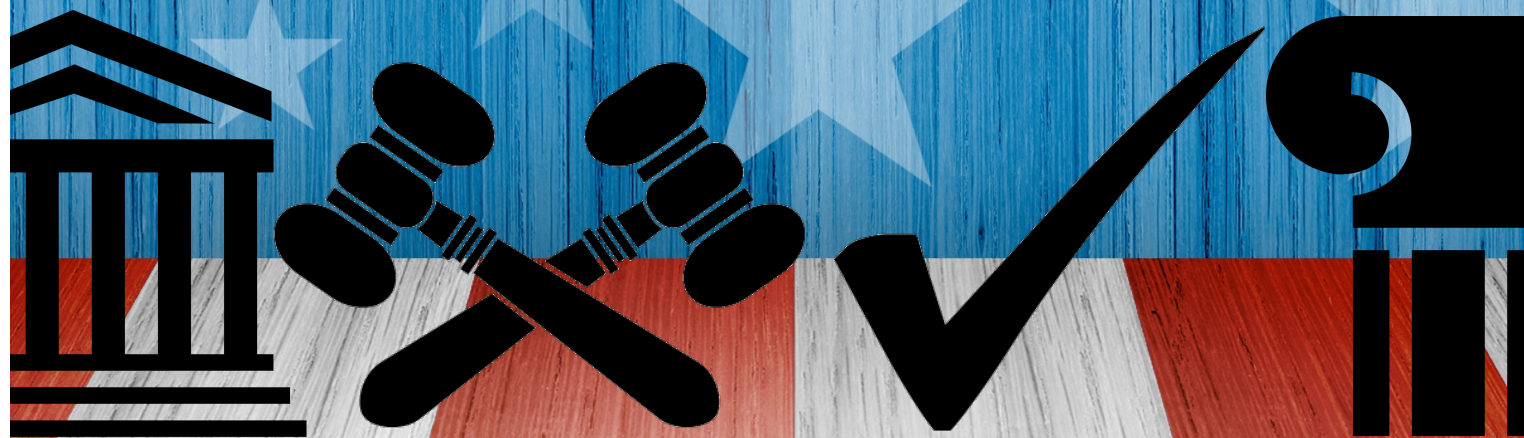


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CIVIC LIFE

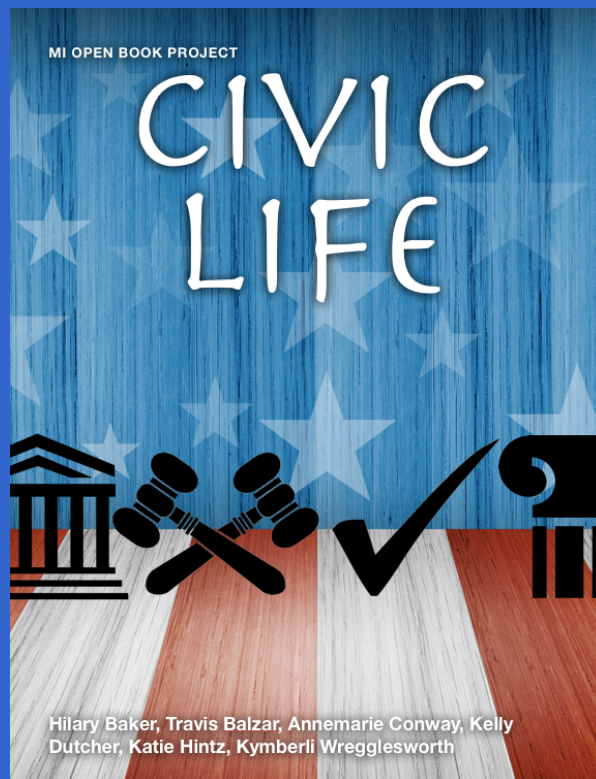


Hillary Baker, Travis Balzer, Annemarie Conway, Kelly
Dutcher, Katie Hintz, Kymberli Wregglesworth

About the Authors



MICHIGAN
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This is version 1.5.2 of this text, released August 2018

Information on the latest version and updates are available on the project homepage: <http://textbooks.wmisd.org/dashboard.html>



