

Election History

Day One:

What is an Election?

An **election** is a process of voting. In elections, people **vote** for someone to be a political **leader**. Presidential elections are where people vote for someone to be the next President of the United States.

Role of the President

The President is the **leader** of the United States. One of his or her jobs is signing the **laws** of our country. The President also meets with other leaders to discuss and solve world problems. They are also in charge of our **military**. The President, along with Congress, decide on how much **money** is spent each year for the U.S. government.

The First Election

George Washington was a Commander who led the U.S. Continental Army to victory in the American Revolution. In **1789**, he was chosen to be the first **president** of the United States of America.

Why Elections?

When George Washington was president, he only served two **terms** (8 years). He believed that presidents should not become too powerful or serve too long, unlike kings. This gave us the idea of having elections every 4 years, where the **citizens** of the United States could vote for their next leader.

Right to Vote

Voting is a **right** that everyone should have, but it wasn't always that way in the United States. For many years, not all Americans could vote. Many were **not allowed** to vote because of their race, gender, religion, age, or the amount of money they had.

Women's Suffrage

Women's **suffrage** is the right of women to vote and hold office in a powerful government position.

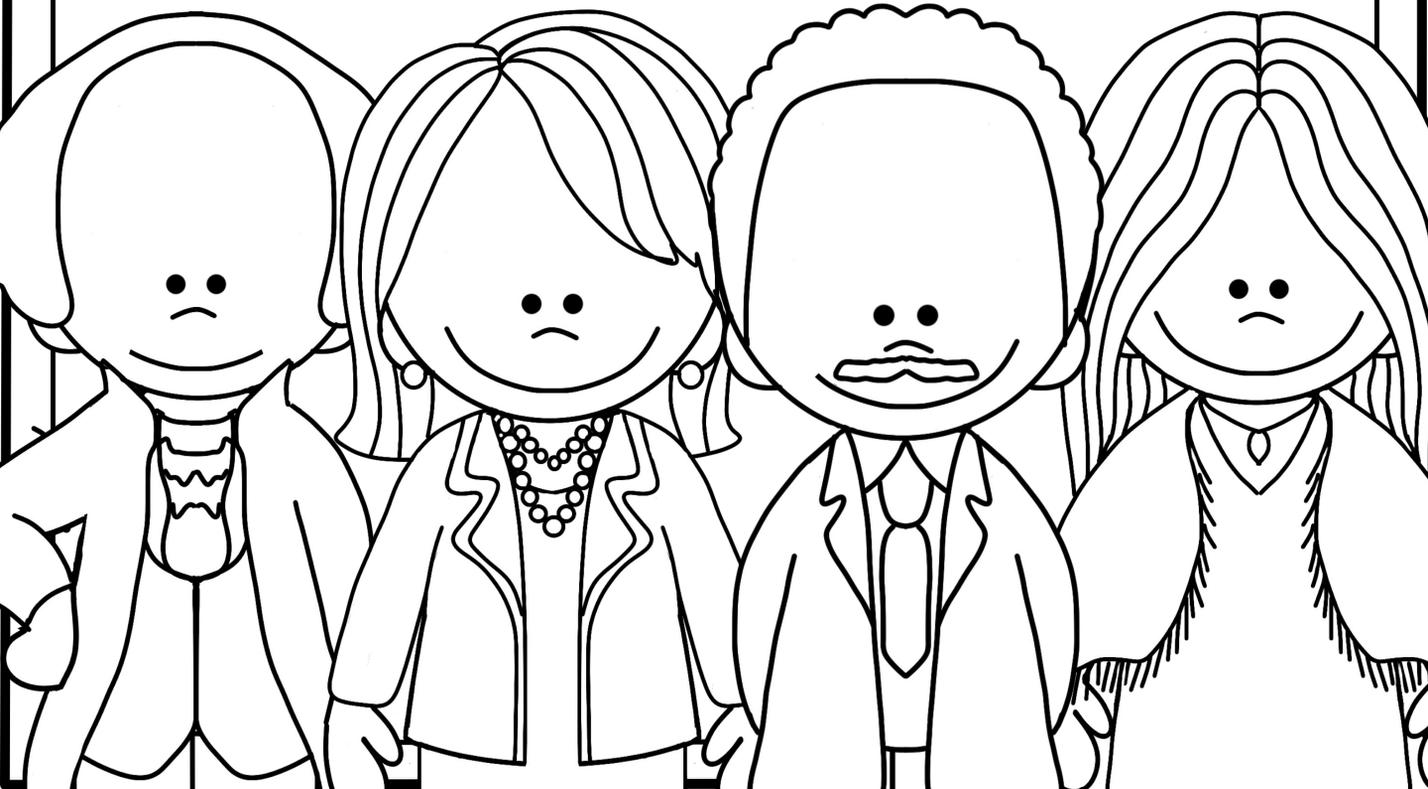
The fight for women to be **treated equally** started in the 1840's, but it wasn't until 1920, that women were finally given the right to vote.

