The Echo Foundation presents

Democracy, Responsibility, & Civic Engagement

Voices Against Indifference Initiative 2011-2012

Photo courtesy of The Glenn Institute
Dear Teachers,

As our country prepares for the 2012 national elections, we need informed, engaged, and responsible young people prepared to participate in the democratic process at this pivotal, historic moment. This year, United States citizens enter the election cycle urgently seeking change. Partisan entrenchment in public discourse has stagnated progress on major economic and social issues, breeding both anger and apathy. A new generation of compassionate, collaborative and creative leaders to reinvigorate civic life in America is our greatest hope.

With *Democracy, Responsibility, & Civic Engagement*, The Echo Foundation provides a nonpartisan tool for: teaching about global democracies; researching politicians’ voting records; facilitating classroom activities; understanding the five key election issues; and more. We hope this curriculum guide is a catalyst for close examination of the privileges and accompanying responsibilities of United States citizenship; and that it inspires the next generation of young Americans to exercise their personal power to make a difference.

TEF thanks you, the teachers, now and always, for your commitment to weaving lessons of social justice and dignity into your instruction each day. By creating informed, compassionate and responsible young people, you ensure that the leaders of tomorrow are prepared to create a more just and humane world.

With best wishes for exciting adventures in learning,

Stephanie G. Ansaldo, President
The Echo Foundation
Democracy, Responsibility, & Civic Engagement

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Photo courtesy of Empax.
Foreword

“Democracy cannot succeed unless those who express their choice are prepared to choose wisely. The real safeguard of democracy, therefore, is education.”

-Franklin D. Roosevelt, 32nd President of the United States

With the 2012 Democratic National Convention coming to Charlotte, much excitement has been generated by news of the events, the economic impact, and the political leaders who will descend on our city from across the nation next September. At the heart of this pageantry, though, the DNC is about choice; it is the first step in choosing an individual who will shape our country for the next several years. It is our privilege, as citizens of a Democratic nation, to choose our leaders. It is our responsibility to make educated decisions.

With Democracy, Responsibility, & Civic Engagement, our goal is to harness the excitement generated by the 2012 campaigns and conventions to teach our community about these responsibilities and privileges. The Democratic principles on which our nation was built rely on personal civic responsibility; we each have an obligation to be informed and to vote. By doing so, we have the power to impact our community through advocacy and activism.

Our six core chapters introduce the concept of democracy and how it is practiced in the United States. The first three (Ch. I-III) define democracy as a system of governance and provide a historical description of the foundation of the United States government. The next two chapters (Ch. IV-V) address the current election cycle and the hot button issues our country faces today. Our final core chapter (Ch. VI) describes how an individual can evoke change in his or her society by acting on their civic responsibilities.

Our seventh chapter supplements the core chapters by detailing the spread of democracy abroad. It brings together the concepts of democracy, government, and individual action by highlighting democratic movements around the world.

Each chapter ends with a page of discussion questions for further reflection on the topics covered. Several also include debate topics and activities about a variety of interesting subjects. Our eighth chapter presents a list of online lesson plans and additional resources. Finally, the ninth chapter describes The Echo Foundation and the many opportunities it offers high school students.

We hope that you can discover your power, as an individual, to evoke change in your community.

Have a wonderful year filled with new discoveries and opportunities.

Sincerely,

Marwa Elnagheeb
Student Intern
Sophomore, UNC-Chapel Hill

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Student Intern
Junior, Myers Park High School
# Democracy, Responsibility, & Civic Engagement

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Special Thanks

The Echo Foundation thanks 2011 student interns Marwa Elnagheeb, current UNC-Chapel Hill student, and Sara Lee, current Myers Park High School student, for the many dedicated hours they contributed to the research and development of the Democracy, Responsibility, & Civic Engagement curriculum guide.

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   Educational materials compiled by The Echo Foundation through its Voices Against Indifference Initiative
I. Understanding Democracy

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“The strongest democracies flourish from frequent and lively debate, but they endure when people of every background and belief find a way to set aside smaller differences in service of a greater purpose.”

Barack Obama, 44th President of the United States
Defining Democracy

From The Belfer Center
Harvard University JFK School of Government

Most contemporary definitions of democracy have several common elements. First, democracies are countries in which there are institutional mechanisms, usually elections, that allow the people to choose their leaders. Second, prospective leaders must compete for public support. Third, the power of the government is restrained by its accountability to the people. These are the essential characteristics of political democracy.

Some writers add additional criteria to the list of what makes a polity a democracy. [For example,] Larry Diamond [a professor of Sociology and Political Science at Stanford University] argues that a democracy must have "extensive civil liberties (freedom of expression, freedom of the press, freedom to form and join organizations)." Samuel Huntington [a consultant to the US Department of State] recognizes that democracy "implies the existence of those civil and political freedoms to speak, publish, assemble and organize that are necessary to political debate and the conduct of electoral campaigns."

Another definition of the word ‘democracy’ takes into account more key elements, delving into the history and different types of democracy.

Government of the People

From usinfo.org

Democracy may be a word familiar to most, but it is a concept still misunderstood and misused in a time when totalitarian regimes and military dictatorships alike have attempted to claim popular support by pinning democratic labels upon themselves. Yet the power of the democratic idea has also evoked some of history's most profound and moving expressions of human will and intellect…

In the dictionary definition, democracy "is government by the people in which the supreme power is vested in the people and exercised directly by them or by their elected agents under a free electoral system." In the phrase of Abraham Lincoln, democracy is a government "of the people, by the people, and for the people."

…Democracy is… a set of ideas and principles about freedom, but it also consists of a set of practices and procedures that have been molded through a long, often tortuous history. In short, democracy is the institutionalization of freedom. For this reason, it is possible to identify the time-tested fundamentals of constitutional government, human rights, and equality before the law that any society must possess to be properly called democratic.

Democracies fall into two basic categories, direct and representative.
In a direct democracy, all citizens, without the intermediary of elected or appointed officials, can participate in making public decisions. Such a system is clearly only practical with relatively small numbers of people—in a community organization or tribal council, for example, or the local unit of a labor union, where members can meet in a single room to discuss issues and arrive at decisions by consensus or majority vote. Ancient Athens, the world's first democracy, managed to practice direct democracy with an assembly that may have numbered as many as 5,000 to 6,000 persons—perhaps the maximum number that can physically gather in one place and practice direct democracy. Modern society, with its size and complexity, offers few opportunities for direct democracy…

Today, the most common form of democracy… is representative democracy, in which citizens elect officials to make political decisions, formulate laws, and administer programs for the public good. In the name of the people, such officials can deliberate on complex public issues in a thoughtful and systematic manner…

How such officials are elected can vary enormously. On the national level…, legislators can be chosen from districts that each elect a single representative. Alternatively, under a system of proportional representation, each political party is represented in the legislature according to its percentage of the total vote nationwide. Provincial and local elections can mirror these national models, or choose their representatives more informally through group consensus instead of elections. Whatever the method used, public officials in a representative democracy hold office in the name of the people and remain accountable to the people for their actions.

Majority Rule and Minority Rights
All democracies are systems in which citizens freely make political decisions by majority rule. But rule by the majority is not necessarily democratic… In a democratic society, majority rule must be coupled with guarantees of individual human rights that, in turn, serve to protect the rights of minorities—whether ethnic, religious, or political, or simply the losers in the debate over a piece of controversial legislation….The rights of minorities are protected because democratic laws and institutions protect the rights of all citizens.

Diane Ravitch, scholar, author, and a former assistant U.S. secretary of education, wrote in a paper for an educational seminar in Poland: "When a representative democracy operates in accordance with a constitution that limits the powers of the government and guarantees fundamental rights to all citizens, this form of government is a constitutional democracy. In such a society, the majority rules, and the rights of minorities are protected by law and through the institutionalization of law." These elements define the fundamental elements of all modern democracies, no matter how varied in history, culture, and economy…

Democratic Society
Democracy is more than a set of constitutional rules and procedures that determine how a government functions. In a democracy, government is only one element coexisting in a social fabric of many and varied institutions, political parties, organizations, and associations. This

Continued on the next page…
diversity is called pluralism, and it assumes that the many organized groups and institutions in a
democratic society do not depend upon government for their existence, legitimacy, or authority.

Thousands of private organizations operate in a democratic society, some local, some national.
Many of them serve a mediating role between individuals and the complex social and
governmental institutions of which they are a part, filling roles not given to the government and
offering individuals opportunities to exercise their rights and responsibilities as citizens of a
democracy.

These groups represent the interests of their members in a variety of ways – by supporting
candidates for public office, debating issues, and trying to influence policy decisions. Through
such groups, individuals have an avenue for meaningful participation both in government and in
their own communities. The examples are many and varied: charitable organizations and
churches, environmental and neighborhood groups, business associations and labor unions…

THE PILLARS OF DEMOCRACY

- Sovereignty of the people.
- Government based upon consent of the governed.
- Majority rule.
- Minority rights.
- Guarantee of basic human rights.
- Free and fair elections.
- Equality before the law.
- Due process of law.
- Constitutional limits on government.
- Social, economic, and political pluralism.
- Values of tolerance, pragmatism, cooperation, and compromise.

Democracy in the United States

From The Constitution Society

The Social Contract and Constitutional Republics

Between 1787 and 1791 the Framers of the U.S. Constitution established a system of government
upon principles that had been discussed and partially implemented in many countries over the
course of several centuries… which we call a constitutional republic…

The Social Contract and Government

The fundamental basis for government and law in this system is the concept of the social
contract, according to which human beings… create a society by establishing a contract whereby
they agree to live together in harmony for their mutual benefit…. This contract involves the
retaining of certain natural rights, an acceptance of restrictions of certain liberties, the
assumption of certain duties, and the pooling of certain powers to be exercised collectively.
The social contract is very simple. It has only two basic terms: (1) **mutual defense of rights**; and (2) **mutual decision by deliberative assembly**…

A constitution of government, such as the Constitution of 1787, is the next step in the development. It is to establish institutions, offices, procedures, duties, and structures that persist from one assembly to another that are not just customs. It is at that point that we begin to get things like laws, and paid agents and officials, whose jobs continue beyond transient assemblies. We also get taxes, standing armies, and professional law enforcers…

…it is generally best that most legislation require approval at some point in the legislative process by a deliberative assembly, a body of elected representatives rather than by direct popular vote, and that any such legislation be subject to judicial review, whereby legislation not consistent with the constitution can be voided. Such a form of government is called a republic, as distinct from a democracy, in which all legislation is adopted solely by direct popular vote. And if it operates under a well-designed constitution, it is a constitutional republic.

It is important that the deliberative assembly fairly represent all the competing interests of the people, so that the concerns of minorities can be weighed and not ignored. . . .

**Checks and Balances**

The framers of the U.S. Constitution addressed the problem of avoiding unbalanced or excessive concentrations of power in government by adopting a constitution in which legislative, executive, and judicial powers are largely divided among separate branches, with each having some power to check the abuses of the others. Legislative powers were further divided between two legislative bodies. Some powers were delegated to the central national government, which others were reserved to the component states or the people…

Of Rights Natural and Constitutional

Under the theory of the social contract, those rights which the individual brings with him upon entering the social contract are natural, and those which arise out of the social contract are contractual. Those contractual rights arising out of the constitution are constitutional rights. However, natural rights are also constitutional rights.

The fundamental natural rights are life, liberty, and property. However, it is necessary to be somewhat more specific as to what these rights include. Therefore, constitution framers usually expand them into such rights as the right of speech and publication, the right to assemble peaceably, the right to keep and bear arms, the right to travel over public roadways, and so forth.
The exercise of such natural rights may be restricted to the extent that they come into conflict with the exercise of the natural rights of other members of society…

Such natural rights are *inalienable*, meaning that a person cannot delegate them or give them away, even if he wants to do so. That means that no constitutional provision which delegated to government at any level the power to take away such rights would be valid, even if adopted as an amendment through a proper amendment process. Such rights apply to all levels of government, federal, state, or local…

Yet constitutions recognize the power to deprive persons of their rights under *due process* of law. Strictly speaking, a person may not be deprived of such rights in the sense of taking them away. Natural rights are never lost. Their exercise can, however, be restricted or, to use the proper legal term, *disabled*. While some might question the practical distinction between losing a right and having it disabled, that distinction is important. A right which is disabled under due process may also be re-enabled by the removal of that disability…

**Duties under the Social Contract**

While a constitution prescribes the legal rights of individuals and the powers of government, the social contract also includes certain duties which members assume upon entry. Those duties include the duty to avoid infringing on the rights of other members, to obey just laws, to comply with and help enforce just contracts, to serve on juries, and to defend the community…

[An] important duty is jury duty… jurors have the duty not only to bring an indictment upon evidence presented to it by a prosecutor, but to conduct their own investigations and if necessary, to appoint their own prosecutors to conduct a trial on the evidence [and] to not only follow the instructions of the judge to bring a verdict on the "facts" in a case, but to rule on all issues before the court, overriding the judge if necessary… they have the duty to find that accused not guilty if the court lacks jurisdiction, if the rights of the accused were seriously violated in the course of the investigation or trial, or if the law under which the accused is charged is misapplied to the case or is unconstitutional; and to find the law unconstitutional if it is in violation of the constitutional rights of the accused, if it is not based on any power delegated to the government, if it is unequally enforced, or if it is so vague that honest persons could disagree on how to obey or enforce it…

…The U.S. Constitution is not a contract

A common misconception is that the U.S. Constitution, or other such constitution of government, is a "contract between government and the people". It is not…. A moment's reflection should reveal that "government" can't be a party to a contract that creates it…

The U.S. Constitution is a law. It proclaims itself as such, as the Supreme Law. A law is not a contract, although it can… define contracts under which its officials will be bound. The election or appointment of each official is a separate contract. Not only do officials not constitute a

*Continued on the next page*...
separate corporate entity, with interests of its own, in competition with the people, but the original design is that they not be allowed to function that way, and that they have a duty not to do so.

The question then is, if the U.S. Constitution is the Supreme Law, and there is no law without a sovereign, then who is the Sovereign, the supreme lawgiver? The People? Yes, but not directly. It is the people acting through conventions in each state, initially deciding to adopt the Constitution by a vote of 9 of the 13 state conventions, and subsequently to amend it by votes of 3/4 of the state conventions…

**Democracy versus Other Forms of Government**

From albatrus.org

Difference between [a] Democracy and Republic, in brief:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Democracy</th>
<th>Republic</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>a: government by the people; especially: rule of the majority.</td>
<td>a: a government having a chief of state who is not a monarch and who in modern times is usually a president: a political unit (as a nation) having such a form of government.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b: a government in which the supreme power is vested in the people and exercised by them directly or indirectly through a system of representation usually involving periodically held free elections.</td>
<td>b: a government in which supreme power resides in a body of citizens entitled to vote and is exercised by elected officers and representatives responsible to them and governing according to law.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Attitude toward law is that the will of the majority shall regulate, whether it be based upon deliberation or governed by passion, prejudice, and impulse, without restraint or regard to consequences

Democracy and Republic are often taken as one of the same thing, but there is a fundamental difference. [While] in both cases the government is elected by the people, in Democracy the majority rules…, [while] in the Republic the Government rules according to law. This law is framed in the Constitution to limit the power of Government and ensuring some rights and protection to minorities and individuals.

Image from globalcommunitywebnet.com/.
**Different Types of Government**

From stutzfamily.com

**Economy - what provides the goods and services that are bought, sold, and used?**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Capitalism</th>
<th>Socialism</th>
<th>Communism</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>(Russia)</strong></td>
<td><strong>(Norway)</strong></td>
<td><strong>(Cuba)</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In a capitalist or free-market economy, people own their own businesses and property and must buy services for private use, such as healthcare.</td>
<td>Socialist governments own many of the larger industries and provide education, health and welfare services while allowing citizens some economic choices.</td>
<td>In a communist country, the government owns all businesses and farms and provides its people's healthcare, education and welfare.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Politics - how is the government run?**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dictatorship</th>
<th>Totalitarian</th>
<th>Theocracy</th>
<th>Monarchy</th>
<th>Parliamentary</th>
<th>Republic</th>
<th>Anarchy</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>(Iraq)</strong></td>
<td><strong>(China)</strong></td>
<td><strong>(Iran)</strong></td>
<td><strong>(Jordan)</strong></td>
<td><strong>(Israel)</strong></td>
<td><strong>(USA)</strong></td>
<td><strong>(Afghanistan?)</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rule by a single leader who has not been elected and may use force to keep control. In a military dictatorship, the army is in control. Usually, there is little or no attention to public opinion or individual rights.</td>
<td>Rule by a single political party. People are forced to do what the government tells them and may also be prevented from leaving the country.</td>
<td>A form of government where the rulers claim to be ruling on behalf of a set of religious ideas, or as direct agents of a deity.</td>
<td>A monarchy has a king or queen, who sometimes has absolute power. Power is passed along through the family.</td>
<td>A parliamentary system is led by representatives of the people. Each is chosen as a member of a political party and remains in power as long as his/her party does</td>
<td>A republic is led by representatives of the voters. Each is individually chosen for a set period of time.</td>
<td>Anarchy is a situation where there is no government. This can happen after a civil war in a country, when a government has been destroyed and rival groups are fighting to take its place.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Authority - who picks the government?**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Revolutionary</th>
<th>Totalitarian</th>
<th>Oligarchy/Plutocracy</th>
<th>Democracy</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>(USA, France, USSR etc)</strong></td>
<td><strong>(North Korea)</strong></td>
<td><strong>(Pakistan)</strong></td>
<td><strong>(India)</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The existing structure is overthrown by a completely new group. The new group can be very small - such as the military - or very large - as in a popular revolution. After a period of time, this 'becomes' one of the other type of government (unless there is another coup or uprising).</td>
<td>Rule by a single political party. Votes for alternative candidates and parties are simply not allowed. Citizens are allowed and 'encouraged' to vote, but only for the government's chosen candidates.</td>
<td>A form of government which consists of rule by an elite group who rule in their own interests, especially the accumulation of wealth and privilege. Only certain members of society have a valid voice in the government. This can reflect (but is not limited to) economic interests, a particular religious tradition (theocracy), or familial rule (monarchy).</td>
<td>In a democracy, the government is elected by the people. Everyone who is eligible to vote - which is a majority of the population - has a chance to have their say over who runs the country.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Study Questions

1. Many people consider the United States to be a democratic republic. According to the definitions provided in the curriculum, discuss whether you believe this is true or false. Explain your reasons why.

2. To what extent is the Constitution a literal representation of the social contract, and to what extent is the Constitution the United States’ supreme law? Why do you think that the Constitution of the United States is commonly misrepresented as a contract of the people? What is the key distinction between a contract and the supreme law that the Constitution represents?

3. The fundamental natural rights, as developed by John Locke, are life, liberty, and property. Why do you think the Declaration of Independence edited them to be life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness instead? What constitutes a natural right?

4. Several definitions of democracy are provided in this curriculum. While these are literal definitions, try and come up with some of your own definitions and examples! How do you see elements of democracy in your daily life?

5. Look at the other forms of government (a chart is provided on page 13). Think about the benefits and consequences each offer, and compare them to the benefits and consequences offered by democracy.

6. The United States displays elements of democracy, but is not considered a pure democracy. Looking at the chart on page 13, consider the different economic, political, and authoritative characteristics the United States displays.

7. On page 12, the concept of due process is contrasted with the idea of “disabling” rights. Elaborate on what you think is the defining distinction between the two ways of depriving people of certain rights. Can you think of an example?
II. History of Democracy in the United States

“A Bill of Rights is what the people are entitled to against every government, and what no just government should refuse, or rest on inference.”

Thomas Jefferson, 3rd President of the United States

“The Echo Foundation
Democracy, Responsibility, & Civic Engagement

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Timeline of Democracy in the U.S.

From Scholastic
By Karen Fanning

April 19, 1775
The American Revolution begins with the Battles of Lexington and Concord in Massachusetts.

After years of combat, Britain and the American Colonies sign the Treaty of Paris on September 3, 1783. The agreement brings an end to the war and officially recognizes the United States as an independent country.

July 4, 1776

Thomas Jefferson completes the draft of the Declaration of Independence in just 17 days. The historic document spells out the reasons why the American Colonies want to split from Britain, their mother country.

May to September, 1787
A group of men, known as the Founders, meet to discuss and write the U.S. Constitution.

The 4,543-word document explains how the country's new government will work. It is drafted in less than 100 days. Ben Franklin, George Washington, and James Madison are among the 55 delegates responsible for the document. More than 200 years later, the Constitution remains the highest law of the United States.

September 17, 1787
The U.S. Constitution is signed.

December 15, 1791
The Bill of Rights, the first 10 amendments to the Constitution, is ratified.

Some fear the original Constitution gives the government too much power. They demand that changes to the Constitution be made to protect the basic liberties of the people. The first 10 changes to the Constitution are known as the Bill of Rights. Among the many liberties guaranteed under the Bill of Rights are the freedom of speech, the freedom of the press, and the freedom of religion. Over time, 17 more amendments will be added to the Constitution.

February 7, 1795
Amendment XI is ratified. It expands the judicial powers of the federal courts.

June 15, 1804
Amendment XII is ratified, outlining the process by which the U.S. President and Vice President are elected.

December 6, 1865
Amendment XIII is ratified, outlawing slavery.
July 9, 1868
Amendment XIV is ratified. It guarantees the rights of citizenship to former slaves and guarantees equal protection under the law for all citizens.

February 3, 1870
Amendment XV is ratified, ending the discriminatory practice of denying U.S. citizens the right to vote based on race or color. The 15th Amendment grants African-Americans the right to vote.

February 3, 1913
Amendment XVI is ratified, granting Congress the power to collect taxes on the incomes of the American people.

April 8, 1913
Amendment XVII changes the process by which U.S. Senators are elected. Senators are no longer elected by state legislatures, but instead, by popular vote.

January 16, 1919
Amendment XVIII is ratified, prohibiting the manufacture, sale, and transportation of liquor.

August 18, 1920
Amendment XIX is ratified, ending the discriminatory practice of denying U.S. citizens the right to vote based on sex. The 19th Amendment gives women the right to vote.

January 23, 1933
Amendment XX is ratified, establishing January 20 as Presidential Inauguration Day.

December 5, 1933
Amendment XXI is ratified, repealing the 18th Amendment. It is again legal in the U.S. to make, sell, or distribute alcoholic beverages.

February 27, 1951
Amendment XXII is ratified, outlining term limits for the U.S. presidency. No President may be elected for more than two terms.

March 29, 1961
Amendment XXIII is ratified, granting the District of Columbia the right to vote in presidential elections.

January 23, 1964
Amendment XXIV is ratified. It eliminates the tax on voting.

February 10, 1967
Amendment XXV is ratified, outlining the line of succession for the presidency in case of the incapacity, death, or resignation of the President.

July 1, 1971
Amendment XXVI lowers the voting age to 18 in federal elections. Previously, the voting age for federal elections was determined by each state, so it varied from state to state.

May 7, 1992
Amendment XXVII outlines the process by which members of Congress receive pay increases
Mayflower Compact

From *The Columbia Encyclopedia*

Mayflower Compact, in U.S. colonial history, was an agreement providing for the temporary government of Plymouth Colony. The compact was signed (1620) on board the *Mayflower* by the adult male passengers; it created the first American settlement that was based upon a social contract. In it, the colonists combined together in a “civil Body Politick” whose purpose was to frame just and equal laws for the general good of the colony. The compact remained the basis of government in Plymouth for ten years, and all later governments in the colony developed out of the compact.

United States (U.S.) Articles of Confederation

America’s First Constitution

From *constitutionfacts.com*

The first constitution in our nation's history was the U.S. Articles of Confederation. Under the U.S. *Articles of Confederation* we took "baby steps" as a nation. The government conducted the affairs of the country during the last two years of the Revolutionary War, helped to negotiate the Treaty of Paris in 1783, and produced two monumental pieces of legislation in the Land Ordinance of 1785 and the Northwest Ordinance of 1787.

While the U.S. Articles of Confederation was a plan of government based upon the principles fought for in the American Revolutionary War, it contained crucial flaws. It had no power of national taxation, no power to control trade, and it provided for a comparatively weak executive. Therefore, it could not enforce legislation. It was a "league of friendship" which was opposed to any type of national authority. The Articles of Confederation's greatest weakness, however, was that it had no direct origin in the people themselves–it knew only state sovereignty. Each state, therefore, had the power to collect its own taxes, issue currency, and provide for its own militia. The government could not govern efficiently because of a general lack of power to compel states to honor national obligations. The government's main activity was to control foreign policy and conclude treaties. Economic credibility was a major problem because the government owed $42 million (more than $40 billion today) after the Revolutionary War, and the debt was mainly owed to American patriots. This financial obligation was not paid off until the early part of the 1800's.

It would have been very difficult for our country to have created a stronger second constitution without learning from the mistakes of the first. The Articles of Confederation served as a "transition" between the Revolutionary War and the Constitution.
The Bill of Rights

From America.gov

Because the government may exercise only those powers specifically granted to it in the Constitution, the Constitution is an important protection of the rights and powers of the people. The first 10 amendments to the Constitution are known collectively as the Bill of Rights. The Bill of Rights guarantees important freedoms to every American, including freedom of speech, press, and religion; the right to be free from unreasonable searches; and the right to have a trial by jury.

Amendments to the Constitution are adopted when proposed by two-thirds of the House and Senate and ratified by three-fourths of the states. This is a difficult process, with only 27 amendments having been made since the Constitution was ratified. Of these, only 16 have been adopted since 1800.

From whitehouse.gov

The First Amendment provides that Congress make no law respecting an establishment of religion or prohibiting its free exercise. It protects freedom of speech, the press, assembly, and the right to petition the Government for a redress of grievances.

The Second Amendment gives citizens the right to bear arms.

The Third Amendment prohibits the government from quartering troops in private homes, a major grievance during the American Revolution.

The Fourth Amendment protects citizens from unreasonable search and seizure. The government may not conduct any searches without a warrant, and such warrants must be issued by a judge and based on probable cause.

The Fifth Amendment provides that citizens not be subject to criminal prosecution and punishment without due process. Citizens may not be tried on the same set of facts twice, and are protected from self-incrimination (the right to remain silent). The amendment also establishes the power of eminent domain, ensuring that private property is not seized for public use without just compensation.

The Sixth Amendment assures the right to a speedy trial by a jury of one's peers, to be informed of the crimes with which they are charged, and to confront the witnesses brought by the government. The amendment also provides the accused the right to compel testimony from witnesses, and to legal representation.

The Seventh Amendment provides that civil cases also be tried by jury.

The Eighth Amendment prohibits excessive bail, excessive fines, and cruel and unusual punishments.

The Ninth Amendment states that the list of rights enumerated in the Constitution is not exhaustive, and that the people retain all rights not enumerated.

The Tenth Amendment assigns all powers not delegated to the United States, or prohibited to the states, to either the states or to the people.
Study Questions

1. Only 27 amendments have been ratified into the constitution. Is there an amendment that you believe should be added? Is there an amendment that you believe should not be included in the constitution? Explain your response.

2. The twenty-sixth amendment lowered the voting age in federal elections to 18. In your opinion, what should be the minimum voting age and why? What criteria, other than age, should be required of people in order for them to obtain the right to vote?

3. How do you think the Mayflower compact influenced the development of democracy and government in the United States?

4. Only adult male passengers signed the Mayflower Compact. Is it necessary to include the voice of a variety of people (of different races, genders, religions, etc.) for a process to be considered truly democratic? Considering both historical and modern-day examples, explain your response. Use what you have learned in this chapter, as well as any outside research, to support your answer.

5. In June of 2011, the Supreme Court ruled, in a 7-2 vote, that a California law banning violent video games to minors is unconstitutional. The Court ruled that the law would violate the free-speech rights of the First Amendment. Do you agree with their ruling? Why? When does government become too involved in our lives?

6. If you were to write your own Bill of Rights, what rules would you include in order to protect the basic freedoms of people? Should all people (illegal immigrants, criminals, etc.) in the U.S. be ensured those rights guaranteed in the Bill of the Rights? Why?

