

One Big Party?

Name: _____

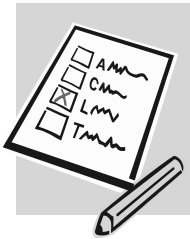
It's a Party...

...but not the kind with ice cream and cake (usually). **Political parties** are groups of people who share similar beliefs about how the government should be run and how the issues facing our country should be solved. By organizing into political parties, people have more power to make their voices heard than they would have if they acted alone. Political parties are powerful organizations that fight to get the government to act in ways the political party believes is best. Political parties are organized at every level of government, from the national level right down to your own neighborhood.



Five Roles of Political Parties

Nominate Candidates



Political parties are responsible for selecting candidates who will run for political office. The parties choose candidates who believe in the party's platform. These candidates represent the party's

members and help to spread the party's message during elections.

Influence Policy



Members of the Senate and the House of Representatives are also members of political parties. The senators and representatives from each party often work together as a group to create

and pass laws that support their party's platform. The laws Congress passes affect the policies of our government. People in each political party want the government's policies to reflect their own party's platform.

Unite Government



People in the same political party are connected because they are members of the same organization. Most members of the government on the local, state, or national level are party members. A party can link

its members at different levels of government to achieve big goals for the party.

Create Balance



The most powerful political party is the one that has the most members elected to office. Being in the **majority** means the party can focus the

government's attention on issues that are important to the party's platform. The party in the **minority** works hard to oppose the majority party and keep it in check. Usually the majority party is able to get many laws passed.

Depending on the minority party's strength, the majority may need to compromise with the minority before a law will pass. In this way the opposing party protects the interests of its own party supporters. A similar balance exists when the president and the majority in Congress are from different parties.

Inform Citizens



Political parties run campaigns for candidates. During campaigns, political parties run television ads, distribute pamphlets, post blogs, and help candidates give speeches. All of this media helps people understand what the

political issues are and how government works. But beware: All of the information a political party distributes is *biased* toward its own party platform. Because of this, a political party should not be a citizen's only source of information.