Black Suffrage

In 1870, the 15th Amendment gave African-American **men** the right to vote. Around 1890, laws were passed in some states that made it very hard and unsafe for black men to vote. In 1965, the **Voting Rights Act** made those unfair laws illegal. This new law allowed all Black men and women the right to vote.

Native American Suffrage

The 14th Amendment says that anyone born in the U.S. is a **citizen**. This however did not apply to Native Americans. This meant they were not allowed to vote. It wasn't until 1924, when the **Indian Citizen Act** was passed, that they were allowed to vote. Even then, it wasn't until 1948 that all states allowed Native Americans to vote.



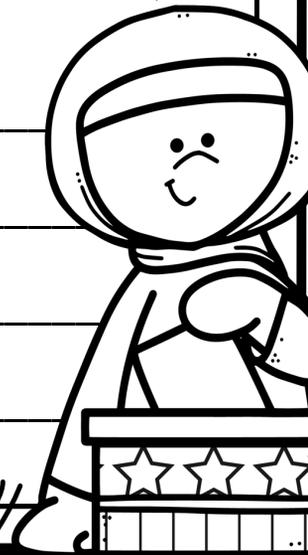
Day 1: Reflection Questions

1. Which of the President's jobs do you think is the most difficult?

2. Why do you think George Washington was chosen to be the first President of the United States?

3. Why is it important for everyone to vote?

4. Why do you think it took so long for women, African-Americans, and Native Americans to be given the right to vote?



2024 Election Candidates

Day Two:

What is a Candidate?

A presidential candidate is a person who wants to be elected, or voted as, the next President of the United States. Many people try to run for this position, but only one candidate is chosen. The process in which a candidate is elected is called the electoral process.

Candidate Requirements

If someone wants to run for president, there are three requirements in order for them to be considered.

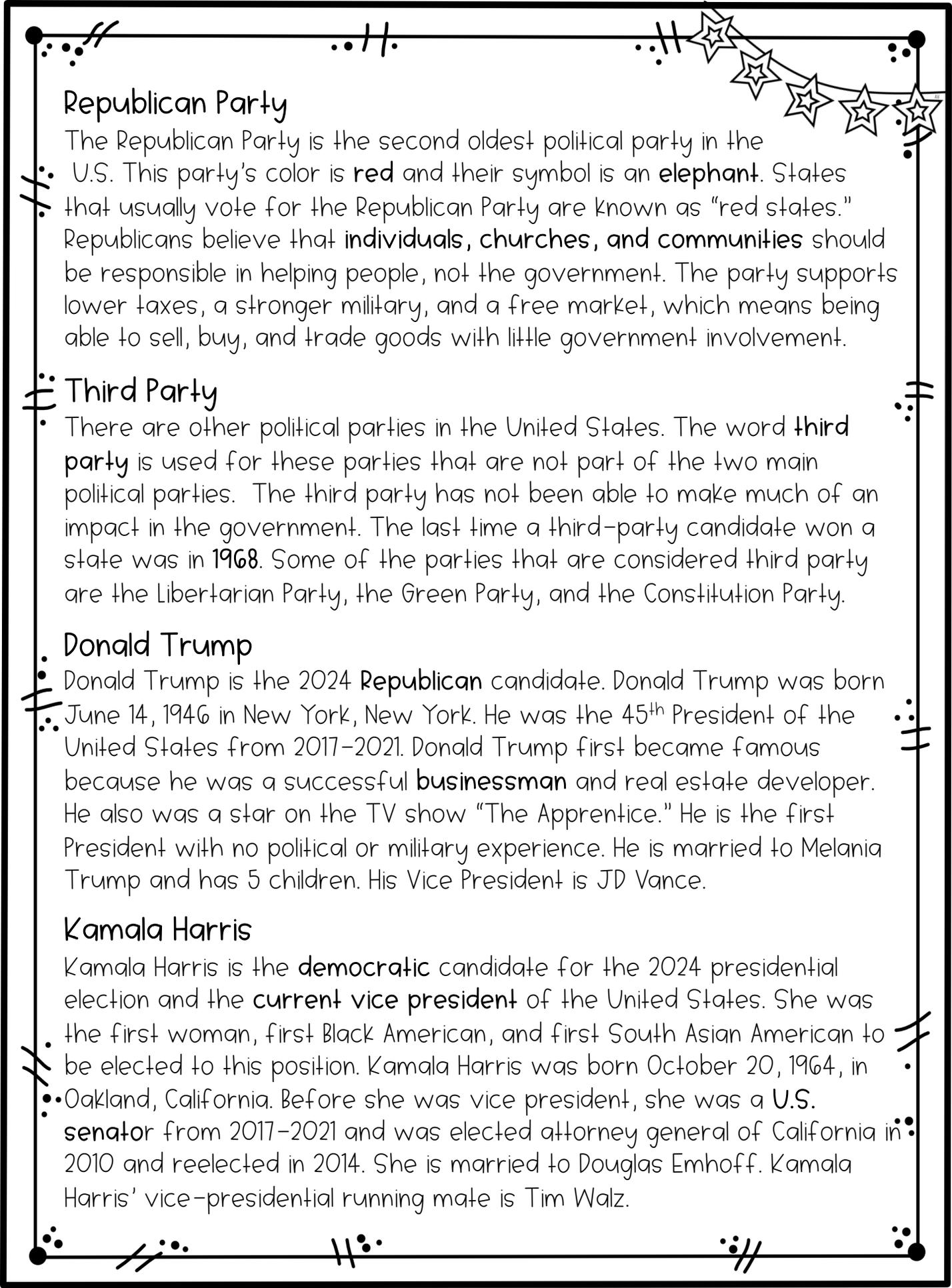
1. They must be a U.S. citizen that was born in the U.S.
2. They have to be at least 35 years old.
3. They had to live in the U.S. for the last 14 years.