7. Research whether other countries also have a Bill of Rights or document to protect certain freedoms for citizens. If not, what rules would you write in order to protect their rights? Why would a Bill of Rights of one country vary from that of another country?

8. Research the differences between the Articles of Confederation and the Constitution. Why were the Articles replaced by the Constitution? How was the federal government different under the new Constitution?

9. After years of battle, the American colonies and Great Britain signed the Treaty of Paris in 1783 to officially recognize the U.S. as an independent country. What are some other examples of countries across the world that have either succeeded or failed in establishing themselves as independent nations? How has their political evolution differed?
III. The United States Government

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"Government is nothing more than the combined force of society, or the united power of the multitude, for the peace, order, safety, good and happiness of the people."

John Adams, 2nd President of the United States
Federalism in U.S. Government

From Oswego School District Regents Exam Prep Center

Federalism

The concept of Federalism is one that underlies all concepts about the power of government in the US system. Federalism within the United States system is the balancing of power between a Federal Government and State Governments. Within this system the Federal Government is superior to the State Governments. For example, a state could not pass a law that directly contradicted a law passed on the federal level. Within these principles, power is divided among the federal and state governments.

Divided Powers in US Government

The US Constitution specifically states what types of powers are to be granted to what governments.

- **Delegated Powers** - To delegate means to specifically assign, in this case delegated powers are those powers specifically assigned to the Federal Government. The founding fathers feared a national government that would overstep its bounds, so they took care to only allow the national government very specific powers. These are also referred to as enumerated powers.

- **Reserved Powers** - To reserve is to save, in this case all powers not specifically delegated the Federal Government are to be reserved or saved for the State Governments.

- **Concurrent Powers** - Concurrent means "at the same time", in this case concurrent powers are those that both the federal and state governments have simultaneously.

- **Implied Powers** - These are powers that are NOT specifically delegated in the Constitution, but are understood to be necessary or allowed. The elastic clause or necessary and proper clause allows these by stating that Congress has the power "to make all laws which shall be necessary and proper for carrying into execution the foregoing powers" (art. I, sec. 8). Examples include:
  - **Hamilton's creation of the National Bank** - no power to create banks is delegated the Federal Government, however it was deemed necessary and proper to form a bank to aid in Congress's power to coin money and regulate the economy. (see McCulloch vs. Maryland 1819)
  - **Regulation of Railroads, Shipping, Highways** - Congress is delegated the power to regulate interstate trade and as such it is implied that Congress also has the power to regulate interstate transportation by which interstate trade is made possible. (Read about Gibbons vs. Ogden 1824)
  - **Denied Powers** - These are powers that are specifically NOT allowed to either the federal or state governments. Again, this listing of denied powers was a specific way in which the founding fathers attempted to create a limited government.

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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Delegated Powers:</th>
<th>Reserved Powers:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Those powers specifically granted the Federal Government by the Constitution.</td>
<td>Those powers not delegated to the Federal Government or denied to the states are reserved for the states.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>o Regulate interstate and international trade</td>
<td>o Regulate intrastate trade</td>
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<tr>
<td>o Coin money</td>
<td>o Establish schools</td>
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<tr>
<td>o Declare war</td>
<td>o Establish local governments</td>
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<tr>
<td>o Maintain an armed forces</td>
<td>o Pass statewide laws (ex. safety belt laws)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>o Establish a postal system</td>
<td>o Run elections</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>o Enforce copyrights</td>
<td>o Sign treaties</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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Examples of Divided Powers in US Government
Popular Sovereignty

From annenbergclassroom.org
By John Patrick, Understanding Democracy, A Hip Pocket Guide

Popular sovereignty is government based on consent of the people. The government’s source of authority is the people, and its power is not legitimate if it disregards the will of the people. Government established by free choice of the people is expected to serve the people, who have sovereignty, or supreme power.

There are four ways that popular sovereignty is expressed in a democracy.

- First, the people are involved either directly or through their representatives in the making of a constitution.
- Second, the constitution made in the name of the people is ratified by a majority vote of the people or by representatives elected by the people.
- Third, the people are involved directly or indirectly in proposing and ratifying amendments to their constitution.
- Fourth, the people indicate support for their government when they vote in public elections, uphold the constitution and basic principles of their government, and work to influence public policy decisions and otherwise prompt their representatives in government to be accountable to them.

Popular sovereignty was asserted as a founding principle of the United States of America. The Declaration of Independence of 1776 asserts that legitimate governments are those “deriving their just Powers from the Consent of the Governed.” Later, in 1787, the framers of the U.S. Constitution proclaimed popular sovereignty in the document’s Preamble: “We the people of the United States . . . do ordain and establish this Constitution for the United States of America.” Popular sovereignty was also expressed in Article VII of the Constitution, which required that nine states approve the proposed framework of government before it could become the supreme law of the land.

The people of the several American states chose representatives to ratifying conventions who freely decided to approve the Constitution in the name of those who elected them. Popular sovereignty was also included in Article V of the Constitution, which provides the means to amend the Constitution through the elected representatives of the people. Finally, popular sovereignty is reflected in two different parts of the Constitution that require members of Congress to be elected directly by the people: Article I pertaining to the House of Representatives and the 17th Amendment concerning election of senators.

The founding of the United States and the framing of its Constitution heralded the idea of popular sovereignty as the standard by which popular government should be established and sustained. The American example, exceptional in the late 18th century, has become a world-class standard of legitimacy for governments in the 21st century. No country can realistically claim to be a democracy unless it proclaims constitutionally and implements functionally the principle of popular sovereignty.

This standard has been upheld in the constitutions of democratic nation-states today. For example, Article 2 of the 1993 constitution of the Czech Republic says “All state power derives from the people. . . . The state power serves all citizens and can be exercised only in cases within the scope stipulated by law, and by means specified by law.”

The 1988 constitution of Brazil asserts in Article 1: “All power emanates from the people, who exercise it by means of elected representatives or directly as provided by the constitution.” And Article 2 of the 1992 constitution of the Republic of Lithuania says: “The State of Lithuania shall be created by the people. Sovereignty shall be vested in the people.” Further, Article 4 says “The people shall exercise the supreme sovereign power vested in them either directly or through their democratically elected representatives…”
The Executive Branch

From whitehouse.gov

The power of the Executive Branch is vested in the President of the United States, who also acts as head of state and Commander-in-Chief of the armed forces. The President is responsible for implementing and enforcing the laws written by Congress and, to that end, appoints the heads of the federal agencies, including the Cabinet. The Vice President is also part of the Executive Branch, ready to assume the Presidency should the need arise.

The Cabinet and independent federal agencies are responsible for the day-to-day enforcement and administration of federal laws. These departments and agencies have missions and responsibilities as widely divergent as those of the Department of Defense and the Environmental Protection Agency, the Social Security Administration and the Securities and Exchange Commission.

Including members of the armed forces, the Executive Branch employs more than 4 million Americans.

The President

The President is both the head of state and head of government of the United States of America, and Commander-in-Chief of the armed forces.

Under Article II of the Constitution, the President is responsible for the execution and enforcement of the laws created by Congress. Fifteen executive departments — each led by an appointed member of the President's Cabinet — carry out the day-to-day administration of the federal government. They are joined in this by other executive agencies such as the CIA and Environmental Protection Agency, the heads of which are not part of the Cabinet, but who are under the full authority of the President. The President also appoints the heads of more than 50 independent federal commissions, such as the Federal Reserve Board or the Securities and Exchange Commission, as well as federal judges, ambassadors, and other federal offices.
The Executive Office of the President (EOP) consists of the immediate staff to the President, along with entities such as the Office of Management and Budget and the Office of the United States Trade Representative.

The President has the power either to sign legislation into law or to veto bills enacted by Congress, although Congress may override a veto with a two-thirds vote of both houses. The Executive Branch conducts diplomacy with other nations, and the President has the power to negotiate and sign treaties, which also must be ratified by two-thirds of the Senate. The President can issue executive orders, which direct executive officers or clarify and further existing laws. The President also has unlimited power to extend pardons and clemencies for federal crimes, except in cases of impeachment.

With these powers come several responsibilities, among them a constitutional requirement to "from time to time give to the Congress Information of the State of the Union, and recommend to their Consideration such Measures as he shall judge necessary and expedient." Although the President may fulfill this requirement in any way he or she chooses, Presidents have traditionally given a State of the Union address to a joint session of Congress each January (except in inaugural years) outlining their agenda for the coming year.

The Constitution lists only three qualifications for the Presidency — the President must be 35 years of age, be a natural born citizen, and must have lived in the United States for at least 14 years. And though millions of Americans vote in a presidential election every four years, the President is not, in fact, directly elected by the people. Instead, on the first Tuesday in November of every fourth year, the people elect the members of the Electoral College. Apportioned by population to the 50 states — one for each member of their congressional delegation (with the District of Columbia receiving 3 votes) — these Electors then cast the votes for President. There are currently 538 electors in the Electoral College.

President Barack Obama is the 44th President of the United States. He is, however, only the 43rd person ever to serve as President; President Grover Cleveland served two nonconsecutive terms, and thus is recognized as both the 22nd and the 24th President. Today, the President is limited to two four-year terms, but until the 22nd Amendment to the Constitution, ratified in 1951, a President could serve an unlimited number of terms. Franklin Delano Roosevelt was elected President four times, serving from 1932 until his death in 1945; he is the only President ever to have served more than two terms.

By tradition, the President and the First Family live in the White House in Washington, D.C., also the location of the President's Oval Office and the offices of the his senior staff. When the President travels by plane, his aircraft is designated Air Force One; he may also use a Marine Corps helicopter, known as Marine One while the President is on board. For ground travel, the President uses an armored Presidential limousine.

**The Vice President**

The primary responsibility of the Vice President of the United States is to be ready at a moment's notice to assume the Presidency if the President is unable to perform his duties. This can be because of the President's death, resignation, or temporary incapacitation, or if the Vice President and a majority of the Cabinet judge that the President is no longer able to discharge the duties of the presidency.

The Vice President is elected along with the President by the Electoral College — each elector casts one vote for President and another for Vice President. Before the ratification of the 12th Amendment in 1804, electors only voted for President, and the person who received the second greatest number of votes became Vice President.
The Vice President also serves as the President of the United States Senate, where he or she casts the deciding vote in the case of a tie. Except in the case of tiebreaking votes, the Vice President rarely actually presides over the Senate. Instead, the Senate selects one of their own members, usually junior members of the majority party, to preside over the Senate each day.

Joseph R. Biden is the 47th Vice President of the United States. Of the 45 previous Vice Presidents, nine have succeeded to the Presidency, and four have been elected to the Presidency in their own right. The duties of the Vice President, outside of those enumerated in the Constitution, are at the discretion of the current President. Each Vice President approaches the role differently — some take on a specific policy portfolio, others serve simply as a top adviser to the President.

The Vice President has an office in the West Wing of the White House, as well as in the nearby Eisenhower Executive Office Building. Like the President, he also maintains an official residence, at the United States Naval Observatory in Northwest Washington, D.C. This peaceful mansion, has been the official home of the Vice President since 1974 — previously, Vice Presidents had lived in their own private residences. The Vice President also has his own limousine, operated by the United States Secret Service, and flies on the same aircraft the President uses — but when the Vice President is aboard, the craft are referred to as Air Force Two and Marine Two.

**Executive Office of the President**

Every day, the President of the United States is faced with scores of decisions, each with important consequences for America's future. To provide the President with the support he or she needs to govern effectively, the Executive Office of the President (EOP) was created in 1939 by President Franklin D. Roosevelt. The EOP has responsibility for tasks ranging from communicating the President's message to the American people to promoting our trade interests abroad.

The EOP, overseen by the White House Chief of Staff, has traditionally been home to many of the President's closest advisers. While Senate confirmation is required for some advisers, such as the Director of the Office of Management and Budget, most are appointed with full Presidential discretion. The individual offices that these advisors oversee have grown in size and number since the EOP was created. Some were formed by Congress, others as the President has needed them — they are constantly shifting as each President identifies his needs and priorities, with the current EOP employing over 1,800 people.

Perhaps the most visible parts of the EOP are the White House Communications Office and Press Secretary's Office. The Press Secretary provides daily briefings for the media on the President's activities and agenda. Less visible to most Americans is the National Security Council, which advises the President on foreign policy, intelligence, and national security.

There are also a number of offices responsible for the practicalities of maintaining the White House and providing logistical support for the President. These include the White House Military Office, which is responsible for services ranging from Air Force One to the dining facilities, and the Office of Presidential Advance, which prepares sites remote from the White House for the President's arrival.

Many senior advisors in the EOP work near the President in the West Wing of the White House. However, the majority of the staff is housed in the Eisenhower Executive Office Building, just a few steps away and part of the White House compound.
The Cabinet

The Cabinet is an advisory body made up of the heads of the 15 executive departments. Appointed by the President and confirmed by the Senate, the members of the Cabinet are often the President's closest confidants. In addition to running major federal agencies, they play an important role in the Presidential line of succession — after the Vice President, Speaker of the House, and Senate President pro tempore, the line of succession continues with the Cabinet offices in the order in which the departments were created. All the members of the Cabinet take the title Secretary, excepting the head of the Justice Department, who is styled Attorney General.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Department of</th>
<th>Function</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Agriculture</td>
<td>Develops and executes policy on farming, agriculture, and food…</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Commerce</td>
<td>Improving living standards for all Americans by promoting economic development and technological innovation…</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Defense</td>
<td>Provide the military forces needed to deter war and to protect the security of our country…</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education</td>
<td>Promote student achievement and preparation for competition in a global economy by fostering educational excellence and ensuring equal access to educational opportunity…</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Energy</td>
<td>To advance the national, economic, and energy security of the United States…</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Health and Human Services</td>
<td>Protecting the health of all Americans and providing essential human services, especially for those who are least able to help themselves…</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Homeland Security</td>
<td>Prevent and disrupt terrorist attacks; protect the American people, our critical infrastructure, and key resources; and respond to and recover from incidents that do occur…</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Housing and Urban Development</td>
<td>Responsible for national policies and programs that address America’s housing needs, that improve and develop the nation’s communities, and that enforce fair housing laws…</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interior</td>
<td>Protect America’s natural resources, offer recreation opportunities, conduct scientific research, conserve and protect fish and wildlife, and honor our trust responsibilities to American Indians, Alaskan Natives, and island communities…</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Justice</td>
<td>Enforce the law and defend the interests of the United States according to law; to ensure public safety against threats foreign and domestic; to provide leadership in preventing and controlling crime…</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Labor</td>
<td>Oversees federal programs for ensuring a strong American workforce. These programs address job training, safe working conditions, minimum hourly wage and overtime pay, employment discrimination, and unemployment insurance…</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>State</td>
<td>Developing and implementing the President’s foreign policy…</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transportation</td>
<td>To ensure a fast, safe, efficient, accessible, and convenient transportation system…</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Treasury</td>
<td>Promoting economic prosperity and ensuring the soundness and security of the U.S. and international financial systems…</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Veterans Affairs</td>
<td>Administering benefit programs for veterans, their families, and their survivors…</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The Legislative Branch

Established by Article I of the Constitution, the Legislative Branch consists of the House of Representatives and the Senate, which together form the United States Congress. The Constitution grants Congress the sole authority to enact legislation and declare war, the right to confirm or reject many Presidential appointments, and substantial investigative powers.

**The House of Representatives** is made up of 435 elected members, divided among the 50 states in proportion to their total population. In addition, there are 6 non-voting members, representing the District of Columbia, the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico, and four other territories of the United States. The presiding officer of the chamber is the Speaker of the House, elected by the Representatives. He or she is third in the line of succession to the Presidency.

Members of the House are elected every two years and must be 25 years of age, a U.S. citizen for at least seven years, and a resident of the state (but not necessarily the district) they represent.

The House has several powers assigned exclusively to it, including the power to initiate revenue bills, impeach federal officials, and elect the President in the case of an electoral college tie.

**The Senate** is composed of 100 Senators, 2 for each state. Until the ratification of the 17th Amendment in 1913, Senators were chosen by state legislatures, not by popular vote. Since then, they have been elected to six-year terms by the people of each state. Senator's terms are staggered so that about one-third of the Senate is up for reelection every two years. Senators must be 30 years of age, U.S. citizens for at least nine years, and residents of the state they represent.

The Vice President of the United States serves as President of the Senate and may cast the decisive vote in the event of a tie in the Senate.

The Senate has the sole power to confirm those of the President's appointments that require consent, and to ratify treaties.
There are, however, two exceptions to this rule: the House must also approve appointments to the Vice Presidency and any treaty that involves foreign trade. The Senate also tries impeachment cases for federal officials referred to it by the House.

In order to pass legislation and send it to the President for his signature, both the House and the Senate must pass the same bill by majority vote. If the President vetoes a bill, they may override his veto by passing the bill again in each chamber with at least two-thirds of each body voting in favor.

**The Legislative Process**

The first step in the legislative process is the introduction of a bill to Congress. Anyone can write it, but only members of Congress can introduce legislation. Some important bills are traditionally introduced at the request of the President, such as the annual federal budget. During the legislative process, however, the initial bill can undergo drastic changes.

After being introduced, a bill is referred to the appropriate committee for review. There are 17 Senate committees, with 70 subcommittees, and 23 House committees, with 104 subcommittees. The committees are not set in stone, but change in number and form with each new Congress as required for the efficient consideration of legislation. Each committee oversees a specific policy area, and the subcommittees take on more specialized policy areas. For example, the House Committee on Ways and Means includes subcommittees on Social Security and Trade.

A bill is first considered in a subcommittee, where it may be accepted, amended, or rejected entirely. If the members of the subcommittee agree to move a bill forward, it is reported to the full committee, where the process is repeated again. Throughout this stage of the process, the committees and subcommittees call hearings to investigate the merits and flaws of the bill. They invite experts, advocates, and opponents to appear before the committee and provide testimony, and can compel people to appear using subpoena power if necessary.

If the full committee votes to approve the bill, it is reported to the floor of the House or Senate, and the majority party leadership decides when to place the bill on the calendar for consideration. If a bill is particularly pressing, it may be considered right away. Others may wait for months or never be scheduled at all.

When the bill comes up for consideration, the House has a very structured debate process. Each member who wishes to speak only has a few minutes, and the number and kind of amendments are usually limited. In the Senate, debate on most bills is unlimited — Senators may speak to issues other than the bill under consideration during their speeches, and any amendment can be introduced. Senators can use this to filibuster bills under consideration, a procedure by which a Senator delays a vote on a bill — and by extension its passage — by refusing to stand down. A supermajority of 60 Senators can break a filibuster by invoking cloture, or the cession of debate on the bill, and forcing a vote. Once debate is over, the votes of a simple majority passes the bill.

A bill must pass both houses of Congress before it goes to the President for consideration. Though the Constitution requires that the two bills have the exact same wording, this rarely happens in practice. To bring the bills into alignment, a Conference Committee is convened, consisting of members from both chambers. The members of the committee produce a conference report, intended as the final version of the bill. Each chamber then votes again to approve the conference report.
Depending on where the bill originated, the final text is then enrolled by either the Clerk of the House or the Secretary of the Senate, and presented to the Speaker of the House and the President of the Senate for their signatures. The bill is then sent to the President.

When receiving a bill from Congress, the President has several options. If the President agrees substantially with the bill, he or she may sign it into law, and the bill is then printed in the Statutes at Large. If the President believes the law to be bad policy, he may veto it and send it back to Congress. Congress may override the veto with a two-thirds vote of each chamber, at which point the bill becomes law and is printed.

There are two other options that the President may exercise. If Congress is in session and the President takes no action within 10 days, the bill becomes law. If Congress adjourns before 10 days are up and the President takes no action, then the bill dies and Congress may not vote to override. This is called a pocket veto, and if Congress still wants to pass the legislation, they must begin the entire process anew.

**Powers of Congress**

Congress, as one of the three coequal branches of government, is ascribed significant powers by the Constitution. All legislative power in the government is vested in Congress, meaning that it is the only part of the government that can make new laws or change existing laws. Executive Branch agencies issue regulations with the full force of law, but these are only under the authority of laws enacted by Congress. The President may veto bills Congress passes, but Congress may also override a veto by a two-thirds vote in both the Senate and the House of Representatives.

Article I of the Constitution enumerates the powers of Congress and the specific areas in which it may legislate. Congress is also empowered to enact laws deemed "necessary and proper" for the execution of the powers given to any part of the government under the Constitution.

Part of Congress's exercise of legislative authority is the establishment of an annual budget for the government. To this end, Congress levies taxes and tariffs to provide funding for essential government services. If enough money cannot be raised to fund the government, then Congress may also authorize borrowing to make up the difference. Congress can also mandate spending on specific items: legislatively directed spending, commonly known as "earmarks," specifies funds for a particular project, rather than for a government agency.

Both chambers of Congress have extensive investigative powers, and may compel the production of evidence or testimony toward whatever end they deem necessary. Members of Congress spend much of their time holding hearings and investigations in committee. Refusal to cooperate with a Congressional subpoena can result in charges of contempt of Congress, which could result in a prison term.

The Senate maintains several powers to itself: It ratifies treaties by a two-thirds supermajority vote and confirms the appointments of the President by a majority vote. The consent of the House of Representatives is also necessary for the ratification of trade agreements and the confirmation of the Vice President.

Congress also holds the sole power to declare war.
**Government Oversight**

Oversight of the executive branch is an important Congressional check on the President's power and a balance against his discretion in implementing laws and making regulations.

A major way that Congress conducts oversight is through hearings. The House Committee on Oversight and Government Reform and the Senate Committee on Homeland Security and Government Affairs are both devoted to overseeing and reforming government operations, and each committee conducts oversight in its policy area.

Congress also maintains an investigative organization, the Government Accountability Office (GAO). Founded in 1921 as the General Accounting Office, its original mission was to audit the budgets and financial statements sent to Congress by the Secretary of the Treasury and the Director of the Office of Management and Budget. Today, the GAO audits and generates reports on every aspect of the government, ensuring that taxpayer dollars are spent with the effectiveness and efficiency that the American people deserve.

The executive branch also polices itself: Sixty-four Inspectors General, each responsible for a different agency, regularly audit and report on the agencies to which they are attached.

**Key Congressional Leaders**

From *The Center on Congress at Indiana University*

**House**
- Speaker: Presides over the House. Chooses priorities and sets the annual and daily legislative schedule.
- Majority Leader: Schedules time for floor debate on legislation.
- Minority Leader: Advocates for the minority party’s concerns and procedural rights.

**Senate**
- President Pro Tempore: Presides over the Senate in the absence of the vice president of the United States.
- Majority Leader: Chooses priorities and sets the annual and daily legislative schedule.
- Minority Leader: Advocates for the minority party’s concerns and procedural rights.

**Key Congressional Terms**

- Committee Markup: Committee members offer changes to a bill before it goes to the full House or Senate for consideration and voting.
- Floor Amendment: In full session, members of the House or Senate can offer changes to a bill under consideration.
- Omnibus Bill: Several initiatives that are not necessarily related are grouped together and voted on as a block.
- Conference Committee: Select members of the House and Senate meet to reconcile differences between bills passed in the House and Senate.
## Monumental Legislation

Compiled by *The Echo Foundation*

June 2011

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Legislation</th>
<th>Change or Provision</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Federal Meat Inspection Act (1906)</strong></td>
<td>…established standards for inspecting all meat processing plants that conducted business across state lines. It has since been amended and strengthened by subsequent acts, including 1967’s Wholesome Meat and Wholesome Poultry Products Acts. The Act paved the way for the eventual creation of the Food and Drug Administration and other federal agencies (<a href="http://nolo.com">nolo.com</a>)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Indian American Citizenship (1924)</strong></td>
<td>…granted citizenship to all Native Americans born in the U.S. The right to vote, however, was governed by state law; until 1957, some states barred Native Americans from voting (<a href="http://loc.gov">loc.gov</a>)</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>The New Deal (1933-1938)</strong></td>
<td>…after being sworn in as America’s 32nd president, Franklin Delano Roosevelt initiated his “New Deal,” an extensive and multifaceted array of social, cultural and fiscal recovery programs designed to reform and reinvigorate national life at the height of the Great Depression (<a href="http://loc.gov">loc.gov</a>)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Social Security Act (1935)</strong></td>
<td>…created unemployment insurance, established a lump-sum Social Security death benefit, and initiated a system of benefits for workers injured in industrial accidents, dependent mothers and children, the blind, and the physically disabled (<a href="http://nolo.com">nolo.com</a>)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Fair Labor Standards Act and Equal Pay Act (1938)</strong></td>
<td>…established a national minimum wage, required overtime pay under certain circumstances, and prohibited most child labor…<em>the Equal Pay Act</em> made it illegal to pay lower wages to women who were doing the same jobs as men (<a href="http://nolo.com">nolo.com</a>)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Federal Food, Drug, and Cosmetic Act (1938)</strong></td>
<td>…was passed after a legally marketed toxic elixir killed 107 people, including many children. The FD&amp;C Act completely overhauled the public health system. Among other provisions, the law authorized the FDA to demand evidence of safety for new drugs, issue standards for food, and conduct factory inspections (<a href="http://fda.gov">fda.gov</a>)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Servicemen’s Readjustment Act—G.I. Bill (1944)</strong></td>
<td>…provided returning World War II veterans with funds for medical care, unemployment insurance, higher education, and housing (<a href="http://nolo.com">nolo.com</a>)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Civil Rights Act (1964)</strong></td>
<td>…prohibited segregation in public places, terminating Jim Crow laws in the South. It also outlawed segregation in businesses, required the integration of schools, eliminated unequal voter registration requirements, and prohibited employment discrimination (<a href="http://nolo.com">nolo.com</a>)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Hate Crimes Act (2009)</strong></td>
<td>The 1969 Federal Hate Crimes Law gave the U.S. Department of Justice the power to investigate and prosecute defendants who selected their crime victim based on the victim’s race, color, religion, or national origin…Specifically the Act: expanded the list of covered crimes to include those motivated by a victim's actual or perceived gender, sexual orientation, gender identity, or disability (<a href="http://nolo.com">nolo.com</a>)</td>
</tr>
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The Judicial Branch

From whitehouse.gov

Where the Executive and Legislative branches are elected by the people, members of the Judicial Branch are appointed by the President and confirmed by the Senate.

Article III of the Constitution, which establishes the Judicial Branch, leaves Congress significant discretion to determine the shape and structure of the federal judiciary. Even the number of Supreme Court Justices is left to Congress — at times there have been as few as six, while the current number (nine, with one Chief Justice and eight Associate Justices) has only been in place since 1869. The Constitution also grants Congress the power to establish courts inferior to the Supreme Court, and to that end Congress has established the United States district courts, which try most federal cases, and 13 United States courts of appeals, which review appealed district court cases.

Federal judges can only be removed through impeachment by the House of Representatives and conviction in the Senate. Judges and justices serve no fixed term — they serve until their death, retirement, or conviction by the Senate. By design, this insulates them from the temporary passions of the public, and allows them to apply the law with only justice in mind, and not electoral or political concerns.

Generally, Congress determines the jurisdiction of the federal courts. In some cases, however — such as in the example of a dispute between two or more U.S. states — the Constitution grants the Supreme Court original jurisdiction, an authority that cannot be stripped by Congress.

The courts only try actual cases and controversies — a party must show that it has been harmed in order to bring suit in court. This means that the courts do not issue advisory opinions on the constitutionality of laws or the legality of actions if the ruling would have no practical effect. Cases brought before the judiciary typically proceed from district court to appellate court and may even end at the Supreme Court, although the Supreme Court hears comparatively few cases each year.

Federal courts enjoy the sole power to interpret the law, determine the constitutionality of the law, and apply it to individual cases. The courts, like Congress, can compel the production of evidence and testimony through the use of a subpoena.
The inferior courts are constrained by the decisions of the Supreme Court — once the Supreme Court interprets a law, inferior courts must apply the Supreme Court's interpretation to the facts of a particular case.

The Supreme Court of the United States

The Supreme Court of the United States is the highest court in the land and the only part of the federal judiciary specifically required by the Constitution.