MICHIGAN OPEN BOOK PROJECT

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"Hillary Baker has spent twenty-two years teaching social studies in the high school setting. She has taught Civics, Criminal Law, Advanced Placement U.S. Government and Politics, U.S. History, Sociology, and Humanities. In addition, she has coached and advised various social studies co-curricular programs such as the We the People...The Citizen and the Constitution Congressional Hearing Simulation as well as Model United Nations. Baker has been recognized as the 2014 American Lawyer Alliance's Law-Related Education Teacher of the Year as well as the Michigan Civic Educator of the Year in 2014. She also has served in a leadership capacity for the College Board A.P. Reading since 2008. Baker began her teaching career in Traverse City Area Public Schools where for seven years she taught in an integrated, interdisciplinary Humanities Program as well as other social science courses such as A.P. U.S. Government and Politics and Sociology. She has spent the last fifteen years teaching at East Kentwood High School and currently also serves as an Instructional Coach in the building. She is a graduate from the University of Michigan where she earned a B.A. in Politi-

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Shepherd Public Schools

Shepherd Public Schools

Travis L. Balzer is a Shepherd High School social studies teacher concentrating in Economics, Civics and History. Mr. Balzer (Mr. B) resides in Shepherd with his bride Haley, and daughters Makayla and Mia Jean. A Gladwin High School graduate. Parents Vicki and Teddy reside in Gladwin. Travis' sister, Kristal and two sons, Isaac and Adam reside in the Lansing area. Mr. Balzer earned an Economics and Management degree from Albion College and proceeded to obtain teaching certification from Saginaw Valley State University in Social Studies. In addition, obtaining a masters in Educational leadership from Grand Valley State University. Hunting, exercising including P90X, biking, running and outdoor activities are great ways that time



Annemarie Conway

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Annemarie Conway teaches AP US Government, psychology, sociology, American Government, and economics for Charlevoix Middle High School. She graduated from Kalamazoo College with her bachelors degree in political science. She earned her Masters of Education with an emphasis in History from Grand Valley State University. Throughout her teaching career she has worked with AP College Board as a reader, table leader and question leader for the US Government & Politics AP exam. She also sponsors Charlevoix's Model United Nations program.





Kelly Dutcher

Harbor Springs Public Schools

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Kelly teaches Economics, Civics, U.S. History, and College Readiness at Harbor Springs High School. Aside from teaching, she is also a Michigan Youth in Government advisor, and class of 2017 sponsor. Mrs. Dutcher is a graduate of Lake Superior State University where she received her BS in Social Studies and Secondary Education. She is currently working towards receiving her MA in American History and Government at Ashland University, and was awarded the James Madison Memorial Fellowship in 2014. Kelly loves teaching at the high school level, and helping bring social studies to life for her students. She shares her life with her husband Jordan and three young daughters: Daphne, Au-

Katie Hintz

Gladwin Public Schools

Gladwin High School

Katie is completing her seventh year as a teacher at Gladwin High School, where she has taught every Social Studies course available, including: American Government, Sociology, Current Events, World History, Economics, Social Problems in the United States, and Law. A graduate of Saginaw Valley State University's Secondary Education Program, she majored in History, minored in Sociology and earned a Social Studies Endorsement. As Social Studies Department Chair, she was inspired to participate to the Open Book Project because of the disjointed resources that most economics teachers are forced to scrape together to create a captivating curriculum.

Currently, she is working on completing her Masters in Global History at with American Public University. Her final thesis on the Food Industry is due to be published September, 2015.

Katie spends her time outside of the education world raising her two boys, Connor and



Kymberli Wregglesworth

Onaway Area Consolidated Schools

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Kymberli has a BA in history and political science from Alma College, a MA in education from Michigan State University, and will be completing her MA in American History and Government from Ashland University this spring upon completion of her thesis on suffragist and equal rights activist Alice Paul. She was named a James Madison Fellow in 2011 and was chosen as the Michigan Council for the Social Studies High School Educator of the Year in 2015. Kymberli returned to her high school alma mater where she teaches Civics, World History, Current Events, Women's Studies, and World Cultures, as well as serving as National Honor Society adviser and executive director of the Miss Onaway Scholarship Program. When not doing history geek stuff, she enjoys spending time in the

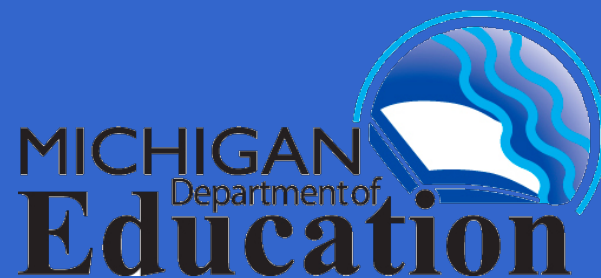


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Eric Hemenway - Director of Repatriation, Archives and Records, Little Traverse Bay Bands of Odawa Indians