Political Parties

The main way that U.S. citizens elect people in the United States is through political parties. There are **two** major political parties: the **Democrats** and the **Republicans**. There are some smaller parties as well, but they aren't as well known. The goal for each party is to win elections, as well as make an **impact** in the government. The members of a political party share **similar beliefs** about how the government should work.

Democratic Party

The Democratic Party is the biggest and oldest political party in the U.S. This party's color is **blue** and their symbol is a **donkey**. States that usually vote for the Democratic Party are known as "blue states." Democrats believe that the **government** should be **responsible** in helping people. The party also supports equal opportunity, affordable healthcare and education, and protection of the environment.



Republican Party

The Republican Party is the second oldest political party in the U.S. This party's color is **red** and their symbol is an **elephant**. States that usually vote for the Republican Party are known as "red states." Republicans believe that **individuals, churches, and communities** should be responsible in helping people, not the government. The party supports lower taxes, a stronger military, and a free market, which means being able to sell, buy, and trade goods with little government involvement.

Third Party

There are other political parties in the United States. The word **third party** is used for these parties that are not part of the two main political parties. The third party has not been able to make much of an impact in the government. The last time a third-party candidate won a state was in **1968**. Some of the parties that are considered third party are the Libertarian Party, the Green Party, and the Constitution Party.

Donald Trump

Donald Trump is the 2024 **Republican** candidate. Donald Trump was born June 14, 1946 in New York, New York. He was the 45th President of the United States from 2017–2021. Donald Trump first became famous because he was a successful **businessman** and real estate developer. He also was a star on the TV show "The Apprentice." He is the first President with no political or military experience. He is married to Melania Trump and has 5 children. His Vice President is JD Vance.

Kamala Harris

Kamala Harris is the **democratic** candidate for the 2024 presidential election and the **current vice president** of the United States. She was the first woman, first Black American, and first South Asian American to be elected to this position. Kamala Harris was born October 20, 1964, in Oakland, California. Before she was vice president, she was a **U.S. senator** from 2017–2021 and was elected attorney general of California in 2010 and reelected in 2014. She is married to Douglas Emhoff. Kamala Harris' vice-presidential running mate is Tim Walz.

Day 2: Reflection Questions

1. Do you think the candidate requirements are fair? Why or why not?

2. Which Democratic values do you think are important?

3. Which Republican values do you think are important?

4. Why do you think the third party has not been as successful as the other two main political parties?

5. What do you think makes someone a good presidential candidate?

The Electoral Process

Day Three:

Step 1: Primaries and Caucus

Many candidates from different political parties will travel and campaign throughout the country, trying to **win the favor** of their party. The states will either hold a **primary** or a **caucus**. In a caucus, the party members will choose the candidate they like best based on questions answered and votes. In a primary, the party members vote for the candidate they want to represent them.

Step 2: National Conventions

Each party will hold a **national convention**. This is where the people who represent the party will vote on which candidate they want to run for President. That candidate will choose a vice presidential candidate to run with them. The candidate from each party will **campaign** around the country trying to win the support and votes of the people in each state.

Step 3: General Elections

In November, the **General Election** is held. This is where **citizens** in every state have the chance to vote for one of the presidential candidates. In this election, voters want their candidate to win the **majority**, or the most votes, for their **state**.