The Constitution does not stipulate the number of Supreme Court Justices; the number is set instead by Congress. There have been as few as six, but since 1869 there have been nine Justices, including one Chief Justice. All Justices are nominated by the President, confirmed by the Senate, and hold their offices under life tenure. Since Justices do not have to run or campaign for re-election, they are thought to be insulated from political pressure when deciding cases. Justices may remain in office until they resign, pass away, or are impeached and convicted by Congress.

The Court's caseload is almost entirely appellate in nature, and the Court's decisions cannot be appealed to any authority, as it is the final judicial arbiter in the United States on matters of federal law. However, the Court may consider appeals from the highest state courts or from federal appellate courts. The Court also has original jurisdiction in cases involving ambassadors and other diplomats, and in cases between states.

Although the Supreme Court may hear an appeal on any question of law provided it has jurisdiction, it usually does not hold trials. Instead, the Court's task is to interpret the meaning of a law, to decide whether a law is relevant to a particular set of facts, or to rule on how a law should be applied. Lower courts are obligated to follow the precedent set by the Supreme Court when rendering decisions.

In almost all instances, the Supreme Court does not hear appeals as a matter of right; instead, parties must petition the Court for a writ of certiorari. It is the Court's custom and practice to "grant cert" if four of the nine Justices decide that they should hear the case. Of the approximately 7,500 requests for certiorari filed each year, the Court usually grants cert to fewer than 150. These are typically cases that the Court considers sufficiently important to require their review; a common example is the occasion when two or more of the federal courts of appeals have ruled differently on the same question of federal law.

If the Court grants certiorari, Justices accept legal briefs from the parties to the case, as well as from amici curiae, or "friends of the court." These can include industry trade groups, academics, or even the U.S. government itself. Before issuing a ruling, the Supreme Court usually hears oral arguments, where the various parties to the suit present their arguments and the Justices ask them questions. If the case involves the federal government, the Solicitor General of the United States presents arguments on behalf of the United States. The Justices then hold private conferences, make their decision, and (often after a period of several months) issue the Court's opinion, along with any dissenting arguments that may have been written.

The Judicial Process

Article III of the Constitution of the United States guarantees that every person accused of wrongdoing has the right to a fair trial before a competent judge and a jury of one's peers.

The Fourth, Fifth, and Sixth Amendments to the Constitution provide additional protections for those accused of a crime. These include:

- A guarantee that no person shall be deprived of life, liberty, or property without the due process of law
- Protection against being tried for the same crime twice ("double jeopardy")

Continued on the next page
- The right to a speedy trial by an impartial jury
- The right to cross-examine witnesses, and to call witnesses to support their case
- The right to legal representation
- The right to avoid self-incrimination
- Protection from excessive bail, excessive fines, and cruel and unusual punishments

Criminal proceedings can be conducted under either state or federal law, depending on the nature and extent of the crime. A criminal legal procedure typically begins with an arrest by a law enforcement officer. If a grand jury chooses to deliver an indictment, the accused will appear before a judge and be formally charged with a crime, at which time he or she may enter a plea.

The defendant is given time to review all the evidence in the case and to build a legal argument. Then, the case is brought to trial and decided by a jury. If the defendant is determined to be not guilty of the crime, the charges are dismissed. Otherwise, the judge determines the sentence, which can include prison time, a fine, or even execution.

Civil cases are similar to criminal ones, but instead of arbitrating between the state and a person or organization, they deal with disputes between individuals or organizations. If a party believes that it has been wronged, it can file suit in civil court to attempt to have that wrong remedied through an order to cease and desist, alter behavior, or award monetary damages. After the suit is filed and evidence is gathered and presented by both sides, a trial proceeds as in a criminal case. If the parties involved waive their right to a jury trial, the case can be decided by a judge; otherwise, the case is decided and damages awarded by a jury.

After a criminal or civil case is tried, it may be appealed to a higher court — a federal court of appeals or state appellate court. A litigant who files an appeal, known as an "appellant," must show that the trial court or administrative agency made a legal error that affected the outcome of the case. An appellate court makes its decision based on the record of the case established by the trial court or agency — it does not receive additional evidence or hear witnesses. It may also review the factual findings of the trial court or agency, but typically may only overturn a trial outcome on factual grounds if the findings were "clearly erroneous." If a defendant is found not guilty in a criminal proceeding, he or she cannot be retried on the same set of facts.

Federal appeals are decided by panels of three judges. The appellant presents legal arguments to the panel, in a written document called a "brief." In the brief, the appellant tries to persuade the judges that the trial court made an error, and that the lower decision should be reversed.

On the other hand, the party defending against the appeal, known as the "appellee" or "respondent," tries in its brief to show why the trial court decision was correct, or why any errors made by the trial court are not significant enough to affect the outcome of the case.

The court of appeals usually has the final word in the case, unless it sends the case back to the trial court for additional proceedings. In some cases the decision may be reviewed en banc — that is, by a larger group of judges of the court of appeals for the circuit.

A litigant who loses in a federal court of appeals, or in the highest court of a state, may file a petition for a "writ of certiorari," which is a document asking the Supreme Court to review the case. The Supreme Court, however, is not obligated to grant review. The Court typically will agree to hear a case only when it involves a new and important legal principle, or when two or more federal appellate courts have interpreted a law differently. (There are also special circumstances in which the Supreme Court is required by law to hear an appeal.) When the Supreme Court hears a case, the parties are required to file written briefs and the Court may hear oral argument.
Marbury v. Madison (1803)

From PBS (Public Broadcasting Service)

Marbury v. Madison, arguably the most important case in Supreme Court history, was the first U.S. Supreme Court case to apply the principle of "judicial review" – the power of federal courts to void acts of Congress in conflict with the Constitution. Written in 1803 by Chief Justice John Marshall, the decision played a key role in making the Supreme Court a separate branch of government on par with Congress and the executive.

The facts surrounding Marbury were complicated. In the election of 1800, the newly organized Democratic-Republican party of Thomas Jefferson defeated the Federalist party of John Adams, creating an atmosphere of political panic for the lame duck Federalists. In the final days of his presidency, Adams appointed a large number of justices of peace for the District of Columbia whose commissions were approved by the Senate, signed by the president, and affixed with the official seal of the government. The commissions were not delivered, however, and when President Jefferson assumed office March 5, 1801, he ordered James Madison, his Secretary of State, not to deliver them. William Marbury, one of the appointees, then petitioned the Supreme Court for a writ of mandamus, or legal order, compelling Madison to show cause why he should not receive his commission.

In resolving the case, Chief Justice Marshall answered three questions. First, did Marbury have a right to the writ for which he petitioned? Second, did the laws of the United States allow the courts to grant Marbury such a writ? Third, if they did, could the Supreme Court issue such a writ? With regard to the first question, Marshall ruled that Marbury had been properly appointed in accordance with procedures established by law, and that he therefore had a right to the writ. Secondly, because Marbury had a legal right to his commission, the law must afford him a remedy. The Chief Justice went on to say that it was the particular responsibility of the courts to protect the rights of individuals – even against the president of the United States. At the time, Marshall's thinly disguised lecture to President Jefferson about the rule of law was much more controversial than his statement about judicial review (which doctrine was widely accepted).

It was in answering the third question – whether a writ of mandamus issuing from the Supreme Court was the proper remedy – that Marshall addressed the question of judicial review. The Chief Justice ruled that the Court could not grant the writ because Section 13 of the Judiciary Act of 1789, which granted it the right to do so, was unconstitutional insofar as it extended to cases of original jurisdiction. Original jurisdiction – the power to bring cases directly to the Supreme Court – was the only jurisdictional matter dealt with by the Constitution itself. According to Article III, it applied only to cases "affecting ambassadors, other public ministers and consuls" and to cases "in which the state shall be party." By extending the Court's original jurisdiction to include cases like Marbury's, Congress had exceeded it authority. And when an act of Congress is in conflict with the Constitution, it is, Marshall said, the obligation of the Court to uphold the Constitution because, by Article VI, it is the "supreme law of the land."

As a result of Marshall's decision Marbury was denied his commission – which presumably pleased President Jefferson. Jefferson was not pleased with the lecture given him by the Chief Justice, however, nor with Marshall's affirmation of the Court's power to review acts of Congress. For practical strategic reasons, Marshall did not say that the Court was the only interpreter of the Constitution (though he hoped it would be) and he did not say how the Court would enforce its decisions if Congress or the Executive opposed them. But, by his timely assertion of judicial review, the Court began its ascent as an equal branch of government – an equal in power to the Congress and the president. Throughout its long history, when the Court needed to affirm its legitimacy, it has cited Marshall's opinion in Marbury v. Madison.
Miranda v. Arizona (1966)

From PBS (Public Broadcasting Service)

In Miranda v. Arizona (1966), the Supreme Court ruled that detained criminal suspects, prior to police questioning, must be informed of their constitutional right to an attorney and against self-incrimination. The case began with the 1963 arrest of Phoenix resident Ernesto Miranda, who was charged with rape, kidnapping, and robbery. Miranda was not informed of his rights prior to the police interrogation. During the two-hour interrogation, Miranda allegedly confessed to committing the crimes, which the police apparently recorded. Miranda, who had not finished ninth grade and had a history of mental instability, had no counsel present. At trial, the prosecution's case consisted solely of his confession. Miranda was convicted of both rape and kidnapping and sentenced to 20 to 30 years in prison. He appealed to the Arizona Supreme Court, claiming that the police had unconstitutionally obtained his confession. The court disagreed, however, and upheld the conviction. Miranda appealed to the U.S. Supreme Court, which reviewed the case in 1966.

The Supreme Court, in a 5-4 decision written by Chief Justice Earl Warren, ruled that the prosecution could not introduce Miranda's confession as evidence in a criminal trial because the police had failed to first inform Miranda of his right to an attorney and against self-incrimination. The police duty to give these warnings is compelled by the Constitution's Fifth Amendment, which gives a criminal suspect the right to refuse "to be a witness against himself," and Sixth Amendment, which guarantees criminal defendants the right to an attorney.

The Court maintained that the defendant's right against self-incrimination has long been part of Anglo-American law as a means to equalize the vulnerability inherent in being detained. Such a position, unchecked, can often lead to government abuse. For example, the Court cited the continued high incidence of police violence designed to compel confessions from a suspect. This and other forms of intimidation, maintained the Court, deprive criminal suspects of their basic liberties and can lead to false confessions. The defendant's right to an attorney is an equally fundamental right, because the presence of an attorney in interrogations, according to Chief Justice Warren, enables "the defendant under otherwise compelling circumstances to tell his story without fear, effectively, and in a way that eliminates the evils in the interrogations process."

Without these two fundamental rights, both of which, the Court ruled, "dispel the compulsion inherent in custodial surroundings," "no statement obtained from the defendant can truly be the product of his free choice."

Thus, to protect these rights in the face of widespread ignorance of the law, the Court devised statements that the police are required to tell a defendant who is being detained and interrogated. These mandatory "Miranda Rights" begin with "the right to remain silent," and continue with the statement that "anything said can and will be used against [the defendant] in a court of law." The police are further compelled to inform the suspect of his or her right to an attorney and allow for (or, if necessary, provide for) a defendant's attorney who can accompany him during interrogations. Because none of these rights was afforded to Ernesto Miranda and his "confession" was thus unconstitutionally admitted at trial, his conviction was reversed. Miranda was later retried and convicted without the admission of his confession.

Miranda v. Arizona, in creating the "Miranda Rights" we take for granted today, reconciled the increasing police powers of the state with the basic rights of individuals. Miranda remains good law today.
Brown v. Board of Education (1954)

From PBS (Public Broadcasting Service)

Brown v. Board of Education (1954), now acknowledged as one of the greatest Supreme Court decisions of the 20th century, unanimously held that the racial segregation of children in public schools violated the Equal Protection Clause of the Fourteenth Amendment. Although the decision did not succeed in fully desegregating public education in the United States, it put the Constitution on the side of racial equality and galvanized the nascent civil rights movement into a full revolution.

In 1954, large portions of the United States had racially segregated schools, made legal by Plessy v. Ferguson (1896), which held that segregated public facilities were constitutional so long as the black and white facilities were equal to each other. However, by the mid-twentieth century, civil rights groups set up legal and political challenges to racial segregation. In the early 1950s, NAACP lawyers brought class action lawsuits on behalf of black schoolchildren and their families in Kansas, South Carolina, Virginia, and Delaware, seeking court orders to compel school districts to let black students attend white public schools.

One of these class actions, Brown v. Board of Education was filed against the Topeka, Kansas school board by representative-plaintiff Oliver Brown, parent of one of the children denied access to Topeka's white schools. Brown claimed that Topeka's racial segregation violated the Constitution's Equal Protection Clause because the city's black and white schools were not equal to each other and never could be. The federal district court dismissed his claim, ruling that the segregated public schools were "substantially" equal enough to be constitutional under the Plessy doctrine. Brown appealed to the Supreme Court, which consolidated and then reviewed all the school segregation actions together. Thurgood Marshall, who would in 1967 be appointed the first black justice of the Court, was chief counsel for the plaintiffs.

Thanks to the astute leadership of Chief Justice Earl Warren, the Court spoke in a unanimous decision written by Warren himself. The decision held that racial segregation of children in public schools violated the Equal Protection Clause of the Fourteenth Amendment, which states that "no state shall make or enforce any law which shall ... deny to any person within its jurisdiction the equal protection of the laws." The Court noted that Congress, when drafting the Fourteenth Amendment in the 1860s, did not expressly intend to require integration of public schools. On the other hand, that Amendment did not prohibit integration. In any case, the Court asserted that the Fourteenth Amendment guarantees equal education today. Public education in the 20th century, said the Court, had become an essential component of a citizen's public life, forming the basis of democratic citizenship, normal socialization, and professional training. In this context, any child denied a good education would be unlikely to succeed in life. Where a state, therefore, has undertaken to provide universal education, such education becomes a right that must be afforded equally to both blacks and whites.

Were the black and white schools "substantially" equal to each other, as the lower courts had found? After reviewing psychological studies showing black girls in segregated schools had low racial self-esteem, the Court concluded that separating children on the basis of race creates dangerous inferiority complexes that may adversely affect black children's ability to learn. The Court concluded that, even if the tangible facilities were equal between the black and white schools, racial segregation in schools is "inherently unequal" and is thus always unconstitutional. At least in the context of public schools, Plessy v. Ferguson was overruled. In the Brown II case a decided year later, the Court ordered the states to integrate their schools "with all deliberate speed."

Opposition to Brown I and II reached an apex in Cooper v. Aaron (1958), when the Court ruled that states were constitutionally required to implement the Supreme Court's integration orders. Widespread racial integration of the South was achieved by the late 1960s and 1970s. In the meantime, the equal protection ruling in Brown spilled over into other areas of the law and into the political arena as well. Scholars now point out that Brown v. Board was not the beginning of the modern civil rights movement, but there is no doubt that it constituted a watershed moment in the struggle for racial equality in America.
Checks and Balances

From EDSITEment
A project of the National Endowment for the Humanities

One of the most persistent and overarching complaints the American colonists had about the rule of the British monarchy was the extent of its power. One of the most persistent and overarching complaints about the early government of the U.S. under the Articles of Confederation was the weakness of the federal government. Attempting to form a more perfect union, the framers of the Constitution designed a government that clearly assigned power to three branches, while at the same time guaranteeing that the power of any branch could be checked by another...

(Image from socialstudieshelp.com)
State and Local Government

From whitehouse.gov

The following describes the general structure of state and local governments across the U.S. However, there are variations among state and local governments that make each unique.

Most Americans have more daily contact with their state and local governments than with the federal government. Police departments, libraries, and schools — not to mention driver's licenses and parking tickets — usually fall under the oversight of state and local governments. Each state has its own written constitution, and these documents are often far more elaborate than their federal counterpart. The Alabama Constitution, for example, contains 310,296 words — more than 40 times as many as the U.S. Constitution.

State Government:
Under the Tenth Amendment to the U.S. Constitution, all powers not granted to the federal government are reserved for the states and the people. All state governments are modeled after the federal government and consist of three branches: executive, legislative, and judicial. The U.S. Constitution mandates that all states uphold a "republican form" of government, although the three-branch structure is not required.

Executive Branch
In every state, the executive branch is headed by a governor who is directly elected by the people. In most states, the other leaders in the executive branch are also directly elected, including the lieutenant governor, the attorney general, the secretary of state, and auditors and commissioners. States reserve the right to organize in any way, so they often vary greatly with regard to executive structure. No two state executive organizations are identical.

Legislative Branch
All 50 states have legislatures made up of elected representatives, who consider matters brought forth by the governor or introduced by its members to create legislation that becomes law. The legislature also approves a state's budget and initiates tax legislation and articles of impeachment. The latter is part of a system of checks and balances among the three branches of government that mirrors the federal system and prevents any branch from abusing its power.

Except for one state, Nebraska, all states have a bicameral legislature made up of two chambers: a smaller upper house and a larger lower house. Together the two chambers make state laws and fulfill other governing responsibilities. (Nebraska is the lone state that has just one chamber in its legislature.) The smaller upper chamber is always called the Senate, and its members generally serve longer terms, usually four years. The larger lower chamber is most often called the House of Representatives, but some states call it the Assembly or the House of Delegates. Its members usually serve shorter terms, often two years.

Judicial Branch
State judicial branches are usually led by the state supreme court, which hears appeals from lower-level state courts. Court structures and judicial appointments/elections are determined either by legislation or the state constitution. The Supreme Court focuses on correcting errors made in lower courts and therefore holds no trials. Rulings made in state supreme courts are normally binding; however, when questions are raised regarding consistency with the U.S. Constitution, matters may be appealed directly to the United States Supreme Court.
Local Government:
Local governments generally include two tiers: counties, also known as boroughs in Alaska and parishes in Louisiana, and municipalities, or cities/towns. In some states, counties are divided into townships. Municipalities can be structured in many ways, as defined by state constitutions, and are called, variously, townships, villages, boroughs, cities, or towns. Various kinds of districts also provide functions in local government outside county or municipal boundaries, such as school districts or fire protection districts.

Municipal governments — those defined as cities, towns, boroughs (except in Alaska), villages, and townships — are generally organized around a population center and in most cases correspond to the geographical designations used by the United States Census Bureau for reporting of housing and population statistics. Municipalities vary greatly in size, from the millions of residents of New York City and Los Angeles to the 287 people who live in Jenkins, Minnesota.

Municipalities generally take responsibility for parks and recreation services, police and fire departments, housing services, emergency medical services, municipal courts, transportation services (including public transportation), and public works (streets, sewers, snow removal, signage, and so forth).

Whereas the federal government and state governments share power in countless ways, a local government must be granted power by the state. In general, mayors, city councils, and other governing bodies are directly elected by the people.

Charlotte City Government

From charmeck.org

Charlotte has a Council-Manager form of government with a Mayor and 11 Council Members elected every two years in November, and a professional City Manager to run the day-to-day operations. The Mayor and four Council Members are elected at-large by a city-wide vote. Seven Council Members are elected from districts by voters who reside in each district.

Mayor
The Mayor presides at all City Council meetings and officially represents the City at special ceremonies and events. The Mayor is generally responsible for the execution of local laws. It is the Mayor's role to represent the City in an official capacity at the state capital in Raleigh, in Washington and internationally.

Part of the Mayor's duties includes his involvement in national organizations that work on issues that are important to both Charlotte and the Nation.

Mayor Pro Tem
The Mayor Pro Tem is elected by a vote of the City Council members. He or she assumes all duties, powers and obligations of the Office of Mayor in the Mayor's absence.

City Council
While At-Large Representatives are elected by all the registered voters in the City and District Representatives are elected only by registered voters within a specific district, all of the City Council members work together to provide policy decisions that benefit the community as a whole and provide quality service to all of Charlotte's districts.

Continued on the next page...
The District Representatives frequently meet with the residents of their community by attending public functions and community meetings.

**Duties of Mayor and City Council**
Together the Mayor and City Council Members are responsible for establishing the general policies under which the City operates. These include:

- **Appointing** the City Manager, City Attorney, City Clerk and members of various Boards and Commissions
- **Enacting** ordinances, resolutions and orders
- **Reviewing** the annual budget, setting the tax rate and approving the financing of all City operations
- **Authorizing** contracts on behalf of the City

**City Manager**
The City Manager is the key administrative officer of the City. The Manager is assisted by a leadership team made up of four Assistant City Managers and other key members of the Manager's staff.

Charlotte is one of the largest cities in the country with a council-manager form of government dating back to 1929, where the manager reports to the City Council and the council votes on the manager's recommendations.

The City Manager ensures that all City services are delivered in an efficient and cost-effective manner.

**Mecklenburg County Government** is responsible for providing such services as:

- Libraries
- Jails
- Parks
- Recreation
- Education
- Human and Social Services

**Charlotte City Government** is responsible for providing such services as:

- Charlotte Douglas International Airport
- Economic Development
- Fire
- Garbage and Recycling
- Neighborhood Development
- Neighborhood Improvements
- Planning and Zoning
- Police
- Road Construction
- Street Maintenance
- Transit
- Water and Sewer
**Mecklenburg County Board of Commissioners**

The nine-member Board of County Commissioners is the governing body of Mecklenburg County. Elections are held in November of even-numbered years, and Commissioners elect a chairman and vice-chairman during their first meeting each December. Six Commissioners are elected by district and three at-large Commissioners are elected by county-wide vote.

The Board's major responsibilities include adopting the annual County budget, setting the County property tax rate, and assessing and establishing priorities on the many community needs, especially those related to health, education, welfare, mental health and the environment. The Board also makes appointments to citizen advisory committees.

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**Political Parties, Platforms, and Planks**

From the *Constitutional Rights Foundation*

**Political parties** are key players in American politics. But the Constitution does not mention political parties. In fact, many of the founders, including George Washington, distrusted permanent political parties, fearing that they would become too powerful. The first two political factions to appear were the Federalists, who supported ratification of the Constitution, and the Anti-Federalists, who opposed ratification. These factions disappeared once the Constitution was ratified. Yet, early in Washington's first administration as president, two new factions formed: the Federalists, who supported Alexander Hamilton and a group that gathered around Thomas Jefferson, called the Democratic Republicans. They were the first real parties.

Throughout most of American history, the United States has had two major parties. Today's Democratic Party can trace its origins to Jefferson's old party. Today's Republican Party can trace its origins to the election of 1854. Along the way, dozens of **third parties** have come and gone. Some of these parties were formed to promote a particular cause, such as the Prohibition Party or the Equal Rights party, which demanded the vote for women. Other third parties, such as the Populists and the Greenbackers, arose for a short period around economic issues. Some third parties, such as the Progressives and the Dixiecrats, splintered off from the Republican and Democratic parties. Some parties have developed around a certain leader, such as George Wallace's American Independent Party or Ross Perot's Reform Party.

Third parties have never received high percentages of votes at election time, but they still serve important functions in the American political system. They give citizens who vote for them a forum for dissent. They also give those promoting reform a chance to air their ideas. For example, many of the ideas of the Progressives eventually were adopted by the major parties…

**Platforms and Planks**

American political parties are organized on a national, state, and local basis. Every four years, the parties hold a national convention to nominate a presidential and vice presidential candidate. They also meet to approve a party platform of issues and positions upon which the candidates will run. A **party platform** is a set of principles, goals, and strategies designed to address pressing political issues. Each party's platform is broken down into "**planks**," or declarations that speak to each specific issue.

Party platforms and their planks are very important to the electoral process: They give the candidates a clear political position with which they can campaign. They give voters a sense of what the candidates believe in, the issues they think are important, and how—if elected—they will address them.
Political Parties

Compiled by The Echo Foundation

The following is only a sample of the modern-day political parties that exist in the United States. See pg. 122 in the Reference Materials Chapter for a link to learn about other parties.

Constitution

“We declare the platform of the Constitution Party to be predicated on the principles of The Declaration of Independence, The Constitution of the United States and The Bill of Rights. According to the original intent of the Founding Fathers, these founding documents are the foundation of our Liberty and the Supreme Law of the Land. The sole purpose of government, as stated in the Declaration of Independence, is to secure our unalienable rights given us by our Creator. When Government grows beyond this scope, it is usurpation, and liberty is compromised. We believe the major issues we face today are best solved by a renewed allegiance to the original intent of these founding documents.” (The Constitution Party)

Democratic

“For over 200 years, Democrats have stood for the idea that wealth and status should not be an entitlement to rule. Democrats recognize that our country and our economy are strongest when they provide opportunity for all Americans—when we grow our country from the bottom up. Democrats stand for an abiding faith in the judgment of hardworking American families, and a commitment to helping the excluded, the disenfranchised and the poor strengthen our nation by earning themselves a piece of the American Dream. We remember that our country was sculpted by immigrants and slaves, their children and grandchildren...” (The Democratic Party)

Green

“The Green Party of the United States is a federation of state Green Parties. Committed to ecology, social justice grassroots democracy and non-violence, Greens are renewing democracy in the United States through community-based organizing without the support of corporate donors...” (The Green Party)

Independence

“...The Independence Party of America will offer a ‘third way’ to professionally manage the federal government. As America’s largest third party organization of political independents … we intend to bring INDEPENDENCE to the national forefront. We intend to change the DEBATE in Washington and offer a viable alternative to the two-party duopoly. And we hope to recruit America’s increasingly apathetic electorate with a plan and a mission to offer a REAL alternative to the major party candidates...” (Independence Party of America)

Libertarian

"The Libertarian way is a logically consistent approach to politics based on the moral principle of self-ownership. Each individual has the right to control his or her own body, action, speech, and property. Government's only role is to help individuals defend themselves from force and fraud.” (The Libertarian Party)

Republican

“Abolition. Free speech. Women's suffrage. These were all causes the Republican Party adopted early on. So, too, were reducing the size of government, streamlining bureaucracy, and returning power to individual states. With a core belief in the primacy of individuals, the Republican Party, since its inception, has been at the forefront of the fight for individuals' rights in opposition to a large, intrusive government.” (The Republican Party)

Socialist

"The Socialist Party strives to establish a radical democracy that places people's lives under their own control – a non-racist, classless, feminist, socialist society in which people cooperate at work, at home, and in the community.” (Socialist Party USA)

Tea Party

“The impetus for the Tea Party movement is excessive government spending and taxation. Our mission is to attract, educate, organize, and mobilize our fellow citizens to secure public policy consistent with our three core values of Fiscal Responsibility, Constitutionally Limited Government and Free Markets.” (The Tea Party Patriots)
The following diagram demonstrates one way of illustrating the various labels assigned to politicians and political activists in order to characterize their beliefs and methods. At the top, the “Bullets” believe in changing the system by any means necessary, including war. At the bottom, the “Ballots” believe in changing the system through the most peaceful method possible, such as voting.

**Radical**
One who advocates immediate, significant changes in the system that have never been tried before and that will produce dramatically different results.

**Extremist**
One who advocates significant, violent changes.

**Reactionary**
One who takes the position that the system ran better in the past; government should work to bring the system back to the “way it used to be.”

**Liberal**
One who believes that change is necessary and beneficial; government must take an active role to ensure fairness and quality instead of competition.

**Conservative**
One who accepts the status quo and believes new changes should be carefully studied before being implemented; competition is good for the system; change does not have to come from the government.

**Centrist**
One who takes the position that the system (politically/economically/socially) is fine the way it is and needs very few changes.

**BALLOTS**

**LEFTIST**

**RIGHTIST**
Building a Party Platform

From the Constitutional Rights Foundation

After reading about the origins and functions of political parties, students create a party platform to address political issues that are likely to arise during a national election.

1. Divide the class into 10 small groups. Assign each group one issue from the list below.

Foreign Policy Issues
- terrorism
- diplomacy and military force
- promoting democracy abroad (nation building)

Domestic Policy Issues
- jobs and the economy
- diversity and equality
- civil liberties & national security
- health care
- education
- environment
- energy

2. Tell students to:
- Define the issue they have been assigned.
- Explain why it is an important campaign issue.
- Develop a position, or "plank," on how the issue should be addressed.

Optional: If time permits, have each group research its issue before proceeding to step 3.

