choices with more of their own money. Critics worried that cuts could weaken public services.

2. The Tea Party was a movement, not a separate political party. Activists often backed candidates in Republican primary elections, where voters choose a party's nominees. Those candidates pushed Republican leaders to promise spending cuts and resist tax increases. Some won seats in Congress and argued against raising the federal debt limit without spending changes. This strategy gave activists influence inside the Republican Party, even when they did not control it. It also sharpened debates with Democrats, who generally favored a larger federal role in funding services.

3. Today, the Tea Party is less visible as an organized movement, but its ideas still shape party debates. Some Republican candidates call for lower taxes, smaller government, and limits on federal spending, echoing Tea Party priorities. Other Republicans support costly programs or tariffs, so the party does not follow one economic script. Democrats often defend federal investment in health care and other services, although they disagree over how to pay for it. The movement's lasting effect is clearest in arguments over what government should fund and who should pay.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. How did Tea Party supporters think lower taxes would affect people's choices?

2. Why did opposing federal stimulus measures fit the Tea Party's economic philosophy?

3. How did the Tea Party influence the Republican Party without becoming a separate party?

4. How does the passage show that Tea Party ideas still matter but do not define every Republican's views?

3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

Congress proposes a federal flood protection program paid for with a higher federal tax. In four or five sentences, explain how a Tea Party-influenced Republican and a Democrat might respond, and why two Republicans might disagree.

ANSWER KEY

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HIGH SCHOOL · USH.C.9.2.A

PART 1 · READ AND MARK

Underline three Tea Party economic goals, circle how activists influenced Republican candidates, and write a 1 beside one example of the movement's influence today. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 · ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	How did Tea Party supporters think lower taxes would affect people's choices?	**People and businesses would keep more of their money and make more of their own spending decisions.**
2	Why did opposing federal stimulus measures fit the Tea Party's economic philosophy?	**Federal stimulus measures involved government spending, which the movement wanted to reduce.**
3	How did the Tea Party influence the Republican Party without becoming a separate party?	**Activists backed candidates in Republican primaries who pushed party leaders to cut spending and resist tax increases.**
4	How does the passage show that Tea Party ideas still matter but do not define every Republican's views?	**Some Republicans still call for lower taxes and spending limits, while others support costly programs or tariffs.**

PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

A Tea Party-influenced Republican might oppose the plan because it raises taxes and federal spending. That lawmaker might ask states to pay for flood protection instead. A Democrat might support federal funding because floods can threaten homes and businesses. The Democrat might still question whether the proposed tax is fair. Another Republican might support the program despite its cost, showing that Republicans do not all agree on federal spending.

Accept other plausible positions if students connect them to the passage's economic ideas. Responses should treat party positions as possible views, not rules that every member follows.