Step 4: Electoral College

Each state gets a certain number of votes. The number of votes each state gets is based on how many people live in that state. The candidate that wins that state by majority of votes, will get all the electoral points for that state. There are a total of **538** electoral votes. The candidate that gets more than half (**270**) of the votes, wins the election. That person becomes the next President of the United States. This system of counting votes is called the **Electoral College**.

Electoral College Map

Here is a picture of the United States with the number of electoral votes each state gets.



Day 3: Reflection Questions

1. What question would you ask a candidate at a caucus?

2. What state do you live in? How many votes does your state get?

3. Do you think the electoral college system is fair? Why or why not?

It's Election Day

Day Four:

What is Election Day?

On Election Day, the citizens get to elect, or choose, their leaders. Most importantly, they get to choose the next **President of the United States**. After the presidential candidates have campaigned all over the country, Election Day is held.

When is Election Day?

Election Day is on the first **Tuesday**, after the first Monday in November. Election Day takes place every 4 years. This year, Election Day is on **November 5, 2024**. The next Election Day will be in November of 2028.

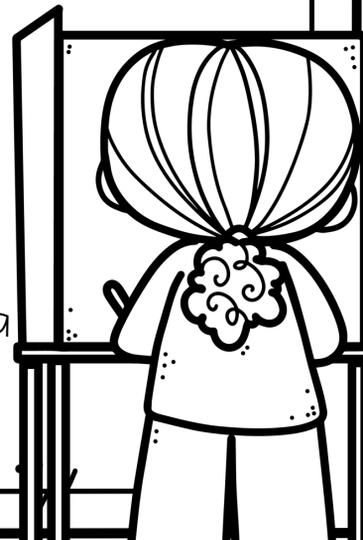
Who Can Vote?

Just like there are requirements to be a presidential candidate, there are also **requirements** to be able to **vote** on Election Day.

1. Must be a citizen of the United States.
2. Must be least 18 years old.
3. Must meet state requirements.
4. Must be registered to vote before the deadline.

Where Do People Vote?

On Election Day, many people will go to a **polling Place** to vote. They are often held in schools, libraries, community centers, or other public buildings. Here people can either vote by using a **Voting machine**, or they can mark their choice on a form called a **ballot**. People can even **mail** in their ballot ahead of time as well.



How Are Votes Counted?

After the last voter has voted, the election ballot boxes are **sealed** and sent off to be counted at a different location. For the votes that were done on a digital voting machine, the digital information will also be sent to a **counting facility**. The votes can take a long time to be counted as some are counted by hand and some are counted through a machine or a scanner.

The Results

Counting votes can take several days, but it is pretty clear the **morning after** Election Day who the next President will be. Many people will watch the **news** on Election Day to see which **states** have counted their votes. If the Democratic candidate won that state, the state will turn blue on the map. If the Republican candidate won the state, the state will turn red on the map.

Day 4: Reflection Questions

1. How old will you be on the 2028 Election Day?

2. Why do you think we have requirements to vote?

3. Counting votes through a machine seems a lot easier. Why do you think not all votes are counted this way?

4. Over 57 million people watched the election results in the year 2020.

Will you watch this year's election results? Why or why not?



If I Were President

Day Five:

Running For President

Many people like to imagine what they would do if they were **President of the United States**. Today you will be doing just that. These next few activities will not only teach you a little bit more about what it takes to be the President, but it will get you thinking about how you can win over the hearts of your fellow citizens and get them to **vote** for you.

Values, Beliefs, & Ideas

When people run for President, they tell others what they **value**, **believe**, and the **ideas** they have to make America a better place. People will be more likely to vote for them if they know that they have similar beliefs.

Campaigning

The **presidential candidates** will **campaign** throughout the country trying to get people to vote for them. There is a lot that goes into political campaigning. Candidates usually start campaigning a year before the election. They travel the country speaking at different places. They make commercials to **convince** people to vote for them. They also create catchy slogans, or phrases, and sell T-shirts, buttons, signs, and bumper stickers.

Political Slogans

Slogans are a **short** but memorable **phrase** used in advertising and campaigns. Here are some slogans from past Presidents.

"Happy Days Are Here Again" – Franklin Roosevelt, 1932

"I Like Ike" – Dwight D. Eisenhower, 1952

"Change We Can Believe In" – Barack Obama, 2008

"Make America Great Again" – Donald Trump, 2016

"Our Best Days Still Lie Ahead" – Joe Biden, 2020



Day 5: Reflection Questions

1. What are some things you value and believe?

2. What ideas do you have to make America better?

3. What would be your political slogan?

4. In the past two presidential elections (2016 & 2020), the total cost for campaigning was over 16 billion dollars. Why do you think the elections cost that much?