3. Have each group present their findings to the whole class. After each presentation, vote as a class whether to (1) adopt, (2) modify, or (3) reject each position or "plank." Record the results of the vote.

4. Re-divide the class into small groups, and using the "planks" they have adopted, have each group create a presentation (a poster, display, speech, or campaign ad) that represents their position. Assemble all the groups' posters, displays, etc. to create a complete party platform.

5. Debrief the activity by having students compare their party platform to existing party platforms (Research the candidates).
- How is your platform similar to existing platforms? How is it different?
- Do candidates plan to address the issues you have chosen? How?
- In your opinion, which platform[s] is better? Which is the best? Why?
Supreme Court Mock Trial Activity

Compiled by The Echo Foundation
June 2011

The Supreme Court holds oral arguments before each case they accept. The oral arguments for each case last for one hour, with each side having 30 minutes to argue their case. This includes time to answer questions from the justices. Before oral arguments take place, the justices have already become familiar with the facts of the case and the lower court’s rulings through reading the briefs and other documents about the case… (montgomeryschoolsmd.org /schools/wjhs/mediactr/socstupathfinder/Mock Supreme Court/index.html)

This activity will mock the Supreme Court case New Jersey v. T.L.O. Each side will have a maximum of 30 minutes. There will be 1 lawyer on each side and 9 justices. Each lawyer will begin with his or her opening argument. The floor will then open for questioning from the Supreme Court Justices. One lawyer will be questioned and then the other will be given the opportunity to either respond or answer another question.

After questioning, there should be an opportunity for closing arguments and rebuttals. The 9 justices will then vote to make a decision. The side that wins must obtain a simple majority of the votes, which is at least 5 votes. The actual decision that was made in the case will be read after the vote.

Supreme Court Justices and lawyers should research the case before the trial. Justices should prepare potential questions. Lawyers should write their opening arguments, think of answers to the potential questions, and prepare arguments for their case.

Here is some brief information about New Jersey v. T.L.O.

In 1980, a high school freshman with initials T.L.O. was caught smoking cigarettes in her public school’s bathroom. She was taken to the principal’s office, where she denied smoking in the bathroom. The assistant vice principal searched her purse. He found cigarettes along with things that showed T.L.O. might be using and selling illegal drugs. Delinquency charges were brought against T.L.O., and the school wanted to use the things from her purse as evidence. T.L.O. argued that the evidence from her purse couldn’t be used because the search was illegal since it violated her constitutional rights (icivics.org).
Study Questions

1. Do you believe that the government is subject to us, or that we are subject to our government? Explain your response.

2. Should government enforce the will of the majority above all minorities? Why? Should government promote the interests of certain groups over others, or benefit all equally? Why? What issues may arise from attempting to benefit certain groups or all equally?

3. Research some specific examples of U.S. participation in the affairs of countries abroad in the twentieth century. What was the role of the U.S. government? In your opinion, what should be the role of the U.S. government internationally? Do you believe that the U.S. is too involved in the affairs of countries abroad? Use examples from your research to support your answer.

4. What are the pros and cons of the current structure of the U.S. government? Referring to “Democracy vs. Other Forms of Government” on pages 13-14, how does this compare to the government of other countries across the world?

5. Why are political party platforms important? Do all Americans believe essentially the same thing about issues (economy, education, etc.)? On what issues may they disagree? Why?

6. With which political party do you most identify? Why?

7. In the past, third parties (Constitution, Libertarian, Independence, Tea Party, etc.) have influenced elections by drawing votes away from larger parties. Third parties are dissident groups formed when the two major parties (Democratic and Republican) are seen as insufficient to resolve certain issues. What new third parties may form in the future? Explain your response.

8. In the U.S., citizens vote for the political leaders they believe best represents their interests. What specific qualities do you think make a candidate fit for the job of representing their constituency?

9. What role does each of the following have in shaping our political beliefs and knowledge of political candidates and issues: the media, family, friends, and school?
IV. The 2012 Presidential Election

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“Presidency is no bed of roses.”

James K. Polk, 11th President of the United States
Promises Obama kept, promises he broke

From MSNBC.com
By NBC's Norah O'Donnell, Adam Verdugo, and Ariel Edwards-Levy
January 24, 2011

We decided to go back and check what President Obama has achieved since last year’s State of the Union address.

In that 2010 speech, Obama made a lot of promises, and he fulfilled many of them – with high-profile, hard-fought successes like the passage of health-care reform, a jobs bill, the New START treaty with Russia, and the repeal of "Don’t Ask Don’t Tell." He also saw the last combat troops leave Iraq, cut out the middlemen from college loans, championed credit for small businesses, and established protections for consumers.

But he also had some failures, mostly due to bills stalling in the Senate. Those included bills to combat climate change, require more campaign-finance disclosure, and fine banks that were bailed out. And compromising with the GOP on the Bush tax cuts meant that while he kept his promise to extend middle-class tax cuts, he also extended cuts for those making over $250,000.

The legislative branch wasn’t the only thing beyond his control – the economy was, too. But given the sluggish economy, he didn’t fare too badly. The president promised last year to add 1.5 million jobs. But he fell a little short, with 1.1 million jobs created in 2010. And although it’s too soon to tell if he’ll meet his goal to double exports in five years, top trade officials said in July that things were looking promising.

Beyond policy, Obama also promised to change the tone in Washington, and to hold monthly meetings with both parties’ leadership, joking, “I know you can’t wait.” Turns out, they could wait – the meetings were sporadic at best, and, of course, the rhetoric remained heated for most of the year.

Here's a list of the promises Obama kept, broke, or achieved mixed results:

**Promises kept (16)**

**Promise: Pass jobs legislation**
What Obama said: "That is why jobs must be our No. 1 focus in 2010, and that's why I'm calling for a new jobs bill tonight"
Result: Congress passed at least two jobs bills, one in March and another in August

**Promise: Give small businesses credit, using $30 billion paid by banks**
What Obama said: "So tonight, I'm proposing that we take $30 billion of the money Wall Street banks have repaid and use it to help community banks give small businesses the credit they need to stay afloat"
Result: The Small Business Lending Fund was passed as part of the fall's Small Business Jobs Act of 2010.

**Promise: Create small business tax credit for more than 1 million businesses**
What Obama said: "I'm also proposing a new small business tax credit – one that will go to over one million small businesses who hire new workers or raise wages"
Result: Passed as part of the Hiring Incentives to Restore Employment (HIRE) Act in March
Promise: Give tax incentives to businesses investing in new plants and equipment
What Obama said: "... provide a tax incentive for all large businesses and all small businesses to invest in new plants and equipment"
Result: Passed as part of the bipartisan tax-cut deal

Promise: Invest in infrastructure
What Obama said: "Next, we can put Americans to work today building the infrastructure of tomorrow"
Result: The two-year Recovery Act did this, as did $50 billion more on Labor Day

Promise: Give consumers protection at banks
What Obama said: "We need to make sure consumers and middle-class families have the information they need to make financial decisions"
Result: The Dodd-Frank Wall Street Reform and Consumer Protection Act signed into law in July

Promise: Freeze discretionary spending for three years
What Obama said: "Starting in 2011, we are prepared to freeze government spending for three years"
Result: Spending is currently frozen – but by a continuing resolution

Promise: Launch a deficit-reduction commission
What Obama said: "That's why I've called for a bipartisan fiscal commission..."
Result: By executive order, Obama created this commission, co-chaired by Democrat Erskine Bowles and Republican Alan Simpson

Promise: Invest in science and tech innovation
What Obama said: "Next, we need to encourage American innovation. Last year, we made the largest investment in basic research funding in history... And no area is more ripe for such innovation than energy"
Result: The American COMPETES Act of 2010 was reauthorized in May. In July, the Obama administration awarded nearly $2 billion in conditional grants to a pair of solar energy companies that have pledged to build plants in the U.S.

Promise: Build nuclear power plants
What Obama said: "And that means building a new generation of safe, clean nuclear power plants in this country:
Result: In February, Obama supported plans for two new nuclear reactors in Georgia, the first since the 1970s

Promise: Make college, especially community college and vocational training, more affordable
What Obama said: "That's why I urge the Senate to follow the House and pass a bill that will revitalize our community colleges"
Result: The reconciliation legislation from March cut out the banks to give direct loans; it expanded the Pell Grant program; and it capped loan repayments at 10%

Promise: Pass health-care reform
What Obama said: "Here's what I ask Congress, though: Don't walk away from reform. Not now. Not when we are so close. Let us find a way to come together and finish the job for the American people"
Result: The health reform passed in March

Continued on the next page...
Promise: End combat operations in Iraq
What Obama said: "As a candidate, I promised I would end this war, and that is what I am doing as president. We will have all of our combat troops out of Iraq by the end of his August"
Result: The last combat troops left in mid-August, though thousands of U.S. troops (for security and training) remain

Promise: Reduce nuclear stockpile
What Obama said: "To reduce our stockpiles and launchers, while ensuring our deterrent, the United States and Russia are completing negotiations on the farthest-reaching arms control treaty in nearly two decades. And at April's Nuclear Security Summit, we will bring 44 nations together here in Washington, D.C., behind a clear goal: securing all vulnerable nuclear materials around the world in four years, so that they never fall into the hands of terrorists"
Result: The Senate ratified the New START treaty with Russia in December; the leaders at the summit adopted his goal and created a work plan to be reviewed in 2012

Promise: Invest in the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs
What Obama said: "That's why we're building a 21st Century VA..."
Result: In April, the president secured the biggest increase in VA spending in 30 years

Promise: Repeal "Don't Ask, Don't Tell"
What Obama said: "This year, I will work with Congress and our military to finally repeal the law that denies gay Americans the right to serve the country they love because of who they are"
Result: In December, Obama signed into law legislation repealing the policy

Mixed (3)
Promise: Add 1.5 million jobs to the U.S. economy
What Obama said: "And we're on track to add another one-and-a-half million jobs to this total by the end of the year"
Result: 1.1 million jobs were added in 2010, according to Bureau on Labor Statistics

Promise: Eliminate capital-gains taxes on small business development
What Obama said: "While we're at it, let's also eliminate all capital-gains taxes on small business investment"
Result: They'll stay at 0% until the end of the year, when they revert to a previous level of 50%

Promise: Double exports in five years
What Obama said: "So tonight, we set a new goal: We will double our exports over the next five years"
Result: Too soon to tell. Exports increased by 17.7% in the first five months of 2010

Failed (6)
Promise: Continue middle-class tax cuts and end others
What Obama said: "To help working families, we'll extend our middle-class tax cuts. But a time of record deficits, we will not continue tax cuts for oil companies, for investment-fund managers, and for those making over $250,000 a year. We just can't afford it"
Result: In December, Obama signed legislation into law extending tax cuts for all income levels, including those who make more than $250,000 per year.
**Promise: Propose a fee on banks**
What Obama said: "To recover the rest, I've proposed a fee on the biggest banks. Now, I know Wall Street isn't keen on this idea. But if these firms can afford to hand out big bonuses again, they can afford a modest fee to pay back the taxpayers who rescued them in their time of need"
Result: The "Financial Crisis Responsibility Fee" never got off the ground

**Promise: End tax breaks to companies that outsource**
What Obama said: "It is time to finally slash the tax breaks for companies that ship our jobs overseas, and give those tax breaks to companies that create jobs right here in the United States of America"
Result: Bill stalled in the Senate

**Promise: Pass a comprehensive energy/climate bill**
What Obama said: "And, yes, it means passing a comprehensive energy and climate bill with incentives that will finally make clean energy the profitable kind of energy in America"
Result: While the House passed such legislation in 2009, the Senate was unable to advance a bill

**Promise: Require more campaign-finance disclosure after the Supreme Court's Citizens United decision**
What Obama said: "I don't think American elections should be bankrolled by America's most powerful interests, or worse, by foreign entities. They should be decided by the American people. And I'd urge Democrats and Republicans to pass a bill that helps to correct some of these problems"
Result: The DISCLOSE Act failed to advance in the Senate

**Promise: Change the tone in Washington; hold monthly meetings with both parties' leadership**
What Obama said: "So, no, I will not give up on trying to change the tone of our politics... I'd like to begin monthly meetings with both Democratic and Republican leadership. I know you can't wait"
Result: Throughout most of 2010, the tone in DC remained harsh. As for the meetings, a few took place, but they were described as "sporadic" and didn't accomplish much.
Republican Presidential Contenders for 2012

Note that the information that follows about the Presidential contenders is accurate as of July 10, 2011.

From ABC News
By Amy Walter, Michael Falcone and Devin Dwyer
June 14, 2011

Less than a year before the Iowa caucuses, a varied and ambitious group of Republicans has been jockeying for their party's presidential nomination, and a chance to go head-to-head with President Obama in 2012.

Here's a look at… Republicans whom ABC News has identified as…contenders in 2012:

FRONT-RUNNERS

Mitt Romney
Former Governor of Massachusetts

"From my first day in office, my No. 1 job will be to see that America once again is No. 1 in job creation.” Romney announces presidential campaign, June 3, 2011.
• Age: 63
• Birthplace: Detroit
• Family: Ann Romney (wife); Children: Tagg, Matt, Josh, Ben, and Craig
• Religion: Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (Mormon)
• Current job: Keynote speeches, GOP fundraising
• Previous experience: Presidential candidate, 2008
• Most Recent Book Written: "No Apology: The Case for American Greatness" (2010)
• PAC: Free and Strong America PAC, Inc.
• Total 2010 Receipts (from Dec. report): $5,568,466.75
• Cash on Hand (from Dec. report): $796,207.59
• Total 2010 fundraising for the federal and five state PACs: $6,300,723.52…

PROS: Strong name identification. Experienced campaign team with proven fundraising ability. Success as a businessman.
CONS: The Massachusetts health care law that was enacted during his tenure as governor, especially the controversial measure of individual mandates. His religion (Mormon) is still seen by many as an impediment to greater appeal among socially-conservative evangelical Christian primary voters.
Tim Pawlenty
Governor of Minnesota

"I'm running for president because I can tackle and fix the budget deficit and the debt and get this economy back on track. That's what I did in Minnesota and that's what I can do for America." Pawlenty announces presidential campaign on "GMA," May 23, 2011.

- Age: 50
- Birthplace: St. Paul, Minnesota
- Family: Mary Pawlenty (wife); Children: Anna and Mara
- Religion: Baptist
- Current job: Governor
- Previous experience: Has never run for president
- Most Recent Book Written: "Courage to Stand: An American Story" (2011)
- PAC: Freedom First PAC
- Total 2010 Receipts (from Dec. report): $2,096,639
- Cash on Hand (from Dec. report): $154,989.60
- Total 2010 fundraising for the federal and state PACs: $2,600,000…

PROS: Record of fiscal conservatism as governor. Midwest roots give him leg up in Iowa caucus. "Electability argument." "Sam's Club" brand of "commonsense conservatism" allows him to reach beyond traditional GOP base and attract independents in a general election.

CONS: Serious and credible campaign team in place.

CONS: Fundraising: He's never had to raise big bucks before and couldn't because of restrictive state campaign finance laws. He may be able to raise what he needs, but no one knows for sure if he can. Can "Minnesota Nice" win over a restive and fired-up base?

Newt Gingrich
Former Speaker of the U.S. House

"I'm announcing my candidacy for President of the United States, because I believe we can return America to hope and opportunity, to full employment, to real security, to an American energy program, to a balanced budget." Gingrich announcement video, May 11, 2011.

- Age: 67
- Birthplace: Harrisburg, Pennsylvania
- Family: Callista Gingrich (wife); Children: Two daughters with Jackie Battley (first wife)
- Religion: Roman Catholic (formerly Baptist; converted in March '09)
- Current job: Chairman, American Solutions for Winning the Future; college professor
- Previous experience: Has never run for president
- PAC: American Solutions PAC
- Total 2010 Receipts (from Dec. report): $736,708.60
- Cash on Hand (from Dec. report): $64,716.60

PROS: Name ID. Goodwill among party base.

CONS: Messy personal life, including multiple divorces. Fundraising: He's been able to raise for his 527 groups but those don't have the restrictive limits that presidential candidate has to live under.
Sarah Palin
Former Governor of Alaska

“I’m looking at the lay of the land now, and ... trying to figure that out, if it's a good thing for the country, for the discourse, for my family." Palin to ABC's Barbara Walters, November 2010.

Age: 46
Birthplace: Sandpoint, Idaho
Family: Todd Palin (husband); Children: Track, Bristol, Willow, Piper, and Trig
Religion: Non-denominational Christian
Current job: Reality TV show host; Fox News contributor
Previous experience: Vice presidential candidate, 2008
Most Recent Book Written: "America By Heart" (2010)
PAC: SarahPac
Total 2010 Receipts (from Dec. report): $3,553,094.79
Cash on Hand (from Dec. report): $1,328,951.26

PROS: Name ID. Access to grassroots fundraising. Strong following among social conservatives and Tea Party types. Ability to dominate "free" media means she doesn't have to spend as much money on paid advertising.
CONS: Lack of organizational campaign structure or strategy. Even among those who view her favorably, there's an electability concern. Mixed record in Alaska, especially the fact that she quit midway through her term as governor.

Michele Bachmann
Congresswoman from Minnesota

"I'm in for 2012 in that I want to be a part of the conversation in making sure that President Obama only serves one term, not two."
Bachmann to ABC's Jonathan Karl Mar. 24, 2011.

Age: 54
Birthplace: Waterloo, Iowa
Family: Marcus (husband); Children: Lucas, Harrison, Elisa, Caroline, Sophia
Religion: Lutheran
Current job: Congresswoman
Previous experience: Has never run for president
Most Recent Book Written: N/A
PAC: Many Individual Conservatives Helping Elect Leaders Everywhere (MICHELE) PAC
Total 2010 Receipts (from Dec. report): $659,595.50
Cash on Hand (from Dec. report): $192,804.90

PROS: Strong support from Tea Party activists. Minnesota base gives her great access and credibility in Iowa. Proven ability to raise money.
CONS: A polarizing figure. Can she broaden her appeal beyond a narrow slice of the Republican electorate?
Jon Huntsman
Former U.S. Ambassador to China

"Things are moving pretty quickly. Whatever timeline one is looking at can't be more than a couple months." Huntsman to reporters after meeting with South Carolina Gov. Nikki Haley, May 7, 2011.
• Age: 51
• Birthplace: Palo Alto, Calif.
• Family: Mary Kaye Cooper (wife); Children: Mary Anne, Abigail, Elizabeth, Jon, William, Gracie Mei, and Asha Bharati
• Religion: Mormon
• Current job: TBD
• Previous experience: Has never run for president
• Most Recent Book Written: N/A
• PAC: Horizon PAC...

Wild Cards

Ron Paul
Congressman from Texas

"Time has come around to the point where the people are agreeing with much of what I've been saying for 30 years." Paul announces his candidacy on "GMA", May 13, 2011.
• Age: 75
• Birthplace: Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania
• Family: Carol Paul (wife); Children: Ronald Paul, Jr., Lori Paul Pyeatt, Senator-elect Randal Paul, Robert Paul, and Joy Paul-LeBlanc
• Religion: Baptist
• Current job: U.S. Congressman
• Previous experience: Ran for president in 1988 as a Libertarian and in 2008 as a Republican
• Most Recent Book Written: "Liberty Defined: The 50 Urgent Issues That Affect Our Freedom" (due out 4/19/11)
• PAC: Liberty PAC
• Total 2010 Receipts (from Dec. report): $183,602.30
• Cash on Hand (from Dec. report): $90,104.20...

Rick Santorum
Former Senator from Pennsylvania

"We're ready to announce that we are going to be in this race and we're in it to win." Santorum announces his candidacy on "GMA", June 6, 2011.
• Age: 52
• Birthplace: Winchester, Virginia
• Family: Karen Garver Santorum (wife); Children: Elizabeth, Richard, Daniel, Sarah, Peter, Patrick, and Isabella
• Religion: Roman Catholic
• Current job: Attorney
• Previous experience: Has never run for president
• Most Recent Book Written: "It Takes a Family: Conservatism and the Common Good" (2006)
• PAC: America's Foundation
• Total 2010 Receipts (from Dec. report): $1,564,303.20
• Cash on Hand (from Dec. report): $102,858...
Herman Cain
Former CEO of Godfather's Pizza

"I am confident enough to be president... After I go through this phase and the decision is yes, trust me, I'm running to win." Cain on "Top Line," January 2011.

- Age: 65
- Birthplace: Memphis, Tennessee
- Family: Gloria Cain (wife); Children: Melanie and Vincent.
- Religion: Baptist
- Current job: Newspaper columnist
- Previous experience: Has never run for president
- Most Recent Book Written: "They Think You're Stupid: Why Democrats Lost Your Vote and What Republicans Must Do to Keep It" (2005)
- PAC: The Hermanator
- Total 2010 Receipts (from Dec. report): $221,945
- Cash on Hand (from Dec. report): $2,246…

Charles Elson "Buddy" Roemer III
Former Governor of Louisiana
"I'm going to be a factor in 2012." Roemer on "Top Line", March 2011.

- Age: 67
- Birthplace: Shreveport, Louisiana
- Family: Twice divorced
- Religion: Methodist
- Current job: Bank President and CEO
- Previous experience: Has never run for president
- Most Recent Book Written: "The Roemer Revolution" (1987)
- PAC: N/A…
John Bolton
Former U.S. Ambassador to the United Nations

"Yes, I am considering it." Bolton to conservative WABC radio talk show host Aaron Klein, November 2010.

- Age: 62
- Birthplace: Baltimore, Maryland
- Family: Gretchen Bolton (wife); daughter, Jennifer
- Religion: Lutheran
- Current job: Senior Fellow at American Enterprise Institute
- Previous experience: Has never run for president
- Most Recent Book Written: "How Barack Obama is Endangering our National Sovereignty" (2010)
- PAC: N/

Copyright ABC News
Barack H. Obama is the 44th President of the United States.

His story is the American story — values from the heartland, a middle-class upbringing in a strong family, hard work and education as the means of getting ahead, and the conviction that a life so blessed should be lived in service to others.

With a father from Kenya and a mother from Kansas, President Obama was born in Hawaii on August 4, 1961. He was raised with help from his grandfather, who served in Patton's army, and his grandmother, who worked her way up from the secretarial pool to middle management at a bank.

After working his way through college with the help of scholarships and student loans, President Obama moved to Chicago, where he worked with a group of churches to help rebuild communities devastated by the closure of local steel plants.

He went on to attend law school, where he became the first African-American president of the *Harvard Law Review*. Upon graduation, he returned to Chicago to help lead a voter registration drive, teach constitutional law at the University of Chicago, and remain active in his community.

President Obama's years of public service are based around his unwavering belief in the ability to unite people around a politics of purpose. In the Illinois State Senate, he passed the first major ethics reform in 25 years, cut taxes for working families, and expanded health care for children and their parents. As a United States Senator, he reached across the aisle to pass groundbreaking lobbying reform, lock up the world's most dangerous weapons, and bring transparency to government by putting federal spending online.

He was elected the 44th President of the United States on November 4, 2008, and sworn in on January 20, 2009. He and his wife, Michelle, are the proud parents of two daughters, Malia, 12, and Sasha, 9.
2012 Election Cycle

From electioncandidates2012.com

Political analysts are already looking towards 2012, the next big election cycle in the United States. This year will play host to elections for a number of offices in the United States government, including several congressional seats, the election of several new governors, and, of course, the President of the United States of America. Given the political climate directly after Barack Obama took office, this next election cycle will have a huge impact on our political system. Here are the elections that will take place in 2012. These elections will take place no matter what the state of the current sitting member of these positions will be.

The President
This office of the United States government may serve only two four-year terms. After that, the candidate can no longer be elected to the office. The President is elected by the Electoral College, a system where a group of representatives, currently 538, cast their vote for the President based on the popular vote. Those in the Electoral College are not required to vote along with the popular vote, but the majority do since they are representatives of those voters.

Senate
Senators serve for six years terms, with the election cycle happening every two years. With each election, 33 Senate seats are up for grabs, with one election cycle having 34. There is no cap on the number of terms a Senator can serve, with some having served 4 and 5 terms in this specific office. The 2012 election will have 33 Senate candidates vying for the seat.

House of Representatives
The House of Representatives is the lower house in Congress, which has 435 active members. While Senators represent the entire state, these Representatives reside over a specific geographic region, with all states having multiple members based on the population. Each Representative hold their office for two years, so each bi-annual election cycle has the potential to bring in an entirely new house of Congress.

Governor
Governors are elected officials who run the government on the state level. All states except for Vermont and New Hampshire have terms of four years, with Vermont and New Hampshire Governors serving two year terms.

The election cycle for governors is quite complex, mainly due to the years the states were established and the varying laws that govern those individual entities. There are five set times that gubernatorial elections are held, based on this. Almost every Election Day will find one state holding a governor's election.

1. **34 states have elections that are concurrent with congressional races.** These are the major election days between presidential elections. To make this easier, take the last two digits of the year. If these cannot be divided by 4, then there is a governors race in these states: Alabama, Alaska, Arizona, Arkansas, California, Colorado, Connecticut, Florida, Georgia, Hawaii, Idaho, Illinois, Iowa, Kansas, Maine, Maryland, Massachusetts, Michigan, Minnesota, Nebraska, Nevada, New Mexico, New York, Ohio, Oklahoma, Oregon, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, South Carolina, South Dakota, Tennessee, Texas, Wisconsin, and Wyoming.

2. **9 states hold gubernatorial elections along with the Presidential elections.** These include: Delaware, Indiana, Missouri, Montana, North Carolina, North Dakota, Utah, Washington, and West Virginia.

3. **3 states have their gubernatorial election on the year before a Presidential Election.** These states include: Kentucky, Louisiana, and Mississippi.

4. **2 states hold their election on the year following a Presidential election.** These states are: New Jersey and Virginia.

5. **2 states elect their governor every two years.** These states coincide with the Presidential and Congressional elections. Those states are Vermont and New Hampshire.

2012 will see election candidates in the Presidential race, 33 Senate races, races for the entire House of Representatives, which will elect the 113th Congress, and 12 gubernatorial races, adding the U.S. territory of Puerto Rico.
Study Questions

1. Now that you’ve seen some of the promises that President Obama has kept, and some he has broken, discuss which you think are most likely to impact the outcome in 2012. Why?

2. Above are some of the campaign logos for presidential contenders for the 2008 election. How is the field different from those running in 2012? Do you see more contenders for one party nomination than others? Why?

3. In the curriculum, there is an extensive list of potential Republican candidates for the Republican nomination. Why do you think so many people are running this year for the nomination? Who do you think will have an advantage going into the race?

4. In contrast, the only Democratic nominee receiving much attention is the incumbent President Barack Obama. An incumbent president often is the following term’s nominee. What do you think are some advantages President Obama may have coming into the race?

5. Activity: Create a timeline that outlines the election cycle! Illustrate how the presidential, Senate, House of Representatives, and gubernatorial campaign and election cycles overlap.
V. Key Issues of the 2012 Elections

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"The most important thing that the United States can do for the world economy is to grow because we continue to be the world's largest market and a huge engine for all other countries to grow."

Barack Obama, 44th President of the United States
By Henry J. Reske
August 3, 2011

While political analysts on both side of the aisle believe that the debt ceiling deal has the potential to emerge as a key issue in the 2012 presidential election, others contend that the economy and jobs will overshadow it and make Barack Obama a one-term president.

Political strategists from both parties say that the deal, which Obama signed into law Tuesday, draws a line — with Republicans standing for smaller government, balanced budgets, and no taxes and the Democrats for what Obama has called the balanced approach of new revenue, budget cuts, and the protection of Social Security and Medicare.

“This had nothing to do with the debt ceiling,” former Republican Congressman Mickey Edwards told The Washington Post. “This was about the 2012 election, and the lines were drawn about as clearly as possible on both sides.”

Obama strategist David Axelrod said the deal crystallized the debate, adding, that there “is no doubt there will be a very distinct choice.”

University of Virginia political science professor Larry Sabato isn’t so sure. “It’s 15 months to the election,” he said. “People always say, ‘We’ll remember in November.’ But will they? My guess is that jobs and the lack of economic growth will supersede the debt debate.”
Next year’s election will be a “national referendum” on Obama, and jobs and economic growth will be the keys, said Sabato, director of the University of Virginia’s Center for Politics.

“It’s thumbs up or thumbs down on his performance,” he said. “We all know it would be thumbs down today. The clock is ticking. Unemployment won’t improve much so his hopes rest on a spurt in GDP. There’s really very little Obama can do at this point to affect jobs and GDP. He’s stuck — and simply has to ‘hope’ that the status quo will ‘change.’”

“Obviously, the other factor is the GOP nominee,” Sabato said. “Republicans have to nominate a mainstream candidate that independents/swing voters can actually rally around.”

Although the deal was reached between Obama, the Republican-controlled House and Democratic Senate, it has been soundly rejected by key members of the GOP presidential field, including Rep. Michele Bachmann of Minnesota and Rep. Ron Paul of Texas, who were opposed to any increase in the $14.3 trillion debt ceiling, and former Massachusetts Gov. Mitt Romney.

Bachmann called Obama’s balanced approach “code for increased spending and taxes.” Romney said that, as “president, my plan would have produced a budget that was cut, capped and balanced — not one that opens the door to higher taxes and puts defense cuts on the table. While I appreciate the extraordinarily difficult situation President Obama’s lack of leadership has placed Republican members of Congress in, I personally cannot support this deal.”

Despite the conventional wisdom in D.C. that Obama came out a loser in the deal, former New Hampshire GOP Sen. Judd Gregg said the president “did very well here” and the deal will have a huge effect on his re-election bid. Gregg told The Washington Times that before the deal, the GOP had jobs, the debt, the deficit and spending to hammer the president with and the deal, which will cut $900 billion in spending, leaves them with just one: jobs.

"He’s taken three of those four issues off the table, or at least muted them,” Gregg said. "He’s gotten a political win."

However, Sabato said Obama’s appearance on TV Sunday tells the story. “He looked awful. That’s says it all,” he said. “Yes, he got some things out of the deal, but he knows full well the left is furious—and he wanted the ‘grand bargain’ for his legacy.

From the Chicago Tribune.
Congressional leaders are making the final push for a deal to raise the debt-ceiling ahead of Treasury’s Tuesday deadline to avoid default.

The final package was posted by the House Rules Committee Sunday night, taking the form of a 74-page amendment that will serve as the “Budget Control Act of 2011.”

RAISES THE DEBT CEILING

President Barack Obama has a fairly easy path to getting the debt ceiling raised between $2.1 trillion and $2.4 trillion. Initially, the debt limit is increased by $400 billion, when the president certifies that it is within $100 billion of being exceeded. An additional $500 billion cap room is created if Congress does not pass, with veto-proof majorities, a resolution disapproving of the increase sought by the president. The total up-front increase is $900 billion, assuming that there’s not enough support in Congress to stop it. Another $1.2 trillion hike occurs when the president seeks it — but that figure would rise to $1.5 trillion if a balanced budget amendment to the Constitution has been sent to the states for ratification or a level between $1.2 trillion and $1.5 trillion if a new deficit-reduction committee’s plan is enacted and its legislation exceeds $1.2 trillion savings. The $1.2 trillion increase could be halted if Congress approves a joint resolution of disapproval, which is unlikely.

DISCRETIONARY SPENDING CAPS

The deal puts in place the annual discretionary spending caps found in the bill the Republican-controlled House passed last week worth about $917 billion in cuts over 10 years. But those caps, from $1.043 trillion in fiscal 2012 to $1.234 trillion in fiscal 2021, are now split between “security” and “non-security” spending, enforceable by across-the-board cuts. The bill defines the “security category” as “discretionary appropriations associated with agency budgets for the Department of Defense, the Department of Homeland Security, the Department of Veterans Affairs, the National Nuclear Security Administration, the intelligence community management account, and all budget accounts under international affairs.

THE SUPERCOMMITTEE

The top leaders in each party in each chamber would appoint three members to a 12-person joint select committee that would be charged with coming up with $1.2 trillion or more in deficit reduction. The committee would report by Nov. 23, and the bill provides for expedited floor procedures for voting in each chamber by December 23. If the committee fails to report a bill by Nov. 23 — or either house fails to act within a month after that — the committee loses its special privileges.

THE HAMMER

If Congress doesn’t act on the supercommittee recommendations — or if the new law doesn’t meet the deficit-reduction goals — new cuts based on the difference between $1.2 trillion and whatever is enacted (perhaps nothing) would go into effect. The reductions would be divided equally between security and non-security programs.

MISCELLANEOUS

Under the deal, Pell Grants get an extra $20 billion in funding over the next two years, and the bill cuts subsidized loans for graduate students.
S&P Downgrades U.S. Credit Rating: End of 7 Decades of Financial Supremacy?

From International Business Times  
By Manikandan Raman  
August 8, 2011

All of the three major rating agencies – Moody's, Fitch and Standard & Poor's – have warned the Obama administration that if Washington failed to get spending under control and take steps to reduce the nation's debt they would review the U.S. credit rating for a possible downgrade.

That's what happened on Friday. S&P cut its long-term credit rating on the U.S., to AA+ from AAA and kept a negative outlook.

We had reported earlier that reaching an agreement on the debt ceiling wouldn't have prevented a downgrade on the country's AAA rating. Now, the downgrade assumes some significance because the U.S. has been the world's dominant financial power for at least seven decades. The U.S. dollar is the reserve currency of the world and the debt of the U.S. became the collateral, which supported a wide variety of global financial instruments.

Now, some critics will question how the world's reserve currency, its interest rates and its monetary policy can be tied to the U.S.

"One cannot keep buying U.S. Treasuries to protect against a U.S. Treasury crisis," Rochdale Securities analyst Richard Bove wrote in a recent note to clients. "The risks here are high. The most compelling one is that the U.S. will be forced to utilize its own resources to meet its own debt service costs. That will stress the economy as much as any tax increase might."

In Fitch's opinion, the debt deal was an important first step but not the end of the process towards putting in place a credible plan to reduce the budget deficit to a level that would secure the AAA-credit rating of the U.S. over the medium term.

"We lowered our long-term rating on the U.S. because we believe that the prolonged controversy over raising the statutory debt ceiling and the related fiscal policy debate indicate that further near-term progress containing the growth in public spending, especially on entitlements, or on reaching an agreement on raising revenues is less likely than we previously assumed and will remain a contentious and fitful process," S&P said in a statement on Friday.

With the downgrade comes the end of an era. The U.S. has been rated triple AAA since 1941 and that reputation, even if the rating is restored, is tarnished.

Why the Downgrade?

The key problem the U.S. faces is that at present it has no plan to pay for its expenditures using its own resources.

If it raises taxes, it would slow economic growth and if it cut expenditures to reduce the deficit, it would put millions of people out of work.

The U.S. government recorded a $1.1 trillion budget deficit during the first 10 months of the fiscal year 2011, despite a revenue increase of eight percent, the Congressional Budget Office said on Friday.

For the first quarter of 2011, the U.S. had receipts of $4.107 trillion and expenditures of $5.578 trillion, implying a net deficit of $1.471 trillion, according to the Commerce Department's Bureau of Economic Analysis.

The deficit was covered by borrowing the money in the open market and by the Federal Reserve printing new funds under its QE2 program.
(Under the QE2 program, the central bank has been buying up long-term Treasury bonds, in a bid to push down yields; thus, aiming to make it cheaper for consumers and businesses to borrow money.)

Meanwhile, the Treasury Department estimates that the second-quarter actual deficit was $460 billion.

If this scenario continues, it is more than likely that the total debt of the U.S. – now estimated to be $14.3 trillion – will rise consistently for the next ten years.

The recent signing of a debt deal also didn't help to preserve the AAA rating. On Aug. 2, President Barack Obama signed a bill to raise the U.S. debt ceiling, preventing a default for the first time in its history. The agreement passed by Congress provides for an initial increase of the debt limit of $900 billion and introduces procedures that would allow the limit to be raised further in two additional steps, for a cumulative increase between $2.1 trillion and $2.4 trillion by the end of 2011.

But S&P wasn't convinced with the effort and said: "The political brinksmanship of recent months highlights what we see as America's governance and policymaking becoming less stable, less effective, and less predictable than what we previously believed. The statutory debt ceiling and the threat of default have become political bargaining chips in the debate over fiscal policy."

S&P said despite this year's wide-ranging debate, the differences between political parties have proven to be extraordinarily difficult to bridge, and the resulting agreement fell well short of the comprehensive fiscal consolidation program that some proponents had envisaged until quite recently.

"It appears that for now, new revenues have dropped down on the menu of policy options. In addition, the plan envisions only minor policy changes on Medicare and little change in other entitlements, the containment of which we and most other independent observers regard as key to long-term fiscal sustainability," S&P said.

S&P has reasons to say so. The U.S. economy stumbled badly in the first half of 2011 and came dangerously close to contracting in the January-March period. The economy grew at a 1.3 percent annual pace in the second quarter, compared to the 1.9 percent pace that analysts were expecting.

Additionally, growth for the first quarter was revised down to 0.4 percent from the previously reported 1.9 percent rise. As a result of this slower-than-expected expansion, economists' expectations for the fourth quarter dropped to 2.3 percent from 3.1 percent.

Though the Obama administration has criticized S&P for the downgrade, some market observers agreed with the stand of the rating agency.

"There is no likelihood that the U.S. would be able to pay for its expenditures through its own resources; and it is fair to state that no private sector entity with a record of this nature and a projected cash outlook of this type would be awarded more than junk bond status," Rochdale Securities analyst Richard Bove wrote in a note to clients.

"Yet when Standard & Poor's lowered the U.S. to an AA+ rating it was widely criticized as being a political act with no justification. From my perspective Standard & Poor's just shouted 'The Emperor Has No Clothes' and I agree."

Lance Roberts of Streettalk Advisors said, "However, at the end of it all, I can't say that S&P was wrong in lowering our rating as I am sure it was a tough call for them to make; but we did it to ourselves."
Background

From crosscut.com

Along with all the other national crises, including the federal deficit and the state of the economy, American education is under attack at all levels. Everyone has an opinion on what to do. Politicians, CEOs, the guy next door. Underfunding, outdated curriculum, poor math and science performance, and high dropout rates are all discussed...Looking back for solutions when things seemed better is of no help because today’s world is far different. Kids with two parents come home from school to an empty house because both parents must work to survive. The other half of our kids have one parent and their parents aren't home, either. For the students, homework or study time competes with television, texting, and, as they get older, part-time jobs. Agreeing on a reform plan for schools and paying for it is a challenge equal to the problem we are having agreeing on a national budget...

No Child Left Behind Act

From the New York Times
Updated: June 24, 2011

The law that is known as "No Child Left Behind" is the primary statute governing the federal government's role in education. First passed during the Johnson administration as the Elementary and Secondary Education Act, it was rebranded as part of its last major overhaul in 2001, when Democrats joined with President George W. Bush to make its focus the use of standardized test scores in schools, particularly those serving minority students.

The Obama administration proposed a sweeping overhaul of the law in March 2010 that would encourage states to raise academic standards after a period of dumbing-down, end the identification of tens of thousands of reasonably managed schools as failing, refocus energies on turning around the few thousand schools that are in the worst shape and help states develop more effective ways of evaluating the work of teachers and principals, among other goals. But efforts to address the problem have gained little traction in Congress, where several attempts since 2007 to rewrite the sprawling law have failed.

The administration's blueprint calls on states to adopt new academic standards that build toward having all students ready for college and career by the time they leave high school. That would replace the current 2014 deadline for bringing every American child to academic proficiency, a goal widely dismissed as unrealistic.

The standardized tests developed by the states under the No Child law focus on measuring the number of students in each grade level in each school who are proficient in reading and math. The administration would like to shift the focus to measuring each student's academic growth, regardless of the performance level at which he starts.

For two years, backed by a friendly Congress and flush with federal stimulus money, the Obama administration enjoyed a relatively obstacle-free path for its education agenda, the focus of which is the $4 billion Race to the Top grant program, which benefited school systems nationwide. With the Republican re-emergence in 2010 as a force on Capitol Hill, the fear among many advocating a new law is that reform will stall.
In March 2011, Secretary of Education Arne Duncan told Congress that more than 80,000 of the nation’s 100,000 public schools could be labeled as failing under No Child Left Behind, the main federal law on public education.

Prodded by school districts clamoring for relief, Mr. Duncan signaled in June 2011 that unless Congress acts by the fall to overhaul the law he would use his executive authority to free states from the requirement that all students be proficient in reading and math by 2014.

The secretary's move brought a sharp rebuke from the Republican chairman of the House education committee, John Kline of Minnesota, who challenged the plans to override provisions of the law.

Mr. Kline later criticized the Obama administration’s use of the $5 billion Race to the Top grant competition to get states to adopt its reform agenda.

A Law’s Nuts and Bolts

...During the 2000 presidential campaign, Mr. Bush made education reform a major plank in his domestic platform, saying that he wanted especially to end the "soft bigotry" of low expectations for minority students. The test-based system of accountability he proposed appealed to many Republicans, but the vastly increased role for the federal government in an arena traditionally left to the states ran into opposition from conservatives. Many civil-rights groups rallied to the cause of the "No Child Left Behind" bill, as it was by then called, and with the help of some leading Democrats, notably the late Senator Edward M. Kennedy of Massachusetts, the bill became law — and Mr. Bush's only solidly bipartisan domestic achievement prior to the Sept. 11 attacks.

The current law calls for every state to set standards in reading and math, and for every student to be proficient at those subjects by 2014. Students in grades 3 through 8 are tested yearly, and reports are issued as to whether schools are making "adequate yearly progress" toward that goal. The scores of groups like minorities, disabled and non-English speaking students are broken out separately. Schools that fail to make the required annual progress, whether overall or for subgroups, face a mounting scale of sanctions, from being required to provide tutoring to students in poor-performing schools to the threat of state takeovers or the shutting down of individual schools.

Since the law was signed, educators have complained loudly that it was branding tens of thousands of schools as failing but not forcing them to change. Teachers' groups disliked the emphasis on preparation for now-crucial exams that the law brought. Many Democrats, including Senator Kennedy, complained

Continued on the next page...
bitterly that Mr. Bush had reneged on a promise to provide more federal aid to help low-scoring schools improve. Some states, led by Utah, sought to rebel against the law's strictures. And with every new round of data, academics debated whether new scores showed the bill's impact, positive or negative.

In October 2009, the latest results on the most important nationwide math test — The National Assessment of Educational Progress — showed that student achievement grew faster during the years before the No Child Left Behind law, when states dictated most education policy. Scores increased only marginally for eighth graders and not at all for fourth graders, continuing a sluggish six-year trend of slowing achievement growth since passage of the law.

During the 2008 presidential campaign, Mr. Obama alternated praise for the law's goals with criticisms of its weaknesses, but left his own plans for it murky.

The first step taken by Secretary of Education Duncan was to recommend a rebranding for No Child Left Behind, a name that had been mocked ever more frequently as Mr. Bush's popularity slid.

A Republican Comeback

In 2009, Mr. Duncan rolled out Race to the Top, an ambitious federal education program to reform the nation’s school systems. Awards worth $4 billion from the economic stimulus package went to the states submitting the best proposals for change.

The money was the most Washington had ever given to overhaul schools. It was awarded in two rounds in 2010, in April and August, to about a dozen states that proposed bold schemes to shake up the way they evaluate and compensate teachers, used data to raise achievement and intervene in failing schools…

Mr. Duncan's Authority

With the Obama administration facing a mounting clamor from state school officials, Mr. Duncan signaled in June 2011 that he might use his executive authority to free states from the requirement that all students be proficient in reading and math by 2014. But his efforts have gained little traction on Capitol Hill, where several attempts since 2007 to rewrite the sprawling school accountability law have failed.

While Mr. Duncan said it was premature to lay out specific plans for potential waivers, his aides said that the 100 percent proficiency standard would be the main target, and that restrictions on how federal money is spent could be relaxed. He said in exchange for such flexibility, states would have to embrace President Obama’s education priorities, a formula the administration used in 2010 in its signature education initiative, the Race to the Top grant competition.

Mr. Duncan has refused to grant such waiver requests, but his latest statement indicated that would change by fall if there is no action on the law. He said his authority was clear, and his aides sent reporters an e-mail copy of the legislative language: “the secretary may waive any statutory or regulatory requirement of this act.”

In June 2011, Mr. Kline, the House education committee chairman, challenged the secretary’s legal authority.

“He’s not the nation’s superintendent,” Mr. Kline said of Mr. Duncan, who assumed powers greater than any of his predecessors when, in 2009, Congress voted $100 billion in economic stimulus money for the

Continued on the next page…

The Echo Foundation 71 Democracy, Responsibility, & Civic Engagement
nation’s school systems and allowed the secretary to decide how much of it should be spent.

Also, Mr. Kline, for the first time, outlined publicly a timetable for rewriting the sprawling school accountability law, saying he would move five bills to the House floor by year’s end.

A bill stripping several dozen federal educational programs from the No Child law, and another tweaking its provisions on charter schools, moved out of the education committee recently. A third bill, which would allow school districts new flexibility in how they spend federal education dollars, could be approved by Mr. Kline’s committee by the summer break, he said.

The fourth and fifth bills — one outlining new federal teacher effectiveness requirements and another rewriting the law’s school accountability provisions — will dominate the committee’s fall agenda, Mr. Kline said. The Senate, led by Democrats, is working to rewrite the law with a single comprehensive bill, although experts said profound partisan disagreements could make a single rewrite difficult.

What is TRIO?

From coenet.us

TRIO is a set of federally-funded college opportunity programs that motivate and support students from disadvantaged backgrounds in their pursuit of a college degree. Over 850,000 low-income, first-generation students and students with disabilities — from sixth grade through college graduation — are served by more than 2,800 programs nationally. TRIO programs provide academic tutoring, personal counseling, mentoring, financial guidance, and other supports necessary for educational access and retention. TRIO programs provide direct support services for students, and relevant training for directors and staff...

Why Are TRIO Programs Important?

The United States needs to boost both its academic and economic competitiveness globally. In order to foster and maintain a healthy economy as well as compete globally, the United States needs a strong, highly-educated, and competent workforce. To be on par with other nations, the country needs students, no matter their background, who are academically prepared and motivated to achieve success.

Low-income students are being left behind. Only 38% of low-income high school seniors go straight to college as compared to 81% of their peers in the highest income quartile. Then, once enrolled in college, low-income students earn bachelor's degrees at a rate that is less than half of that of their high-income peers — 21% as compared with 45%.

The growing achievement gap in our country is detrimental to our success as a nation. There is a tremendous gap in educational attainment between America's highest and lowest income students - despite similar talents and potential. While there are numerous talented and worthy low-income students, relatively few are represented in higher education, particularly at America's more selective four-year colleges and universities. While nearly 67% of high-income, highly-qualified students enroll in four-year colleges, only 47% of low-income, highly-qualified students enroll. Even more startling, 77% of the least-qualified, high-income students go on to college, while roughly the same proportion of the most-qualified low-income students that go on to college. (ACSFA 2005)
Understanding the CMS Budget

From Charlotte Mecklenburg Schools

How is the budget created?

CMS Superintendent…, department heads, managers and school leaders work together to develop a budget that is presented to the Charlotte-Mecklenburg Board of Education. The Board discusses, reviews and amends the drafts of the budget before approving a final version, which is then sent to the Board of County Commissioners. The commissioners may make additional adjustments to the funding level when they approve their budget, which requires CMS to adjust its budget accordingly.

CMS’ budget can be affected by several factors, including the following:

• The economy. In difficult financial times, funding can be tight from local, state and federal sources.

• Enrollment. As enrollment increases, the resources and personnel required to meet the needs of all CMS students may also increase.

• New ways to support goals and objectives of Strategic Plan 2014, including Strategic Staffing and programs to increase the district’s graduation rate.

Use of Funds

63% Salaries

19% Benefits

11% Purchased Services

6% Supplies & Materials

1% Furniture & Equipment
What did CMS cut in prior years?

CMS has cut and/or reduced programs and personnel for the past two years, while increasing the number of students and schools.

Here are some of the areas that have been cut:

- **CMS TV** (eliminated except for the costs to broadcast Board meetings; channel programming is existing content from before July 2010)
- **Employee dental insurance** (employees pay all costs)
- **Teacher tuition reimbursement** (phased out)
- **Bonuses for school staff based on test results**
- **Extended day and summer school programs** (reduced)
- **Middle school athletics** (funding through fees, donations)
- **Funding for advanced placement and International Baccalaureate exams**
- **Transportation costs** (shuttle stops for magnet schools for students living more than five miles from schools)

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2011-2012 CMS Budget Changes

Rich schools, poor schools: N.C.’s gap may be growing

As state keeps slashing money for education, cuts fall to counties. Rural areas fare worst.

From the *Charlotte Observer*

By Jane Stancil

June 20, 2011

…Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools officials announced last week that they will be able to avoid more than two-thirds of the 1,500 job cuts they have been planning for since early this year. They say they were able to do that because the state and county budgets ended up better than they expected.

Mecklenburg County commissioners have voted to give CMS $26 million more than last year, and the newly adopted state budget gives CMS a reduction of about $40 million - far less than the $70 million cut originally indicated and for which the schools had been bracing.

About 1,050 CMS educators, including prekindergarten teachers and elementary teacher assistants, will be spared layoffs in 2011-12. The Bright Beginnings pre-K program will continue to serve about 3,000 disadvantaged 4-year-olds, CMS officials said.

Perdue, during a recent visit to Charlotte, noted that wealthier counties like Mecklenburg will be able to withstand the state cuts, but poorer rural ones will suffer...
Background

From PBS (Public Broadcasting Service)

In a year when Americans experienced record high prices at the gas pumps and winter heating costs are projected to soar nearly fifty percent, consumers are looking for ways to lower their energy costs for businesses, homes, schools, and transportation. Our primary energy sources today are fossil fuels, which are being depleted at an alarming rate. According to some, if consumption continues at the current rate, the fossil fuel supply could be gone before the end of the century. In addition to the cost and supply issues, scientists have long warned of the environmental damage caused by burning fossil fuels. In short, we are at a crossroads. Americans must use and develop alternate forms of energy to help us power our homes, automobiles, and businesses into the future without destroying the Earth's environment. Exploring the use of renewable and alternative resources is a must in today's world.

Key Terms

- **Renewable resource**: natural resource that is depleted at a rate slower than the rate at which it regenerates (i.e. solar energy)
- **nonrenewable resource**: resources for which there are no ways to replenish the supply (i.e. fossil fuels)
- **fossil fuels**: also known as mineral fuels, they are hydrocarbon containing natural resources such as coal, petroleum, and natural gas
- **solar energy**: harnessing the energy produced by sunlight
- **wind power**: using the kinetic energy of the wind or wind turbines to extract the wind's energy
- **hydropower**: energy obtained from flowing water
- **geothermal energy**: electricity generated by utilizing naturally occurring geological heat sources
- **hydrogen fuel cells**: electrochemical cell in which the energy of a reaction between fuel, such as liquid hydrogen, and an oxidant, such as liquid oxygen, is converted into electrical energy
- **nuclear energy**: energy released from the nucleus of an atom creating an nuclear reaction
- **LED**: light emitting diodes: a semiconductor device that emits light using a variety of inorganic materials
- **greenhouse gasses**: gaseous components of the atmosphere including carbon dioxide and ozone, among others. They contribute to the greenhouse effect
- **global warming**: an increase in the average temperature of the Earth's atmosphere and oceans increasing the greenhouse effect
Green Jobs: Promise, Progress and Potential

From Forbes
Posted by Gregory Unruh
Sep. 29 2010

...Promise
Most agree that a green economy, and sustainable development more broadly, are society’s best hope for reconciling the world’s need for poverty-alleviating economic growth with the planet’s need for life-giving ecological vitality. There is great promise in a green economy. Traditional industrial development has been incredibly wasteful of materials and energy.

The typical coal-fired power plant, for example, loses over half the input energy as waste heat before the first electron zips out of the facility. To produce one ton of pharmaceutical pills requires more than 100 tons of input materials, making a 99% waste rate on average.

The good news is that we already have the know-how and technology to tackle most of this waste. What’s missing is a supportive economic, social and political context, along with a trained and knowledgeable workforce to get the job done. Given the 9% unemployment rate in the U.S., the fact that dollar-for-dollar the green economy produces more jobs than traditional development makes it a no-brainer.

Progress
We have seen progress. The Commerce Department reports that there is already a $1 trillion green economy up and running in diverse business sectors like construction, recycling and forestry. Countries as different as China, Germany and India have shifted their policies and incentives to support and stimulate more green growth.

Here in the U.S., there has also been bi-partisan support for environmentally friendly economic development. In 2007, for example, the Bush Administration included $125 million for green jobs in the Energy Bill. Last year, the Obama Administration made green jobs an important part of the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act. Some pundits, like The New York Times’ Tom Friedman, see the green economy as the next field of economic competition and are gaining the publics’ and politicians’ attention.

Potential
Despite the progress, it is clear that there is still vast untapped potential in the green economy. Official statistics show green business accounts for only 1-2% of all economic activity.

That’s a tiny sliver of the overall economic pie. But we know that this can grow rapidly. Germany, for example, was able to grow its green industries four fold in just a decade. Even business-as-usual projections show the green economy tripling to $3 trillion by 2020.
Our CGI discussion highlighted innovation and experimentation in building the green economy going on in such disparate places as inner city New York, rural India and Native American reservations. Despite the apparent differences between these spots, the challenges are surprisingly similar: supportive policies, capable workforces, attractive business infrastructures, community support. The commonalities show that shared learning might be able to accelerate green economic development and allow us to capture the potential that the green economy promises.

Bill Clinton’s Green Jobs Plan

From Forbes
Posted by Jonathan Fahey
March 4, 2010

Former President Bill Clinton told a collection of green business executives at a lunchtime speech today that in order to get some momentum behind changing the nation’s energy portfolio, business leaders need to prove to elected officials and voters that going green will create jobs and improve the economy.

"Defend the science, but argue the economics," he said. "It’s up to you to prove the economics."

Clinton was speaking at a lunchtime meeting in New York organized by the Irish renewable energy firm NTR.

Clinton argued that countries that signed the Kyoto Protocol and met its targets, including Germany, Denmark, the United Kingdom and Sweden, performed better than the United States in the decade leading up to the financial crisis. (Kyoto, remember, was the accord that was voted down unanimously by the Senate while Clinton was president. "That was the last time they were united on anything," he joked.)

He also offered his own green jobs plan. He thinks the government should set aside $15 billion to fund a $150 billion loan guarantee program that would help owners of big buildings make their buildings more energy efficient.

Firms like Johnson Controls and Honeywell would help make the buildings more efficient and guarantee results. Owners would pay for the improvements, backed by government loans, through the energy savings achieved. Clinton estimates for every $1 billion loaned, 7,000 jobs would be created. Loan out $150 billion, and create 1 million jobs. The Clinton Foundation’s Clinton Climate Initiative is helping to retrofit the Empire State Building now.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>GREEN INVESTMENTS AND JOBS</th>
<th>REPRESENTATIVE JOBS</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Building Retrroitting</strong></td>
<td>Electricians, Heating/Air Conditioning Installers, Carpenters, Construction Equipment Operators, Roofers, Insulation Workers, Carpenter Helpers, Industrial Truck Drivers, Construction Managers, Building Inspectors</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Mass Transit/Freight Rail</strong></td>
<td>Civil Engineers, Rail Track Layers, Electricians, Welders, Metal Fabricators, Engine Assemblers, Bus Drivers, Dispatchers, Locomotive Engineers, Railroad Conductors</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Smart Grid</strong></td>
<td>Computer Software Engineers, Electrical Engineers, Electrical Equipment Assemblers, Electrical Equipment Technicians, Machinists, Team Assemblers, Construction Laborers, Operating Engineers, Electrical Power Line Installers and Repairers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Wind Power</strong></td>
<td>Environmental Engineers, Iron and Steel Workers, Millwrights, Sheet Metal Workers, Machinists, Electrical Equipment Assemblers, Construction Equipment Operators, Industrial Truck Drivers, Industrial Production Managers, First-Line Production Supervisors</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Advanced Biofuels</strong></td>
<td>Chemical Engineers, Chemists, Chemical Equipment Operators, Chemical Technicians, Mixing and Bleeding Machine Operators, Agricultural Workers, Industrial Truck Drivers, Farm Product Purchasers, Agricultural and Forestry Supervisors, Agricultural Inspectors</td>
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Image courtesy of americanprogress.org.
Background

From uspolitics.about.com

The nation's health care system is once again in the spotlight as part of President Obama's policy agenda; it was a priority issue during the 2008 campaign. Growing numbers of Americans are uninsured; costs keep rising (annual growth rate, 6.7%); and the public is increasingly worried about the issue. The U.S. spends more money on health care than any other nation. By 2017, we will be spending about $13,000 per person, according to the annual projection by the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services. Less than 60% of us are covered by an employer's policy.

Health Insurance 101

From planforyourhealth.com

What is the purpose of health insurance?

Health insurance protects you from the high cost of medical care by providing coverage for specific health care services. Although you generally pay a monthly premium and either co-payments or co-insurance, the cost for insurance is far less than medical care would be if paid fully out-of-pocket.

What are the major types of health insurance policies?

There are three umbrella types of health insurance - consumer-directed, fee for service (often known as "traditional" or "indemnity" plans) and managed care. These types of plans cover medical, surgical and hospital expenses and depending on the plan, may cover prescription drugs, dental and behavioral/mental health coverage.

Fee for service plans mean the doctor or other health care professional will be paid a fee for each health care service provided to the patient. Patients can see the doctor of their choice and the claim is filed by either the health care professional or the patient.

Managed care plans provide coverage for comprehensive health services to their members and offer financial incentives in the form of lower out-of-pocket costs to patients who use doctors participating in a network. More than half of all Americans have some kind of managed care plan - the three types include health maintenance organizations (HMOs), preferred provider organizations (PPOs) and point-of-service (POS) plans.

What is an HMO?

An HMO is a type of managed care health insurance plan that allows you to receive care through a network of participating doctors and hospitals. Generally, you select a primary care physician who coordinates your care and refers you to specialists when needed. Out-of-network care is generally not covered under an HMO plan, unless the member requires care that is not available in the existing network.

What is a PPO?

A PPO is a type of managed care health insurance plan that combines features of a fee-for-service plan and an HMO. In a PPO, members who seek care within the network of participating doctors and hospitals
pay lower out-of-pocket costs. Members can also seek care from nonparticipating doctors and hospitals, but pay a higher portion of the cost of care.

What is a consumer-directed health insurance plan?

Also referred to as "consumer-driven," or "consumer choice," this type of health plan gives members more choice and flexibility in making health benefits decisions and more control over their health benefits dollars. These plans often include a health fund or account for covered medical expenses. Depending on the type of fund or account, unused dollars may be rolled over annually to cover medical expenses in subsequent years for the duration of the members' enrollment in the plan. There are several types of consumer-directed plans, including Health Savings Accounts (HSAs), Health Reimbursement Arrangements (HRAs) and Flexible Spending Accounts (FSAs).

What is a health insurance premium?

A premium is the fee you and/or your employer pay to your insurance company to purchase a health insurance plan. This can be paid on a monthly, quarterly or annual basis.

How does a health insurance deductible work?

A deductible is the amount that you must pay for covered services in a specified time period in accordance with your plan before the plan will pay benefits. A member of a high-deductible health plan, for example, might be required to pay for the first $1,000 of medical care prior to receiving coverage under the terms of his/her benefits plan.

What is a co-payment?

A co-payment is the specified dollar amount or percentage required to be paid by you or on your behalf in connection with benefits. For example, most HMO plans have co-payments in place for certain services such as doctor's visits, prescription drugs, hospital stays, etc.

What are out-of-pocket costs?

Out-of-pocket costs include premiums, co-payments, deductibles, co-insurance or other fees that you are required to pay outside of your health benefits plan.

How do I pick a health insurance plan?

If you have a choice of plans through your employer or you are purchasing your own coverage, it's important to understand your choices and pick the plan that is right for you and your family. There are several questions to ask yourself when reviewing health insurance plan options:

- How affordable is the cost of care?
- How much are monthly premiums?
- How much are the deductibles?
- Are the co-payments or co-insurance flat fees or percentages of service fees?
- What out-of-pocket expenses have to be paid before the plan begins reimbursement?
- How does the reimbursement process work?
- What is the cost of out-of-network care?
- Does the plan cover the services that I may use?
- What is the quality of the health insurance plan?
What if my employer doesn't offer health insurance?

Employer-subsidized group coverage is generally less expensive than anything you can get on your own. But, if your employer doesn't offer health insurance, or if you are unemployed, you should consider purchasing an individual health insurance policy.

What is Medicare?

A Federal government program that provides health care insurance to people aged 65 years or older, as well as certain disabled individuals.

What is Medicaid?

A State government program that provides health care insurance for low income individuals, including families and children.
Health Care Reform Bill Summary: A Look at What's in the Bill

From CBS News
By CBS News Capitol Hill Producers Jill Jackson and John Nolen
Updated March 23, 2011

Cost:
• $940 billion over ten years.

Deficit:
• Would reduce the deficit by $143 billion over the first ten years. That is an updated CBO estimate. Their first preliminary estimate said it would reduce the deficit by $130 billion over ten years. Would reduce the deficit by $1.2 trillion dollars in the second ten years.

Coverage:
• Would expand coverage to 32 million Americans who are currently uninsured.

Health Insurance Exchanges:
• The uninsured and self-employed would be able to purchase insurance through state-based exchanges with subsidies available to individuals and families with income between the 133 percent and 400 percent of poverty level.
• Separate exchanges would be created for small businesses to purchase coverage – effective 2014.
• Funding available to states to establish exchanges within one year of enactment and until January 1, 2015.

Subsidies:
• Individuals and families who make between 100 percent - 400 percent of the Federal Poverty Level (FPL) and want to purchase their own health insurance on an exchange are eligible for subsidies. They cannot be eligible for Medicare, Medicaid and cannot be covered by an employer. Eligible buyers receive premium credits and there is a cap for how much they have to contribute to their premiums on a sliding scale. Federal Poverty Level for family of four is $22,050

Paying for the Plan:
• Medicare Payroll tax on investment income – Starting in 2012, the Medicare Payroll Tax will be expanded to include unearned income. That will be a 3.8 percent tax on investment income for families making more than $250,000 per year ($200,000 for individuals).
• Excise Tax – Beginning in 2018, insurance companies will pay a 40 percent excise tax on so-called "Cadillac" high-end insurance plans worth over $27,500 for families ($10,200 for individuals). Dental and vision plans are exempt and will not be counted in the total cost of a family's plan.
• Tanning Tax – 10 percent excise tax on indoor tanning services.

Medicare:
• Closes the Medicare prescription drug "donut hole" by 2020. Seniors who hit the donut hole by 2010 will receive a $250 rebate.
• Beginning in 2011, seniors in the gap will receive a 50 percent discount on brand name drugs. The bill also includes $500 billion in Medicare cuts over the next decade.
Medicaid:

- Expands Medicaid to include 133 percent of federal poverty level which is $29,327 for a family of four.
- Requires states to expand Medicaid to include childless adults starting in 2014.
- Federal Government pays 100 percent of costs for covering newly eligible individuals through 2016.
- Illegal immigrants are not eligible for Medicaid.

Insurance Reforms:

- Six months after enactment, insurance companies could no longer deny children coverage based on a preexisting condition.
- Starting in 2014, insurance companies cannot deny coverage to anyone with preexisting conditions.
- Insurance companies must allow children to stay on their parent's insurance plans until age 26.

Abortion:

- The bill segregates private insurance premium funds from taxpayer funds. Individuals would have to pay for abortion coverage by making two separate payments; private funds would have to be kept in a separate account from federal and taxpayer funds.
- No health care plan would be required to offer abortion coverage. States could pass legislation choosing to opt out of offering abortion coverage through the exchange.

**Separately, anti-abortion Democrats worked out language with the White House on an executive order that would state that no federal funds can be used to pay for abortions except in the case of rape, incest or health of the mother.**

Individual Mandate:

- In 2014, everyone must purchase health insurance or face a $695 annual fine. There are some exceptions for low-income people.

Employer Mandate:

- Technically, there is no employer mandate. Employers with more than 50 employees must provide health insurance or pay a fine of $2000 per worker each year if any worker receives federal subsidies to purchase health insurance. Fines applied to entire number of employees minus some allowances.

Immigration:

- Illegal immigrants will not be allowed to buy health insurance in the exchanges – even if they pay completely with their own money.
The GOP's Health-Care Alternative

We can cover more people by making the current insurance tax subsidy more fair.

From *The Wall Street Journal*
By Grace-Marie Turner and Joseph R. Antos
May 20, 2009

Republican congressional leaders are finally offering a clear alternative to the health-reform plans being developed by the White House and Democrats in Congress. The goals and the rhetoric of both sides are remarkably similar: cover the uninsured, allow people to keep the coverage they have, provide more choices of affordable health insurance, and rein in health costs. But their policy prescriptions are remarkably different.

Democrats are uniting around proposals to vastly expand federal regulation of health insurance, require everyone to have coverage, and compel employers to provide federally prescribed insurance or pay a new tax. A new Medicare-like insurance plan is still being debated, but even if it doesn't make the cut, Congress could regulate its way to a government-dominated market.

Four Republicans in Congress – Sens. Tom Coburn (Oklahoma) and Richard Burr (North Carolina) and Reps. Paul Ryan (Wisconsin) and Devin Nunes (California) – will today introduce a bill that moves away from federal centralization. Aptly called the **Patients' Choice Act**, it provides a path to universal coverage by redirecting current subsidies for health insurance to individuals. It also provides a new safety net that guarantees access to insurance for those with pre-existing conditions.

The nexus of their plan is redirecting the $300 billion annual tax subsidy for employment-based health insurance to individuals in the form of refundable, advanceable tax credits. Families would get $5,700 a year and individuals $2,300 to buy insurance and invest in Health Savings Accounts.

Low-income Americans would get a supplemental debit card of up to $5,000 to help them purchase insurance and pay out-of-pocket costs. They would have an incentive to spend wisely since up to one-fourth of any unspent money in the accounts could be rolled over to the next year. The combination of the refundable tax credit and debit card gives lower-income Americans a way out of the Medicaid ghetto so they can have the dignity of private insurance.

The great majority of Americans with job-based health insurance would see little more than a bookkeeping change with the Patients' Choice plan. But implicit in the policy is the acknowledgment that our system of tying health insurance to the workplace is not working for upwards of 45 million uninsured Americans.

That's a pivotal point in the fight over reform: Will the next health-reform bill lock in a system of job-based health insurance or allow more individual choice and portability to fit a 21st century work force?

Democrats are fretting over how to pay for their plans, which early estimates peg at $1.5 trillion or more over 10 years. Economists at a recent Senate Finance Committee roundtable unanimously supported limiting the virtually invisible $300 billion tax subsidy that workers receive when they get health insurance through their employers. Even Senate Finance Chairman Max Baucus (D., Mont.) said he feels like Willie Sutton: Congress must look at redirecting at least some of this huge subsidy because "that's where the money is."
This is the same proposal John McCain was criticized for during the 2008 presidential campaign. Television ads by the Obama campaign pounded him for "taxing your health insurance."

Employers worry that their contributions toward their workers' health insurance premiums no longer would be recognized as legitimate business expenses. The Republican alternative doesn't touch that. Whether companies offer their workers compensation in the form of health insurance or cash wages, they still can deduct the full cost.

While many Americans are fed up with private insurance, opinion polls consistently show a majority think government-controlled health care would be worse. There are problems in the private insurance market, and the Republican plan takes steps that can help.

States could provide one-stop insurance shopping through new Health Care Exchanges rather than giving the federal government control, as most Democratic plans would do. And it frees up Medicaid money and provides added resources to the states to target additional help to those with disabilities and low incomes. It also calls for auto-enrollment to expand insurance coverage: People will have many options and opportunities to select insurance, but if they don't make an active choice they can be automatically enrolled in private policies financed by the tax credit.

Who will control the system? Doctors and patients, or politicians and regulators? That's the crux of this year's health-care debate. The Republican proposal makes the choice clear…
Background
From balancedpolitics.org

A political battle that has been heating up recently is the battle over immigration. Terrorism, the drug war, and the national deficit have all fueled interest in a long dormant debate. The U.S. population, fed largely by immigration, will grow to 420 million by the year 2050 (according to the U.S. Census). The Hispanic population alone should be over 100 million, which is especially relevant since over 60 percent of immigrants come from Mexico.

Proposals have recently been put through by the President and House to deal with various aspects of illegal immigration, varying from amnesty for existing illegals, guest worker programs, deportation, fines for unpaid taxes, stricter border enforcement, and so on. However, very little attention has been given to legal immigration. Is immigration in general good for the country? Should we increase the level of people that are allowed to enter the country and work towards citizenship?

Early history of American immigration law
From Cornell University Law School

Congress's first attempt to set immigration policy came in 1790 with the enactment of the Naturalization Act of 1790. This Act restricted naturalization to "free white persons" of "good moral character" and required the applicant to have lived in the country for two years prior to becoming naturalized. In 1795 an amendment increased the residency requirement to five years. The five-year requirement remains on the books to this day.

Upon ratification of the Fourteenth Amendment, all children born within the United States received citizenship at birth. In 1870 Congress broadened naturalization laws to allow African-Americans the right to become naturalized citizens. Asian Americans, however, did not receive such a right for many years. Xenophobia from an influx of Asians between 1850 and 1882 prompted Congress to pass the Chinese Exclusion Act, which restricted further Chinese immigration.

In 1921 Congress passed the Emergency Immigration Act, creating national immigration quotas, which gave way to the Immigration Act of 1924, capping the number of permissible immigrants from each country in a manner proportional to the number already living within the United States. The aggregate number from the eastern hemisphere could not eclipse 154,227 immigrants. Franklin D. Roosevelt's Administration essentially closed...the country to immigration ...during the Great depression, drastically reducing the numbers per country that could enter the United States.

Modern immigration law

The Immigration and Nationality Act of 1952 (INA), also known as the McCarran-Walter Act, eliminated all race-based quotas, replacing them with purely nationality-based quotas. The INA continues to influence the field of American immigration law. To enforce the quotas, the INA created the Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS). The INS served as the federal agency that enforced these caps for remainder of the 20th century.

Continued on the next page...
When Congress passed the INA, it defined an "alien" as any person lacking citizenship or status as a national of the United States. Different categories of aliens include resident and nonresident, immigrant and nonimmigrant, and documented and undocumented ("illegal").

The terms "documented" and "undocumented" refer to whether an arriving alien has the proper records and identification for admission into the U.S. Having the proper records and identification typically requires the alien to possess a valid, unexpired passport and either a visa, border crossing identification card, permanent resident card, or a reentry permit. The INA expressly refuses stowaway aliens entry into the U.S.

The need to curtail illegal immigration prompted Congress to enact the Immigration Reform and Control Act (IRCA) of 1986. The IRCA toughened criminal sanctions for employers who hired illegal aliens, denied illegal aliens federally funded welfare benefits, and legitimized some aliens through an amnesty program. The Immigration Marriage Fraud Amendments of 1986 sought to limit the practice of marrying to obtain citizenship. The Immigration Act of 1990 thoroughly revamped the INA by equalizing the allocation of visas across foreign nations, eliminating archaic rules, and encouraging worldwide immigration.

The Illegal Immigration Reform and Immigrant Responsibility Act (IIRIRA) of 1996 revolutionized the process of alien entry into the United States. The IIRIRA eliminated the term "entry," replacing it with "admission." An application for admission occurs whenever an alien arrives in the U.S. regardless of whether the arrival occurs at a designated port-of-entry. Applicants at either designated ports or otherwise must submit to an inspection by U.S. customs, even if the applicant possesses an immigrant visa. The IIRIRA also employs the term "arriving alien" to describe applicant aliens attempting to enter the U.S., regardless of whether they arrive at a designated port, a non-designated point on the border, or are located in U.S. waters and brought to shore.

Post-9/11 reform
On March 1, 2003, the Department of Homeland Security opened, replacing the INS. The Bush Administration had designed the Department of Homeland Security to foster increased intelligence sharing and dialogue between agencies responsible for responding to domestic emergencies, such as natural disasters and domestic terrorism. Within the Department, three different agencies - U.S. Customs and Border Enforcement (CBE), U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS), and U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) - now handle the duties formerly held by the INS.

Refugee and asylum seekers
The Refugee Act of 1980 defines the U.S. laws relating to refugee immigrants. Under the Refugee Act, the term "refugee" refers to aliens with a fear of persecution upon returning to their homelands, stemming from their religion, race, nationality, membership in certain social groups, or political opinions...To qualify for refugee status under the persecution provision, the refugee applicant must prove actual fear. A proof of actual fear requires meeting both a subjective and an objective test. The President retains the ultimate decision making authority when determining the number of refugees to allow into the country during a given year.

Deportation
Deportation refers to the official removal of an alien from the United States. The U.S. government can initiate deportation proceedings against aliens admitted under the INA that commit an aggravated felony within the United States after being admitted. An alien's failure to register a change of address renders the alien deportable, unless the failure resulted from an excusable circumstance or mistake.

Continued on the next page...
If the government determines that a particular alien gained entry into the country through the use of a falsified document or otherwise fraudulent means, the government has the grounds to deport.

Other common grounds for deportation include the following: aiding or encouraging another alien to enter the country illegally; engaging in marriage fraud to gain U.S. admission; participating in an activity that threatens the U.S.’s national security; voting unlawfully; and failing to update the government with a residential address every three months, regardless of whether the address has changed.

### Should America Maintain/Increase the Level of Legal Immigration?

From balancedpolitics.org

The question of why legal immigration is good for the U.S. is often debated. The following chart demonstrates arguments frequently heard from both sides of the debate.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Some of the most intelligent and ambitious individuals, who are unsatisfied with their own countries, bring their skills to America.</td>
<td>• More immigrants means more opportunity for terrorists, drug dealers, and other criminals to enter the country.</td>
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<tr>
<td>• It increases the diversity and expands the culture of the country.</td>
<td>• Immigrants, especially the poorer ones, consume a high amount of government resources (health care, education, welfare, etc.) without paying a corresponding high rate of taxes.</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Immigrants often taken the low-paying jobs (like food service &amp; hotel cleaning) that most Americans don't want to do at such low wages.</td>
<td>• The national identity and language is disappearing. The great &quot;melting pot&quot; is being replaced by divisive multiculturalism.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Decreasing or eliminating legal immigration will inevitably create more incentive to come to the country illegally, which leads to less assimilation and fewer taxpaying, law-abiding citizens.</td>
<td>• The emigration to the United States hurts the home country, as much of the male population, workers, and top intellectuals often leave their country.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• It improves the overall image of America internationally, as it is seen as an open, welcoming country; and immigrants who return home or maintain contact with family back home have a true image of America, not the one propagated in much of the international media.</td>
<td>• Less-skilled American citizens earn less money and have fewer job opportunities because they must compete with immigrants in the job market.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Adding an additional group of cheap labor adds to the flexibility of business, leading to cheaper prices, better quality products, and higher profits.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• It gives struggling people all over the world an opportunity for a better life. This country was built on immigrants who sought opportunity, political &amp; religious freedom, etc.</td>
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The Nation: The Other Face of Illegal Immigration

From NPR (National Public Radio)
By Courtney E. Martin
June 29, 2011

The contentious debate over immigration was given a human face last week when Pulitzer Prize–winning journalist Jose Antonio Vargas outed himself as an undocumented immigrant in a New York Times Magazine article. In a very personal essay, Vargas detailed his journey from boyhood in the Philippines to a prestigious journalism career in the United States. Vargas admitted to breaking a number of laws to conceal his citizenship status over more than a decade of working illegally for a range of high-profile publications, including the Washington Post, the Huffington Post and The New Yorker. The essay quickly rose to the top of the "Most e-mailed list at the Times and landed Vargas, and his compelling story, on a major media sites over the weekend.

Vargas's personal story is vital because it complicates the usual terms of the immigration debate: outsiders vs. insiders, deserving vs. undeserving, legal vs. illegal. After all, one can't help but see Vargas, though undocumented, as the consummate deserving insider — an American Dream hero incarnate, transcending race and class boundaries to make a real impact through his reporting. It's nearly impossible to see a picture of the goofy adolescent, who watched "Frasier" to better his English or hear the story of his choir teacher's admiration for him, and think "criminal."

Publishing this piece is not the end of Vargas's advocacy on immigration. The article coincides with the launch of new campaign Vargas co-founded, Define American. Its aim is to inspire a new conversation about immigration, particularly in unveiling the truth about what its founders call "a growing 21st century Underground Railroad "for undocumented immigrants who are helped along by teacher, pastors, friends, and employers. Vargas told his Twitter followers: "I've written hundreds of stories. very few on immigration. now, i will write solely about immigration."

But Vargas, in writing openly about his immigration status in a climate of polarized views on the subject and increased criminalization of undocumented immigrants, is at risk of being deported. As he wrote in the article: "I...am working with legal counsel to review my options."Jehmu Greene, co-founder of Define American and the daughter of two former undocumented immigrants herself, said of Vargas, "Of course he's afraid. But he's been living in fear for the past eighteen years. He has the support of the Filipino American Legal Defense Fund and he is taking responsibility for breaking the law."

Vargas may have made the biggest media splash, but he is not the first undocumented immigrant to out himself for a cause. In 2010,
thousands of undocumented immigrants told their stories publicly in an effort to humanize the fight for the DREAM Act — which would have created a pipeline for them all to achieve legal residency. The DREAM Act passed the House but failed in the Senate in December of last year. Marquette University student Maricela Aguilar, an immigrant from Mexico, was one of the student activists who outed herself. Despite the DREAM Act's defeat, she didn't feel her admission was made in vain. "I'd much rather have that out in the public than just living in fear," she told The New York Times.

The bravery of Vargas, Aguilar and others shines a light on how dangerous this kind of transparency is for immigration reform activists — and how imperative it is that we not only celebrate their bravery, but protect them so they can continue their critical work. Their stories have the power to shift hearts and minds, not only because they humanize a contentious issue. Their stories demonstrate that there is no reasonable option for undocumented immigrants like Vargas, who don't have an identity or a community rooted in the country of their birth, but whose only option for obtaining American citizenship was, as an immigration lawyer told him, leaving the country, accepting a 10-year ban on returning, and then applying to return legally. Their real life experiences reveal just how illogical, unsustainable, and unjust our current immigration policies really are, and how desperately we need comprehensive reform.

The threat of deportation for citizens like Vargas — young and with no criminal record — are, admittedly, slim. Spokeswoman for the U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement, Cori W. Bassett, told NPR in an emailed statement: "ICE takes enforcement action on a case-by-case basis — prioritizing those who present the most significant threats to public safety as determined by their criminal history and taking into consideration the specific facts of each case, including immigration history."

But this doesn't mean that the undocumented immigrants who tell their stories are not at risk. A couple of high profile cases have revealed how arbitrary the deportation process has become. Steve Li, then a 20-year-old City College student became a symbol of the kind of deserving immigrant youth who the DREAM Act would help as he awaited deportation in fall of 2010, inspiring a Facebook campaign. Li's plight inspired the attention of Senator Dianne Feinstein and other politicians and he was released from an immigration detention center in Arizona after two months. So far, he remains in the US, though he hasn't achieved any legal status.

Mandeep Chahal, a sophomore at U.C. Davis, was also threatened with deportation this year, despite being the very model of a student the failed DREAM Act would have helped. She was voted "most likely to save the world" by her high school classmates after starting a humanitarian nonprofit. Like Li, Chahal and her mother, who also faced deportation, were saved by a robust Facebook campaign. Her lawyer, Kalpana Peddibhotla, told Patch.com that she is "fairly certain" that Chahal and her mother would have been deported without "thousands of supporters form around the country who have advocated on their behalf."

Li and Chahal didn't out themselves for a political cause, as so many of their peers did, but they did live very public, "normal" lives — not hiding their status, but not flaunting it either. Their stories illustrate that it doesn't even take an activist's bold and challenging mentality to attract the gaze of ICE. Just being a ambitious student who earns public recognition can, thanks to our backward system, get one in trouble.

The first generation of undocumented immigrants to grow up in the U.S., earn college degrees, enlist in the military, and pursue meaningful work despite incredible obstacles, is coming of age. Despite anti-immigration advocates' best efforts, they're not going away. And increasingly, they're not staying silent. Their public stories point towards a political truth: it's time that we figured out an immigration policy more sophisticated than randomly applied discretion and Facebook campaigns.

Continued on the next page...
There are 11 million undocumented immigrants in this country, and many of them are young, brave, and ready for a fight. Gaby Pacheco is one such fighter. An undocumented student involved in organizing for the DREAM Act, she recently published an op-ed on CNN.com in which she argued that President Barack Obama should use his executive power to stop deportations of youths eligible for the DREAM Act. She wrote that this act with precedent (President Bush used his discretionary powers to defer the deportation of undocumented immigrant spouses of military soldiers) would keep "families together until Congress is able to put its differences aside and acknowledge that we are part of the future of our great country."

It's a pathway to citizenship that these young immigrants need. As Greene said, "Jose would happily pay a fine, get to the back of the line, behind everyone who has been attempting to come into this country legally to simply know that he has a path forward. He has worked hard, he has paid taxes, and he wants to continue contributing to the country he loves."

Courtney E. Martin is the author of the forthcoming Project Rebirth: Survival and the Strength of the Human Spirit from 9/11 Survivors and the recently released Do It Anyway: The New Generation of Activists. She is also an Editor for Feministing.

From the New York Times

**Under One Roof, Both Legal and Illegal**
The Pew Hispanic Center estimates that about 3 million families with children in the United States are headed by at least one parent who is here illegally. The number of such families has risen nearly 30 percent in the last five years; the vast majority are families with children who were born in the United States and are thus U.S. citizens. Nearly half of all illegal immigrant households are couples with children, largely because illegal immigrants tend to be young.

**Less Education, Limited Opportunities**
Although a rising number of illegal immigrants are well educated, education levels remain lower than those of legal immigrants and U.S. citizens. They also have lower incomes and lower-skilled jobs.

**Educational attainment, ages 25-64**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Less Education, Limited Opportunities</th>
<th>Median household income</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Illegal immigrant</td>
<td>Illegal immigrant ($38,000)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Legal immigrant</td>
<td>Legal immigrant ($52,000)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Born in the U.S.</td>
<td>Born in the U.S. ($50,000)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Share of each group's workers in each job type**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Services</th>
<th>Construction</th>
<th>Production, installation, repair</th>
<th>Sales, administrative support</th>
<th>Professional, management, finance</th>
<th>Transportation, material moving</th>
<th>Farming, fishing, forestry</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>30%</td>
<td>21%</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16%</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>36%</td>
<td>36%</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: Numbers may not add to 100 due to rounding.

Activity

From PBS (Public Broadcasting Service)

The Electoral College
Grade Level: 4-8; 9-12
Subjects: Social Studies; Reading & Language Arts; Math

While many people who live in the United States believe that we live in a democracy, we actually live in a "republic," in which voters elect representatives to vote their will in the legislative and executive branches.

When the Constitutional Convention debated on how the president should be selected, they devised a system called the "electoral college," in which a formula was developed that provided a safeguard against voters electing an "unsuitable" president, and also providing that even the smallest state would have some leverage in selecting the chief executive.

However, the election of 2000 proved that the system might allow one candidate to win the election while not winning the popular vote. While Republican George W. Bush won the electoral vote after the Supreme Court ruled he won the state of Florida; Democrat Al Gore collected more than half a million more popular votes nationwide than Bush.

Have students work in groups and analyze the following Electoral College resources to investigate the reasoning for it and why it is still part of the American election system (see Online Resources below).

After researching the Electoral College and the role it plays in the process of selecting the president, students can write newspaper editorials or letters to the editor either in favor of the system or proposing a replacement system for it. As an extension activity, students can also review other US presidential elections, comparing the percentage of popular vote a candidate received with the percentage of electoral vote the candidate got. Which percentage is higher? Ask students to speculate as to why that would be so.

Online Resources

NewsHour Extra:
http://www.pbs.org/newshour/extra/features/elections/confusion.html

By the People: Electoral College Lesson Plan:

U.S. National Archives and Records Administration:
http://www.archives.gov/federal_register/electoral_college/

Harvard University Kennedy School of Government:
http://www.ksg.harvard.edu/case/3pt/electoral.html

New American Magazine: "Save the Electoral College":
http://www.jbs.org/node/1537

Print Resources
Choosing a President: The Electoral College and Beyond by Paul D. Schumaker and Burdett A. Loomis
Securing Democracy: Why We Have an Electoral College by Gary L. Gregg II (Editor)
Study Questions

Economy
1. Research and discuss the concept of laissez-faire. How does it affect national economics today?
2. What areas of the economy do you believe should face budget cuts? What areas should receive more funding?
3. The U.S. depends on foreign countries for oil. What are the pros and cons of this? Do you believe that the U.S. should be self-sufficient in oil-supply? Why?

Education
1. What are some barriers for ensuring that all children in our community receive a high quality education?
2. What do you believe should be our priority when it comes to improving education in our state? Who is responsible for making that happen?
3. What is the role of parents and parental involvement in improving public education? How can parents become more involved?
4. What steps/actions/strategies are necessary to attract and retain great teachers in our schools?
5. From a teacher’s perspective, what specific kinds of support and changes are needed to help teachers be as effective as possible, regardless of where they teach?
6. How can we all collaborate toward better outcomes for all young people?
   (Source for Education questions: Waiting for “Superman”)

Environment
1. What can the government do to limit the amount of greenhouse gas emissions? What can we do in our everyday lives?
2. Do you believe that the leaders of our country (and other countries) pay enough attention to the future of our environment and renewable energy? Why? Explain why the environment should or should not be a priority.

Healthcare
1. Research the Health care systems of other countries. How do the health care systems of other countries around the world compare to that of the United States?
2. What are the pros and cons of Obamacare and the GOP alternative health care plan?
3. Should providing universal health care be the policy of the U.S.? Why?

Immigration
1. Should immigration to the U.S. be considered a right or a privilege? Explain your choice. Do you believe that there should be a process for illegal immigrants to obtain citizenship? If so, what should that process be?
2. What are the pros and cons of immigration in general?
3. What responsibility, if any, do democratic governments have to citizens of other countries?
VI. Acting on Your Civic Responsibility

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“Although our interests as citizens vary, each one is an artery to the heart that pumps life through the body politic, and each is important to the health of democracy.”

Bill Moyers, former White House Press Secretary
What is Civic Responsibility?

From Jennifer Self of Grand Valley State University

Civic Responsibility is defined as the "responsibility of a citizen" (Dictionary.com). It is comprised of actions and attitudes associated with democratic governance and social participation. Civic responsibility can include participation in government, church, volunteers and memberships of voluntary associations. Actions of civic responsibility can be displayed in advocacy for various causes, such as political, economic, civil, [and] environmental or quality of life issues…

Although Civic Responsibility has existed for centuries in society, it was officially sanctioned as a blueprint for democracy in 1787 by the ratification of the United States Constitution. The Constitution declared, "We the people of the United States, in order to form a more perfect union, establish justice, insure domestic tranquility, provide for the common defense, promote the general welfare, and secure the blessings of liberty to ourselves and our posterity, do ordain and establish this Constitution for the United States."

The importance of civic responsibility is paramount to the success of democracy and philanthropy. By engaging in civic responsibility, citizens ensure and uphold certain democratic values written in the United States Constitution and the Bill of Rights. Those values or duties include justice, freedom, equality, diversity, authority, privacy, due process, property, participation, truth, patriotism, human rights, rule of law, tolerance, mutual assistance, self restraint and self respect. Schools teach civic responsibility to students with the goal to produce responsible citizens and active participants in community and government…

Examples of Civic Duties and Responsibilities

From the National Science Teachers Association/Lee Ann Potter
November 2005

Civic duties and responsibilities are numerous. They include voting, serving on a jury, signing a petition, writing to a government official, paying one's taxes, being knowledgeable about current events, registering for the draft, serving in the military, being a law-abiding citizen, volunteering, addressing issues that affect the larger society, contributing to the common good, protesting injustice, passing on civic values to the next generation, and more. Government documents, in their almost infinite variety, feature individuals and groups performing such civic duties, and often more than one simultaneously.
Make Yourself Heard!

From *Information Outlook*
By Tamara Theiler
March 2002

**Why Should I Get Involved in Public Policy?**

…Often we allow the opportunity to influence public policy pass us by because proposed legislation and regulations are frequently so detailed and contain so much jargon that they are difficult to understand. This causes us to feel overwhelmed….

Generally, it is not necessary to understand all the nuances of a piece of legislation or regulation. A solid overview is often enough to convey the purpose of the legislation or rule and its potential affect. Web sites such as Thomas (http://thomas.loc.gov), which is operated by the U.S. Library of Congress, are excellent sources for this kind of information.

You may still be wondering why you should get involved in public policy debates. There are several good reasons for becoming involved. One reason is that it gives you a chance to shape the scope of a final draft of a law or rule. You may even be able to help determine how a law or rule is made. Getting involved in public policy provides a chance to participate in the evolution of your profession, your community, and society as a whole. In a nutshell, being involved in public policy is an opportunity to have your voice heard.

However, making your voice heard sometimes seems like an impossible task. Often people feel alone in their efforts to address a policy issue. Even when a group of people band together they may feel that their elected and appointed officials are only interested in hearing from lobbyists representing organizations that have massive amounts of money and power. They believe that these officials are not interested in hearing the common person's point of view….

You also have a better understanding of what is happening in your geographic area or area of specialization or interest. Often the momentum for a new law or regulation starts at the state or local level.

When action is taken at these levels, federal governments and the international community take notice. Then they decide to either take action to counter what the state or local government has done, implement the state or local action at the federal or international level, or allow the state or local government to deal with the issue themselves…

…Lawmakers and rule makers like hearing from the public at large, particularly their constituents. That is why we need your assistance in… grassroots activities, when they are necessary. These activities include writing a letter to a lawmaker or rule-making agency. Other times it may be an e-mail or phone call to an elected or appointed official. These are the best ways to explain your position to decision-makers.

While input from even one person can make a difference, correspondence from a large number of people lends credibility to the group's position. That is why we hope that, when the time comes, you will participate in the grassroots efforts…
Take Action!
How to Track a Politician’s Record

From *The News Junkie Post*
June 28, 2011

How To Keep Track Of Politicians’ Voting Track Records, A Guide

What’s the point of opening a savings account if you don’t care if the bank is giving you a good interest rate or not? It’s same with electing our political leaders to office — just because you register to vote and cast your ballot it doesn’t mean that you won’t have to keep an eye out on how that man or woman you elected to office is doing. Holding our [politicians] accountable is what can save…the nation and it doesn’t have to be a time consuming task.

What To Look For

Just because you voted Democrat doesn’t necessarily mean that your representative is voting with Democrats all the time. Even though partisanship is what we see mostly, there are times when your elected official will vote with the other side…

… Here is a list of five things to look for on the voting records of your elected officials:

1) **How many YEAS or NAYS they gave to legislation you care about** — the environment, LGBT issues, healthcare, the economy, military spending, etc.

2) **How many times they missed voting** — in other words, was your elected official on a skiing trip while his or her vote could have helped passed legislation you care about?

3) **Who are they voting with** — are they siding with Republicans most of the time even though they are Democrats or vice-versa?

4) **Are they being influenced by PAC groups or other campaign contributors?** — A perfect example is Democratic Senator Max Baucus who receives top dollar from pharmaceutical and insurance companies and has been fighting the public option in the healthcare bill. Who are they working for?

5) **What’s their rhetoric?** — One of the websites below actually [keeps] records of the speeches and public statement your elected official gives to fellow members and the media with transcripts and everything. You want to read these from time to time and see if he or she [is] actually walking the talk.
Where To Go

The U.S. House of Representatives and the U.S. Senate have their own websites where you can check what bills are being voted on, but it can be a nightmare to navigate THOMAS or other government databases. Certainly, they don’t make it easy. Thankfully we have great organizations dedicated to keeping track of how your elected official is voting. Here are the ones I’ve found to be extremely helpful…:

1) Project Vote Smart (www.votesmart.org) — This organization is by far the best at keeping excellent track of how your elected official is voting. The website is simple to navigate and you can get all [this] great info:

- Voting track record on the issues
- Speeches and public statements
- Interest groups ranking
- Campaign financing
- Issue positions
- Bios
- and more.

2) The Washington Post (http://projects.washingtonpost.com/congress) — Certainly, the Post is using a great database to keep voting track records. Here is what you will find there:

1. Voting track record
2. Positions held
3. Financial disclosure report
4. Key votes record
5. Missed votes
6. Voting with party
7. Latest votes
8. Bios
9. and more

3) League of Conservation Voters (www.lcv.org) — These folks go out of their way to tell you how members of Congress have voted on environmental issues. They keep a scorecard on each of them and they keep a list, “The Dirty Dozen” that should be voted out in the next election. Here is what you will find: Scorecards, list of evildoers, and more.

Continued on the next page...
Keeping Track The Easy Way

Since there are so many elected officials to keep track on from the local to the federal level, I would suggest that you follow these three steps: Start by writing down on a notebook, your diary, or in your computer, the names of key legislation that you cared about the most up to that point (the healthcare bill for example) and note how your elected official in Congress voted.

Then, find out why they voted that way using the Project Vote Smart database and write it down — “she/he felt the time wasn’t right,” “she/he felt that it would hurt business,” “she/he thought it would mean higher taxes,” “she/he thought the legislation would only benefit the rich,” “she/he thought it’s socialism,” etc.

And finally, write [him or her] a letter, fax, or send an email. You want to either thank them, or express how outraged you are. This step is extremely important because you’re letting your public official know that you are watching [him or her]...You have to remind them that you are indeed keeping track of how they’re doing their job. Think of it as, an employee evaluation — they are working for you and getting paid with your tax dollars.

How to Lobby

What is lobbying?

Lobbying is process of using your voice effectively to promote change. Change can be at the federal, state or local level. Lobbying can include using your influence to guide legislation in Congress or effect regulations at a federal agency. (American Thoracic Society)
Thinking about visiting a public official? Here are a few tips that will help you be a successful lobbyist. First and foremost, you don't have to be an expert to lobby your representatives. Your viewpoint is important and worth expressing. Never forget that democracy depends on citizens expressing their views.

1. Always be polite! Never be argumentative, call names or threaten.

2. Make an appointment. Don't be disappointed if your appointment is set up with a staff person. Legislators are busy and staff members pass the information they receive on to their bosses. Often, by developing a rapport with a staff member, you open an important line of communication to that office. If your meeting is to be with the legislator himself/herself, it will usually be specified.

3. Be on time. Identify yourself and the organization you represent. If you are a registered voter in the legislator's district, say so.

4. Present a clear message. If you are with a number of fellow lobbyists, choose one person to speak for your group. Get your point across in the fewest possible words. Say exactly what you want the policy maker to do—using your own words or the language prepared by your advocacy organization. If your issue involves legislation, cite the specific bill's name or number.

5. Use hard facts to support your arguments. Leave supporting documents whenever possible.

6. Be prepared for questions, even challenges. If a question throws you off balance because you don't know the answer, don't be afraid to admit it. Say you will research the matter and report back to them.

7. Be a good listener. Give the legislator or staff member a chance to express his/her point of view.

8. Give special recognition to legislators who are known to be on your side. Ask them for advice and help in reaching other legislators and suggestions for ways to communicate the issue to their colleagues.

9. If a legislator or staff member expresses opposition to your viewpoint, try to leave on a friendly note so you will have access to them in the future.

10. Be gracious. If your meeting was with a legislator, thank him/her for taking the time to listen to your point of view. If your meeting was with a staff member, thank him/her for communicating your viewpoint to their boss and ask for a written reply if you want one.

11. Never talk about legislators, staff members, political parties, or other individuals involved with your issue when you are in hallways or elevators before or after meetings. There are lots of operatives. They will know who you represent, but you won't know who they represent or what side they are on.

12. Follow up your visit with a thank-you letter. Restate your case briefly and provide any information you may have promised during your meeting. This gives you a second chance to make your point.

Always remember that the basic principle of effective lobbying is grassroots pressure. While it is important to see your legislators, lobbying is often ineffective without the help of large numbers of letters and telephone calls or faxes from people who live in the representative’s district. Elected officials do pay attention to the opinions of those who elect them—letters really count!
Democracy In Action

From PBS (Public Broadcasting Service)

The Freedom Rides brought together people of different races, religions, cultures, and economic backgrounds from across the United States. Unlike most other campaigns of the Civil Rights Movement, a single organization or charismatic leader did not dominate; instead, history was made by courageous men and women who chose to join the Rides, alone or as part of groups such as the Congress of Racial Equality (CORE), the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC) and the closely linked Nashville Student Movement. Many Riders were students in their late teens or early twenties.

The key lesson of the Rides was "the ability of ordinary citizens to affect public policy" wrote historian Raymond Arsenault in his book Freedom Riders: 1961 and the Struggle for Racial Justice. Individuals without legal training or political connections were nevertheless able to make headlines and confront an unjust system. The change that they created was democratic in its most direct sense – as the actions of ordinary people compelled established movement leaders like Martin Luther King, Jr. and government officials like John F. Kennedy, Jr. and Robert F. Kennedy to respond. Arsenault argued that the Freedom Riders, more so than any other activists of the time, prefigured the "rights revolution" and the movements for feminism, the environment, gay and lesbian rights, the rights of the disabled, and the end of the Vietnam War.

The integrated Civil Rights Movement of the early 1960s would eventually be tested past its limits, splitting into Black Power and other factions. But during the Freedom Rides, the coalition held.

As Rider Glenda Gaither Davis put it in her interview for Freedom Riders, "Even though we came from many different places and we had many different cultures and many different home environments... we were very much unified because we had a common cause and we were all moving in that direction, and we did believe in what were doing. We knew that we had taken a stand."

Peace Protests

Around the time the Vietnam war draft was announced, people around the country from college campuses, middle-class suburbs, labor unions, and government institutions began to organize protests against the war, the first prominent rally happening in 1965. Over the next few years, anti-war rallies, speeches, demonstrations, and concerts continued all over the country, remaining powerful for the duration of the conflict…

In 2003, anti-war activists across the country marched against the U.S.-led war on Iraq… In February of 2003 in New York City, antiwar demonstrators were prohibited to march past the United Nations complex or anywhere else in Manhattan by a federal judge ruling. The judge said the organizers would have to settle for a stationary rally five blocks north of the complex, saying that free-speech rights were adequately addressed in this counteroffer.
How To: Start an Awareness Campaign About Your Cause

From DoSomething.Org

Chances are, there are tons of people out there who don’t know much about your cause or how many people it affects…

- **Double check.** Are you allowed to post your signs around school or on telephone poles and community bulletin boards? If your town won’t allow you to post on public property, see if you can pass out flyers at your town hall, public library, a local business or at school.

- **Do some research.** Figure out how you want to present your data. Do Something has some great info on tons of causes including facts, effects and dangers.

- **Investigate.** What are the cause-relevant things happening in your area? For instance, if your cause is alcohol abuse, call your local Alcoholics Anonymous and ask about the details of alcoholism in your area. Don’t be afraid to include this info on your posters.

- **Details.** See if you can get a quote from an expert. Call your local university and track down a professor. If your cause is drug addiction, talk to a recovering addict (Narcotics Anonymous may be able to help you here). Real stories are powerful!

- **Image it.** Sometimes pictures make stronger statements than words, so don’t be afraid to use them. If you campaign for locally grown food, as to take a picture of a farmer’s produce.

- **Power in people.** Now that you’ve got all this info, get some friends together to help you design and complete the posters or flyers. They can also help you put them up when you’re done.

- **Variety is key.** Keep in mind that in order to make this campaign effective, you have to vary your strategy. So think about making a few different kinds of signs:
  - Small flyers to pass out to people
  - Big, colorful posters to post on telephone polls: you want these to grab the attention of the people will be driving and/or walking by.
  - Informative flyers to post on cork boards or town message boards.

- **Timing is everything.** Think what time of year is best to campaign. If your cause is climate change, aim to have a campaign around Earth Day. If it’s alcoholism, get your flyers up in April during Alcohol Awareness Month. But if you’ve missed the date, don’t be hesitant to start a campaign regardless.

- **Be bold.** Think of strange places you can put up posters and see if you can get permission to post them there. Marketers have put up ads in odd places because it’s an effective tactic. Stick ‘em in places like the doors in bathroom stalls of restaurants, cafes, and/or even in restrooms of your local bus or train station. Try it out!

- **Post and repost.** While going out one day and posting is great, keep in mind that weather may damage posters so you’ll want to go out periodically and repost your signs. You also won’t catch everyone in one day so schedule a few days to go out and distribute flyers.

- **Recruit speakers.** Who can come in and speak to students at your school, church, or community center about your cause? If your cause is discrimination, visit your local synagogue to see if someone can come in and speak about Antisemitism. You can even go to your local police station and ask for resources. They’re usually more than willing to help support a positive cause.
Follow the Money Trail Worksheet

From votesmart.org
Schnee, 2010

1. Go to www.votesmart.org. Once there, enter your zip code to find the members of Congress from your state.

2. Select one: ________________________________

3. On the right side of the page, click on “Campaign Finances” to answer the following questions regarding the politician you selected:
   • In the most recent election cycle how much money did your senator or representative raise and spend? How much was left over for the campaign?

   • List five of the top contributors

   • Next, identify at least five of the entities (corporations, organizations, unions, special interest groups, etc.) that contributed to the campaign of the politician you selected.

   • Why do you think these individuals or entities gave such a significant contribution?

   • Next, navigate to the biographical information about your senator or representative and scroll down to see the caucuses and congressional committees on which he or she serves. List a few of these committees below.

     Can you find any connections between the committees and the individuals or entities contributing to the campaign?

   • Are there any implications for the political system when any one person or organization contributes large sums of money to campaigns?
Study Questions

1. What is the difference between a civic responsibility and a civic duty? Name some examples of each, and elaborate on why you think each is important to our society.

2. The Freedom Rides were an historically significant movement supporting civil rights. What are some significant movements that may be underway today? What is something that needs to be actively promoted in today’s society?

3. If you were to write a letter to your state’s Representative or Senator, what would it be about? How would you suggest that the Representative or Senator could help? Write a sample letter, and share it with your classmates. If you want, send the letter to the intended recipient!

4. What is a cause for which you hope to raise awareness? Why is it important? What would your awareness campaign entail? Use the “How to: Start an Awareness Campaign About Your Cause” guide on page 101 to generate a few ideas.

5. What events or factors may shape a person’s idea of civic responsibility?

6. In your opinion, what is the importance of volunteering? Where have you volunteered in the past year? What did you learn from your experience?

7. What impact has the increasing union between celebrity and philanthropy had on people’s desire to create change in their community? Do you think celebrities have a greater civic responsibility to promote a cause because of their fame and wealth? Why?
VII. The Spread of Democracy

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“The care of human life and happiness, and not their destruction, is the first and only object of good government.”

Thomas Jefferson, 3rd President of the United States

Protesters take part in a march in Mbabane, the Swaziland capital, in mid-March. (Siphiwe Sibeko/Reuters).
Photo courtesy of CBC News.
Experts Outline Steps to Democracy in Egypt, Tunisia
New governments can look to procedures that worked for Latin America and Eastern Europe

From Voice of America (voanews.com)
By Mohamed Elshinnawi | Washington, D.C.
March 18, 2011

Popular uprisings have overthrown the leaders of Egypt and Tunisia, but it’s still unclear whether either country will get the democratic government its people are demanding. Experts believe certain steps must be taken to make the transition from authoritarian regimes to democracy.

When Latin America and Eastern Europe witnessed a wave of political changes in the late 1980s and early 1990s, governments in the emerging democracies wanted to do something about the crimes and abuses of the regimes they replaced. The new governments adopted various procedures that, over time, have come to be known as "transitional justice."

Hanny Megally, vice president of the International Center for Transitional Justice based in New York, has a list of procedures that were used in Latin America and Eastern Europe. Megally says they can also be used by the new governments in the Arab world.

These include: criminal justice and accountability for those who have been involved in perpetration of human rights violations, reparations for victims, processes of getting the truth about what actually happened during that period in the past, legal reforms and institutional reforms to ensure that the structures that may have actually helped the violations that were taking place are no longer the same.

However, these mechanisms of transitional justice often take years to implement. And, according to Megally, the governing groups in Egypt and Tunisia have not even begun to transform their security services from tools of repression to instruments of public service.

"If we look at experiences, whether it is in South Africa or other experiences in Latin America or Asia, these are incremental steps that will take a number of years to put in place," says Megally. "I think the lesson to be learned is that you can't do it all within a period of six months or a year."

Whichever steps Egypt and Tunisia take first, Megally believes it is important that they bring the rest of the procedures of transitional justice into play over a period of time.

Brian Grodsky, assistant professor of comparative politics at the University of Maryland and author of a new book entitled "The Costs of Justice," believes emerging governments in Egypt and Tunisia need to be decisive - especially given the history of human rights abuses in both countries. But first, their new leaders have to address the peoples’ demands.

"Voters started the revolutions for a reason, most of this because they did not want the corruption and the non-transparency of these non-democratic regimes," says Grodsky. "They wanted to see economic reforms. They wanted to have personal security, general improvement in their standard of living. So once
these things begin to occur, the new political elites can once again go back and start digging into the past and reopen these issues."

It is important, Grodsky says, for the new leaders in Cairo and Tunis to prove to their people that the rule of law will prevail and that measures are being taken to protect human rights. According to Grodsky, that process may already be underway.

"If you look at Egypt, you see corruption charges against the ex-interior minister. It is not that they are going after him for torture. What is most salient to a lot of people tends to be the economic and social changes. In Tunisia, what we have seen up until now seems to be a couple of commissions they set up to do some investigations, but again, the investigation has been focused mostly on the most recent crackdown in December and also again on corruption of the former leader."

Experts in transitional justice agree that whether in Egypt or Tunisia, or elsewhere in the region, the challenge will always be for new governments to promote accountability for past abuses without risking a smooth transition to democracy.
A decade and a half ago, as the third wave of democracy was cresting, it seemed that freedom was becoming a global norm; today, that wave is rapidly receding… Asia was at the forefront of the third wave, despite its lack of an indigenous history of democracy, and is the only region outside of Europe in which a large set of consolidated democracies emerged in the third wave. Asia offers the best hope of understanding how consolidated democracies can emerge in parts of the world without a liberal political tradition.

… in Asia, Japan is about to enter its seventh decade of democracy under the American-drafted constitution, Korea is an OECD member entering its third decade of democracy, Taiwan would be in the OECD but for its international situation, Mongolia survived a bout of Putinism to remain a consolidated democracy in the shadow of two authoritarian giants, Indonesia has emerged as the leading consolidated democracy in a majority Muslim country, Malaysian semi-democracy may be healthier than it has been in decades, and the Philippines has survived a coup and an attempt by the president to extend her term.

Inroads on the communist mainland have of course been less rapid than some had hoped. China sits atop a broad swath of unfree countries, from Myanmar through Indochina extending to North Korea. But even in China, civil liberties have improved significantly with two decades of sustained economic growth, and the lessons of the other democracies in the region may one day be applicable in the neighborhood.

From ISN ETH Zurich

**Taiwan**

Taiwan is where the first sign of the third wave in Asia emerged. In 1986, President Chiang Ching-kuo initiated a reform of the political system to expand political participation, with a goal of reunification with the mainland. Chiang believed that a more democratic Taiwan would serve as a vanguard for democratizing China. Opposition political parties were legalized, and during a long transition, opposition politicians made demands for reform which were then co-opted by the liberalizing mainstream faction of the Kuomintang. That faction became the vehicle of the remarkable leader Lee Teng-hui, an advocate of Taiwan independence. Lee used his political skills to transform the KMT, and eventually martial law was ended and new elections were held to replace the national assembly elected on the mainland forty years earlier. In Taiwan's first democratic presidential election in 1996, Lee was elected for a four-year term. With the election of Democratic Progressive Party leader Chen Shui-bian as president in 2000, Taiwan passed with flying colors the key test of any democracy, a succession of power. Despite poor political performance by virtually all accounts, democracy is clearly entrenched for good.

**The Philippines**

If Taiwan's democratization was gradual and peaceful, the ending of the regimes in the Philippines was hardly so, with the People Power revolution that brought down Marcos in 1986. Since the adoption of the 1987 Constitution, Philippines politics have been mired in scandal, corruption, and two impeachment attempts. Whatever the level of performance, however, democracy seems entrenched. President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo survived a 2003 military rebellion, but was unable to push through constitutional amendments to permit her to serve beyond 2010. The Philippines has thus withstood two significant tests of its democracy in the last four years: a failed coup and the rejection of a democratic leader's seeking to use extra-constitutional means to extend her term (as happened this month to Venezuela's Hugo Chavez, who lost his bid for constitutional amendment so that he could serve past 2012).
**South Korea**

After South Korea's "people power" movement of 1987 against the heavy-handed governance of Chun Doo Hwan, the government agreed to a democratic transition based on a pact among elements of the military regime and the two major opposition parties. The new constitution provided for a democratically elected president, limited to one five-year term. Each of the three major protagonists in 1987 has now held that office; the current president is a former activist labor lawyer, Roh Moo-Hyun. Democratic performance has not always been satisfying, and the popularity of each of the four directly elected presidents has dropped significantly over the course of their terms. But democracy is fully consolidated: the military is under control, elections are vigorously contested, and the courts have become major sites for the constraint of politics.

**Indonesia**

While not yet a fully consolidated democracy, Indonesia presents a remarkable case in Asian democracy. It is the largest country outside China in the region, predominantly Muslim, and diverse and centrifugal in character. Governed for thirty-two years by the authoritarian Suharto, Indonesia's regime might have survived the new era until the 1997 Asian Financial Crisis. An austerity program backed by the IMF empowered Suharto's opponents, and when Suharto engineered another presidential term for himself, protests forced him from office. Thus began the *reformasi* era of gradual constitutional reforms. Significant decentralization has occurred, and lingering security problems such as the Aceh rebellion and the occupation of East Timor have been resolved. The 2004 election of Yudhyono marked the first direct election of the chief executive of this era.

**Thailand**

In Thailand, the Asian Financial Crisis spurred efforts to complete constitutional reform, leading to the passage of the 1997 "People's Constitution," which introduced a number of checks over the country's political institutions. Alas, the Constitution worked too well, and a large political party emerged under the control of controversial populist billionaire Thaksin Shinawatra, who used his base in the countryside and his large checkbook to consolidate power and control the country's nominally independent oversight institutions. Massive demonstrations in 2006 and a remonstrance from the King forced Thaksin to resign, but he continued to serve in an interim capacity. In September 2006, the military staged a coup while Thaksin was out of the country. While the military announced a rapid timetable of constitutional reform, to be capped off with elections on 23 December 2007, the coup nonetheless represents a setback for Thai democracy.

**Mongolia**

Mongolia's story is more like those of the Central and Eastern European republics. A longtime puppet regime of the Soviet Union, Mongolia initiated rapid political reform in 1990. By 1992, it had a new democratic constitution, and it has witnessed several rounds of free and fair elections since then. As in Taiwan, when the longtime ruling party lost power, the newly empowered "democratic forces" proved ineffective at governance, leading to corruption scandals and the return of the formerly communist Mongolian People's Revolutionary Party. From 2000 to 2004, a Putinesque leader named Enkhbayar served as prime minister, reestablishing close relations with Russia and intimidating the opposition, but these tendencies never reached the levels found in Russia. Today, Enkhbayar is president, while the parliament is governed by a grand coalition of both major parties…
Latin America

From United Nations Development Programme

Over the course of 200 years of independent existence, democracy in Latin America has emerged and ended on dozens of occasions. Even as it was being enshrined in Constitutions, it was being destroyed in practice. War, tyranny and short periods of stability are associated with much of this history of independence, during which even flagrant violations of democracy were committed in its name.

By 1978, the region had entered an unprecedented era. Authoritarian regimes gradually gave way to democratic ones. Never before have there been so many countries with democratic governments and never before have Latin American democracies been so robust.

But there is no assurance that what has been achieved is secured. Indeed, the 25 years that have passed since the start of democratization in the region have not been without their setbacks. At the same time as the armed conflicts were winding down in Central America and others continued in South America, a number of countries experienced failed coup attempts, mutinies, mass street demonstrations and other crises that led to the resignation or expulsion of their Presidents. In all of these cases, however, a way out was found that preserved the legal order and allowed democracy ultimately to prevail.

But political democracy in Latin America exists alongside limited rule of law and serious economic and social problems. In 2003, poverty affected 43.9 percent of the population and extreme poverty some 19.4 percent. The region, moreover, has one of the highest levels of inequality in the world.

While Latin America is now less at risk of violent attacks against its institutions, other weaknesses have come to the fore. Notably, democracy appears to be losing its dynamism. Although it is the preferred system of government, there is little faith in its capacity to improve living conditions, public regard for political parties is at its lowest level, and the State is viewed with both expectation and distrust. In some cases, furthermore, the thrust towards democracy that has characterized the past few decades appears to be waning. Latin America is at a crossroads. The structural reforms associated with the Washington Consensus have not generated economic growth that meets the demands of the population. The idea is gradually emerging that the State should return to its role of guide or regulator of society. The need for a political system that addresses the main problems of the times and the need for a new type of State are key issues in the new debate in which the region’s future is at stake.
Africa’s Regional Democracy: Trends, Attitudes & Transitions

From the University of Michigan Library
The Journal of the International Institute

Africa countries have made strides to attain full democracies since independence. However, their efforts have been hampered by negative circumstances over the years… After the collapse of the Berlin Wall in 1989, a third wave of democracy swept through the African continent. Statistics shows that while Freedom House designated only two African countries as “free” in 1972, by 2005, eleven countries achieved “free” status and nineteen others received a “partly free” designation… more than two-thirds of African nations have undergone elections, and the recently established African Union (AU) has decreed that it will not recognize governments that come to power through unconstitutional means. Of Africa’s fifty-three countries, thirty of them are now entrenched in what analyst describe as a “consolidation state” of their democratic development.

Much of this success can be attributed to the growth and development of civil society organizations, free media, and Africans’ continued desire and demand for democratic governance. Despite this uncontested surge for democratic activity in the early to mid-1990s, some political skeptics caution that the trend toward democratic consolidation in Africa stalled after 2002. They point to various factors that plague the region: continent-wide institutional incapacity; corruption; lack of decentralization; continuous and renewed conflicts in Sudan, Chad, Uganda, Ethiopia, and Eritrea; fragile civil societies; and inadequate resource management both in terms of economic and human capital.

Presently, Africa is at a critical threshold... So far, it can only boast of few regional democratic success stories, including the end of apartheid in South Africa and the quelling of civil strife in Mozambique and Sierra Leone. Democracy promotion groups and other civil society NGOs such as the Transition Monitoring Group in Nigeria, the Campaign for Democracy and Development in Ghana and Nigeria, and the Campaign for Good Governance in Sierra Leone are working tirelessly to improve the situation but it seems their efforts are well not enough… [Are] standards of democratic governance are being whittled down to suit incumbent rulers [?] The problem is however exacerbated…by a lack of political will on the part of the ruling elite to press for democratic reform…

… it was not all due to lack of will or resistance, as is shown by the militancy of such leaders as Kwame Nkrumah, Modibo Keita, Gamal Abdel Nassar, Ahmed Ben Bella, and Julius Nyerere … African economies have been in decline since the end of the 1960s… What started as an economic recession in Africa around 1969 had become a deepening economic crisis by 1979 that called for immediate intervention. It comes as no surprise that African governments were compelled to come up with The Lagos Plan of Action in 1980. The crusade by international agencies since 1976 for “poverty reduction” yielded ground to a dramatic intervention by the World Bank…The 1990s became like a coming-out ceremony. The people had had enough and the democratization movement had started in earnest. The situation had become so dismal that even the military had by and large lost appetite for its futile coups and its leaders started looking for other avenues for scrambling out of the abyss. Africa was plagued by every crisis imaginable – crisis of democracy, economic crisis, political crisis, agricultural crisis, food crisis, and crisis of governance…

…Many more Africans now enjoy basic political rights, and a clear yet partial move toward accountable governance offers a better platform for tackling the region's steep challenges of economic development and poverty reduction.

When the Cold War ended, most of Africa was ruled by…regimes. According to the Washington based Freedom House, in 1989 the region (south of the Sahara and excluding island microstates) was home to only three “electoral democracies”—Botswana, Gambia, and Mauritius—with a combined population of

Continued on the next page...
less than 3.5 million. By this count, less than one in every hundred Africans lived in countries that met minimum standards of free and fair electoral competition. The most recent ratings, for 2007, paint a very different picture. The number of sub-Saharan democracies has swelled to 20, accounting for more than a quarter of the region's population. Two decades ago, Africa's economic and military powerhouse—South Africa—was ruled by a white minority government that regularly destabilized its neighbors, while its most populous country—Nigeria—was suffering under a series of corrupt military dictatorships. More recently, these same two countries have been at the forefront of initiatives to promote regional peace and development. They helped launch a new African Union (AU), whose founding principles reflect growing commitment to “good governance” among political leaders. For example, when a military coup followed the death of Guinea's long-time president late last year, the country's AU membership was immediately suspended.

Despite these promising trends, major tragedies of the past 20 years have highlighted obstacles to democracy and development in the region. Perhaps most destabilizing was a sharp spike in violent conflict during the mid-1990s, with the Central African Great Lakes region especially hard hit. Following the horrors of the Rwandan genocide, a civil war in the Democratic Republic of Congo (formerly Zaire) spilled over the borders into neighboring countries. According to the International Rescue Committee, the conflict has directly and indirectly claimed more than five million lives since 1998. This by some reckonings makes it the most deadly international conflict since World War II…

Any useful assessment of Africa's challenges must account for the dynamism and diversity of the region. For example, considerable international assistance has helped the Democratic Republic of Congo emerge from civil war. Meanwhile, public policy responses to HIV/AIDS have improved considerably, particularly in South Africa, which has the largest HIV-positive population in the world. And while crises like Zimbabwe's free-fall—combining state repression with inflation rates running into the trillions—grab international headlines, directly next door Botswana has quietly maintained one of the world's most impressive records of sustained economic growth.
Youth and Technology in Movements for Democracy

The faces of Egypt's 'Revolution 2.0'

From CNN
By John D. Sutter
February 21, 2011

(CNN) – Dressed in black, they stood in silence on the banks of the Nile River with their backs turned to Egypt.

They had watched their homeland become a place of torture and repression. And now, in June 2010, they were making a statement.

Instructions for the protest were clearly disseminated on Facebook: Stand 5 feet apart, so as not to break Egyptian laws against public demonstration; be absolutely silent; no signs; wear black, as determined in an online vote; stand on the banks of the river or sea for one hour only, then walk away.

No one yet knew who had organized this protest against police brutality. There were five Facebook page administrators, tech-savvy activists who didn't really know each other. They had communicated almost exclusively over Google's e-mail system, which doesn't allow outsiders to trace communications back to a specific computer's IP address.

But the young, anonymous, internet-powered dissidents behind the "We Are All Khaled Said" Facebook page would surge in popularity over coming months. Eventually, they would be credited with helping spark the 18-day revolution that began on January 25 and toppled Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak, in power for as long as some of them had been alive.

In doing so, they would update our image of what it means to be a revolutionary: Perhaps it's no longer enough to wield slogans, baseball bats and gas masks; modern revolutions must be fueled, in part, by a bit of tech geekery, too.

The regime-changing wave of protests started after Tunisians successfully ousted their president in a popular uprising.

"Who does a Facebook event for a revolution, you know?"
–Mahmoud Salem, Egyptian blogger

Egypt's then-nameless revolutionaries had created a Facebook "event" for January 25, like those for birthday parties or dinner gatherings.

They gave it an ominous name:

"The Day of the Revolution Against Torture, Poverty, Corruption and Unemployment."

More than 80,000 people clicked "yes" on the invite, indicating they would attend, according to Ahmed Saleh, one of the five administrators of the Facebook page.

Mahmoud Salem, 29, one of Egypt's most prominent bloggers, saw the Facebook event come across his Twitter feed. At first, he didn't believe it was real.

"Who does a Facebook event for a revolution, you know?"

Salem RSVP'd a skeptical "maybe" on the Facebook page. And, like many others, including the event's organizers, he showed up in the streets of Cairo that Tuesday, doubtful that the event would amount to much.

Soon, though, he found himself in a throng of thousands shoving against police barricades "like a bowling ball," trying to create a way for protesters to get through.

In that moment, for him, a digital movement became real.

'Waiting for the internet'
Saleh learned that his country was a place of maddening torture, rape and imprisonment in unimaginably small spaces at age 10, when he opened one of his father's books.

Saleh's dad, a religious conservative, was a voracious reader – and he kept a library in their home with all types of reading material, including material that was critical of the State.

"That was just shocking. And it continued to be inside me. It was internalized," Saleh said.

As he grew up, Saleh, now 32, was frustrated by how little he could learn about the world from Egypt's two state-run TV stations. Hungry to know more, he rejoiced at age 16 when the internet came into his home in Alexandria, Egypt. He stayed up night after night, reading international news and chatting with new friends in foreign countries.

"I was waiting for the internet to arrive in Egypt years before it arrived. Reading about it, I could see how much freedom there was (online), how much information you had. I was reading every book and every magazine talking about the internet," he said. "I was playing out in my head what websites I was going to visit."

Eventually, he would try to make Egypt more like this virtual world he loved.

The face of torture

The photo of Khaled Said's beaten, bloodied, fractured face went viral online.

The Egyptian man was allegedly beaten to death by police outside an internet café. He reportedly had possession of a video showing police selling illegal drugs.

Saleh and others were shocked. Soon they had created a Facebook page.

The name: "We Are All Khaled Said."

Google employee Wael Ghonim, working at night online from Dubai, headed this effort.

Administrator the site anonymously under the pseudonym "el shaheed," which is Arabic for "the martyr," he filled the page with news about police abuse and torture.

Ghonim, 30, rallied people around an issue that unified Egyptians. And by writing as a martyr, his words had the powerful impact of feeling like they came from beyond.

"It was someone who could be a brother, could be you, could be a friend who was brutally tortured," said Habib Haddad, a tech entrepreneur from Lebanon. "And he was talking to you – not the admin."

Building bravery

Soon, there were Facebook-organized protests to show support for Khaled Said.

One of the first prominent demonstrations – in which people stood along the banks of the Nile wearing black – was held primarily in Alexandria, where Saleh grew up.

The idea didn't come from the Facebook page's five leaders, however.

It came from Facebook users, said Nadine Wahab, 34, another one of the five Facebook organizers who was a backup administrator, located in Washington.

"The flash mob was an idea that someone posted in the comments – it wasn't any of ours," she said. "It really is a people's movement."

Saleh said it was amazing to see so many people lined up in silence, following all the rules posted on the "We Are All Khaled Said" Facebook page.

That June day felt like it was the start of something bigger, Wahab said.

But the world was not yet watching.
"The thing is, no one was really paying attention to Egypt," said Wahab, who is a press officer for a human rights group in the United States. "There were just a bunch of protesters. I remember sending press release after press release saying, 'Come on people, this is exciting! This is the start of a movement.'"

**A technological spark**

After the morning of January 25, the online organizers like to say Egypt's protest moved "offline."

Protest organizers led crowds of people into Cairo's poorer neighborhoods, shouting over loudspeakers for those without internet connections to come join people who had heard about the event online, organizers said.

Others pasted posters onto building walls.

"A lot of people who have never touched keyboards in their lives came out," Wahab said.

When the Egyptian government shut down the internet for five days during the protests, people on the streets turned to word of mouth, or they just looked out windows to see what was happening.

Perhaps the internet was a spark of the revolution. But much of the action was being lived out by real people in the real world.

On Thursday, January 27, the third day of protests in Egypt, Salem, the blogger, found himself surrounded by an angry mob of pro-government demonstrators – some of whom were calling for him to be hanged, yelling that he was an anti-Egyptian "Zionist."

"It reminded me of zombie movies," he said. "You know that scene in a zombie movie when you've got the keys and you're trying to get the car to start and it won't start and they are swarming around you and trying to bite and eat you?"

"It was just like that. That happened."

The online organizers in Egypt are quick to spread credit. No single person, group, Facebook page or political party planned this movement. It just happened, they said. Partly in response to the events in Tunisia. Partly by years and years of lingering economic, social and human rights problems.

And even within the blogging and social-media-activist community, there were several efforts. A group called the April 6 Youth Movement had been leading internet-driven protests since at least 2008. It also had a hand in rallying people in January.

Saleh, the young man who grew up yearning for an internet connection, said he was amazed at the degree to which the internet played a role in the movement.

Facebook, Twitter and e-mail created a "parallel Egypt" on the internet, he said.

In that world, if you could use tech tricks to maintain anonymity, you could mobilize more freely than in public, where you were likely to be watched by police. You could set up decoy events and change them on a moment's notice, you could spread your message to other countries, you could believe that another type of Egypt was possible.

And then you could bring it into reality.
Activity

From PBS (Public Broadcasting Service)
July 2004

Ten Years After Apartheid: A New Era in South Africa
Grade Level: 6-12
Subjects: Social Studies; Reading & Language Arts; The Arts

One of the most dramatic democratic movements in the world occurred in South Africa in the late 1980s and early 1990s. During that time, the racial separation policy of apartheid was dismantled. A new government—chosen by a "one-man, one-vote" election—replaced the old order and black citizens of South Africa won more equality and freedom.

Nelson Mandela, president of the African National Congress, and held a prisoner for years by the white dominated South African government, was named the first black president of the nation. He served from 1994 until 1999.

Students can work independently or in groups investigating the fall of apartheid and the rise of the Black Nationalist government using the Online Resources below.

After reviewing the information regarding apartheid, have younger students draw pictures demonstrating the effects of apartheid, or illustrating the work of democratic reformers, such as Mandela. Older students could use the information and pictures contained in the resources to develop posters or multimedia presentations highlighting apartheid or showing the end of apartheid and the rise of democracy in the nation.

Online Resources
Frontline: "The Long Walk of Nelson Mandela":
http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/pages/frontline/shows/mandela/

NewsHour Online: Life After Mandela:

NewsHour Online: Apartheid's People:
http://www.pbs.org/newshour/bb/africa/apartheid.html

NewsHour Online: Truth & Consequences:
http://www.pbs.org/newshour/bb/africa/july-dec98/southafrica_10-29.htm

ElectionWorld: South Africa:
http://www.electionworld.org/southafrica.htm

BBC: South Africa Timeline:
http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/africa/country_profiles/1069402.stm

United Nations Apartheid and South Africa site (Historical Images):
http://www.un.org/av/photo/subjects/apartheid.htm

Print Resources
Mandela: An Illustrated Autobiography by Nelson Mandela
The Politics of Truth and Reconciliation in South Africa: Legitimizing the Post-Apartheid State by Richard A. Wilson
Study Questions

1. Now that you have a broader idea of the idea of democracy (Section I) and understand the continuing spread of democracy globally, why do you think these regions are moving towards democratic governance?

2. Have you ever used social media or technology to spread knowledge about something you thought was important? Why do you think the Facebook movement in Egypt was so successful?

3. Should the United States intervene in other countries to promote democracy? Why or why not? What kinds of benefits and consequences would the United States face?

4. In the curriculum, many different regions are described in their pushes for democracy—specifically Asia, the Middle East, Africa, and Latin America. What do you think were some cultural or regional influences on their spreading of democracy? What do you think were some similarities involved in their democratic movements?

5. In “The Face of Egypt’s ‘Revolution 2.0”, the role of youth and technology in the Egyptian riots was described as groundbreaking. What do you think will be the future of technology in democratic movements? How do you think technology will influence political change?
VIII. Reference Materials

A. Online Lesson Plans...................................................................................................................120
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C. How to Make a Compelling Argument......................................................................................125

“Leadership and learning are indispensable to each other.”

John F. Kennedy, 35th President of the United States
Online Lesson Plans

A Trip Around the World

**Description:** Students compare the rights and responsibilities that constitutions of five different countries give their citizens. Students compare these constitutions to that of the U.S and learn about the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child.

**Link:** [http://www.icivics.org/teachers/lesson-plans/trip-around-world](http://www.icivics.org/teachers/lesson-plans/trip-around-world)

Hammurabi’s Treasure

**Description:** Students learn about Hammurabi, his code of laws, his Mesopotamian Empire, and the concept of *lex talionis*. It includes discussion questions and activities.

**Link:** [http://www.crf-usa.org/images/pdf/Codes_and_Crowns_sample.pdf](http://www.crf-usa.org/images/pdf/Codes_and_Crowns_sample.pdf)

Have Women Achieved Equality?

**Description:** Students take a look at the evolution of women’s rights over the years and the attempt to attain legal equality with men. It includes an activity and discussion questions.


Hobbes, Locke, Montesquieu, and Rousseau on Government

**Description:** Students learn about different forms of democracy from the philosophies of European Enlightenment Philosophers. It includes an activity, debate topics, and discussion questions.


Making Sense of World Conflicts: Corneille – Music of Life

**Description:** Students learn how language can be used in response to injustice. Corneille is a Rwandan-born singer who has used his music to overcome his childhood during the Rwandan genocide. It includes a discussion of one of his songs and an activity.


Media and Elections

**Description:** Students examine what role the media plays in influencing the public about political candidates and elections. It includes activities in which students learn about political advertising and create their own media campaigns.

**Link:** [http://www.edb.utexas.edu/resources/team/lesson_3.html](http://www.edb.utexas.edu/resources/team/lesson_3.html)
Norman Rockwell, Freedom of Speech—Know It When You See It

Description: Students examine Norman Rockwell’s “Freedom of Speech” painting, study the first amendment by creating a collage, and stage and report on a town meeting.

Link: http://edsitement.neh.gov/lesson-plan/norman-rockwell-freedom-speech-know-it-when-you-see-it

Social Entrepreneurship

Description: Students are introduced to social entrepreneurship, its increasing trend, and how it has impacted world issues. It includes key terms and concepts, discussion questions, additional resources, and extension activities.


The Inaugural Speech: Setting the Tone for the Administration of the President

Description: Students read and analyze the inaugural addresses of George H.W. Bush (1989) and George W. Bush (2001). It includes activities in which students review the historical events mentioned in the speeches and compare George W. Bush’s accomplishments to the promises in his inaugural address.

Link: http://www.pbs.org/newshour/inauguration/lesson_speeches.html#activities

The Social Security Act

Description: Students learn about the history of the Social Security Act, use primary source documents to prepare for debates, and engage in various activities involving a variety of media.

Link: http://edsitement.neh.gov/lesson-plan/social-security-act
Resources

Advocacy and Activism

Amnesty International: Working to Protect Human Rights
www.amnesty.org

Constitutional Rights Foundation: Educating Tomorrow’s Citizens
www.crf-usa.org

CNN: Impact Your World
www.cnn.com/SPECIALS/impact.your.world

Experience in Democracy Leadership Program
www.experienceindemocracy.org/

Oxfam America-What you can do
www.oxfamamerica.org/whatyoucando/pages/#ways-to-take-action

The Guardian: International Development Journalism Competition
www.guardian.co.uk/journalismcompetition

Yes Magazine: Powerful Ideas, Practical Actions
www.yesmagazine.org

YES! National Student Writing Competition
www.yesmagazine.org/for-teachers/essay-bank/yes-exemplary-essay-quick-facts

You’re the Youth: The Future of Democracy
www.youretheyouth.org

Write Your Representative
https://writerep.house.gov/writerep/welcome.shtml

Current Events

BBC News
www.bbc.co.uk/news

CNN
www.cnn.com

Forbes
www.forbes.com

NPR: National Public Radio
www.npr.org

The Guardian
www.guardian.co.uk
Documentaries

Each of the films listed below addresses one of the key issues of the 2012 elections.

An Inconvenient Truth
Paramount, 2006

Roadside Attractions, 2008

Race to Nowhere
Reel Link Films, 2009

Sick Around the World
PBS, 2008

Sicko
The Weinstein Company, 2007

Waiting for “Superman”
Paramount, 2010

Which Way Home
HBO Documentary Films, 2009

Government and History

City of Charlotte and Mecklenburg County Government
www.charmeck.org

History Channel: American and World History
www.history.com

North Carolina State Government
www.ncgov.com

Political Parties
www.politics1.com/parties.htm

PBS: Public Broadcasting Service
www.pbs.org

The Avalon Project: Documents in Law, History and Diplomacy
http://avalon.law.yale.edu

The United States Constitution
The White House
www.whitehouse.gov

Links to Glossary of Terms

Key Economic Terms and Concepts
- www.investopedia.com/dictionary
- www2.scholastic.com/browse/article.jsp?id=3750579

Political Science Terms
2. www2.scholastic.com/browse/article.jsp?id=4637

Materials for Educators

Annenberg Learner: Democracy in America
www.learner.org/courses/democracyinamerica/

Constitutional Rights Foundation: Teachers
http://www.crf-usa.org/teachers/teachers-lounge.html

National Endowment for the Humanities: EDSITEment
http://edsitement.neh.gov/lesson-plans

The Buck Institute for Education: Project Based Government
www.bie.org/store/units/pbg_curriculum_units

Print Resources

How to Change the World: Social Entrepreneurs and the Power of New Ideas – By David Bornstein

Join the Club: How Peer Pressure Can Transform the World - By Tina Rosenberg

Strength in What Remains – By Tracey Kidder

Voting and Voter Registration

North Carolina State Board of Elections: Voter Registration
www.sboe.state.nc.us

Project Vote Smart: The Voter’s Self-Defense System
www.votesmart.org

Rock the Vote: register to vote, get educated, volunteer
www.rockthevote.com
How to Make a Compelling Argument

From ehow.com

To make a compelling argument either verbally or in writing requires tact, knowledge and the ability to see both sides of the debate. The credibility of a compelling argument can be the difference between winning the debate or argument and being discredited.

Instructions

• Educate yourself on the subject matter. If you don't know the details of your argument, the opposing side will find holes and weaknesses in your argument which can lead to an unsuccessful debate. Study not only your side of the argument but any potential opposition as well.

• Have a passion for your subject matter. Being passionate or expressing belief in your argument will help express the validity of your side of the debate. As with many debates and arguments, believing in your subject helps, but it's not necessarily needed to win the debate.

• Don't let anger rule the argument. Getting angry or flustered greatly reduces the chance of making a compelling argument. Step back and look at the subject matter to find any weaknesses in the opposing party's argument. Trying to make an opponent angry in a debate or argument is actually a tactic used to make an opponent make mistakes and lose credibility.

• Listen as well as talk. Great speakers are usually great listeners. Listening to and acknowledging an opposing side in an argument shows that you do understand the opposing argument, but have the conviction to stand by your opinion.

• Back up your argument with statistics or facts. Having an opinion on a subject matter, passionate or not does not necessarily lend credibility in making a compelling argument. Have statistics and cite sources when available to back up your side of the debate.

• Practice alone before the debate if at all possible. Practicing responses and statements will help you deal with questions and remain calm. If the argument is done in writing, read it aloud to see how the subject matter flows and what message is being sent.
IX. Appendix

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The Echo Foundation promotes understanding and inspires hope through education, service, and the development of leadership for a more humane world.

Echo was founded in 1997 following Wiesel’s visit to Charlotte that year. As the community-wide project *Against Indifference* concluded, Wiesel challenged the community to act on its convictions of human dignity, justice, and moral courage. He also offered his assistance in developing programs to address critical issues facing humankind.

Through comprehensive educational programs, The Echo Foundation equips individuals with moral and intellectual tools necessary to create positive change in their local and global communities. Echo initiatives use the power of example to educate about human rights, social justice, and urgent matters of sustainability. Experiential learning opportunities, programs using the arts in service to humankind, and facilitated dialogue in the pursuit of innovative solutions are hallmarks of the organization.

The foundation has hosted 22 humanitarians, Nobel Laureates and world leaders and created curriculum about each; serving over 680,000 students, and forging partnerships to benefit students worldwide. Recent projects have focused on Nobel Chemistry Laureate Dr. Aaron Ciechanover; Dr. Paul Farmer & Partners In Health; Africa expert and activist, John Prendergast, Rwandan Bishop John Rucyahana; Science Nobel Laureates, Günter Blobel, Edmond Fischer, Christiane Nüsslein-Volhard, Douglas Osheroff, Robert Richardson; founder of Doctors without Borders, Bernard Kouchner; Earth Institute Director, Jeffrey Sachs; and others. For more information and printable copies of past curriculum, visit www.echofoundation.org
THE ECHO FOUNDATION

FIVE INITIATIVES

The Echo Foundation Mission “…to promote justice and inspire hope through education, creative acts of service, and the development of leadership for a more humane world” is implemented through five core initiatives:

1. **Voices Against Indifference**: Through bringing renowned humanitarians to Charlotte as a catalyst for education, and with diversity of race, class and culture as our primary focus, The Echo Foundation creates educational programs centered on the message of our annual guest. **Voices Against Indifference** builds bridges across racial divides by bringing students from all corners of Charlotte-Mecklenburg together to learn about the messages of our guests. In other words, thinking globally and acting locally – taking lessons learned around the world and seeking to apply the solutions locally. An extension to this initiative is Echo’s Annual Award Dinner at which the International Humanitarian is the Keynote Speaker and a local hero is chosen to receive the Echo Award Against Indifference.

2. **Forum for Hope**: Believing that the tone and culture of an organization begins at the top, Echo invites 20 leaders from the Charlotte community to travel together for the purpose of exposure to individuals who have, from a humanitarian perspective, shaped the world in a positive way. Our inaugural journey was to Boston for a round table discussion with Echo Foundation Honorary Chair, Elie Wiesel. Participants met twice prior to traveling to build unity around the mission of the initiative and to establish goals and measures for success. A steering committee was formed to identify participants ensuring representation from professional, educational, religious, medical and arts communities with an emphasis on race, ethnicity and gender diversity.

3. **Living Together in the 21st Century**: **Living Together in the 21st Century** is an education outreach project for 2nd grade students originated by Nobel Peace Laureate, Elie Wiesel, with involvement by child activist, Jonathan Kozol, and created by Charlotte-Mecklenburg teachers. LT is a broad-based curriculum that focuses on living together in harmony and teaches problem solving strategies, conflict resolution and respect for others. The underlying mission of the project is to simultaneously begin to build compassion for people of all races, cultures and backgrounds, and to teach life skills in young children that will prepare them to live in our society non-violently. The curriculum is mandatory in all Charlotte-Mecklenburg elementary schools.

4. **Footsteps Global Initiative**: Our belief is that travel and hands-on experiences have the capacity to transform students in a way that transcends classroom learning; only by “doing” can young people fully appreciate the challenges that face them as future leaders. This leadership initiative for regional high school students promotes awareness and global citizenship through international travel and service. Competitively selected Ambassadors of the initiative participate in yearlong programming that combines intensive study, volunteerism and travel to locations of great humanitarian interest.

5. **Books Beyond Borders**: Encourages international understanding and action on behalf of others by helping Charlotte students furnish libraries for children around the world.
THE ECHO FOUNDATION

– International Board of Advisors –

Elie Wiesel, Honorary Chairperson
Nobel Laureate for Peace, 1986

Dr. Paul Farmer, Founder, Partners In Health

Henry Louis Gates, Jr., Chair, Department of African & African American Studies, Harvard University

Kerry Kennedy, International Human Rights Activist and Author

Dr. Bernard Kouchner, Founder, Doctors Without Borders

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