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Linda Start

Michigan Center for Civic Education

Former Executive Director

Linda Start has served as the Executive Director of the Michigan Center for Civic Education for more than twenty-five years. Start has presented at hundreds of school districts across Michigan and is sought out as a speaker for many national civic education conferences. As the Executive Director of the Michigan Civic Education Center, Start served on the Committee to draft the Michigan Civics Standards and presented the Civics Standards and Benchmarks to the Michigan State Board of Education. Start served on a Review Committee for the National Standards in Civics and Government. Start represents Michigan in several national networks of civic educators. In addition, Start was asked to join a group of civic education experts in the United States to work with emerging democracies in Eastern Europe. Start has worked closely with civic educators in Poland, Ukraine, the Czech Republic, and Slovakia. A

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Rebecca Bush is currently the Social Studies Consultant at the Ottawa Area Intermediate School District (OAISD), where she assists K-12 social studies teachers in developing curriculum, modeling instructional strategies in social studies literacy, and designing district-level formative and summative assessments. Additionally, as Project Director, she has written and received multiple Teaching American History grants, working with teachers throughout an eight-county radius. She has presented at various national conferences on multiple topics surrounding social studies instruction as well as innovative techniques and topics in formative and summative assessment design. Currently she is Co-Project Director of The Performance Assessments of Social Studies Thinking (PASST) Project and assists with the professional development of teacher writers for the MI Open Book Project where she serves as an editor of several of the project's texts. Rebecca currently leads the Michigan Social Studies Supervisors Association and is a member of the National Social Studies Supervisors Association Executive Board of Directors. She is also an adjunct professor at Hope College in Holland, MI



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Dave began his career teaching 8th grade United States History in Mesick, Michigan. After almost a decade in the classroom, he took a job at Wexford-Missaukee Intermediate School District (WMISD) as an Instructional Consultant for Social Studies. He is shared across 11 ISDs in Northern Michigan that form the Northern Michigan Learning Consortium. He completed his Masters in Educational Leadership through Central Michigan University in 2011 and is Co-Project Director of the Performance Assessments of Social Studies Thinking (PASST) Project in addition to his duties as the Project Manager for MI Open Book.

Chapter 5

Is the common role of “watchdog” that political parties, interest groups, media, and individuals play in the development of public policy more important than the methods each entity employs?

What roles do political parties, interest groups, the media and individuals play in the development of public policy?

What is the role of campaigns and elections in American politics?

To what extent can interest groups exert their power?

Is there a true balance of power between those in the political arena and the public with regard to the media's role as a gatekeeper in dictating what topics influence public policy?



- 1. What roles do political parties, interest groups, the media and individuals play in the development of public policy?**
- 2. What is the role of campaigns and elections in American politics?**
- 3. To what extent can interest groups exert their power?**
- 4. Is there a true balance of power between those in the political arena and the public with regard to the media's role as a gatekeeper in dictating what topics influence public policy?**

- public policy
- political parties
- political socialization
- party platform
- Party label
- watchdog
- third party



Have you ever stopped to think about why we have certain policies, laws and regulations? For instance, why is the driving age 16 or the drinking age 21? Why are there nutrition labels on all food packages? Why in Michigan, do you have to go to school until you are 18? Do you believe the United States should spend \$601 billion dollars in 2016 on our national defense (www.businessinsider.com)? Do you agree with how the United States handles issues with immigration? Do you even know how immigration issues and situations are handled? These are all examples of **public policy**.

There are differences of opinion by scholars on the definition of public policy. According to Merriam-Webster, “public policy are the government policies that affect the whole nation.” It evolves overtime and is typically based off of public opinion on the issue.

Each American has his or her own view about how our society should operate and how it should be governed. Have you thought about the laws that govern our American society or about those that you would like to see changed? For example, should marijuana be legalized in the State of Michigan or throughout the nation? Should our justice system decriminalize drug offenses and instead put individuals into treatment? Should college be free, but require two years of service to our country in return?

Understanding how individuals become politically active, how they impact public policy, how public policy emerges and how it becomes law is what this unit is all about.

Interactive 5.1 The Policy Making Process



This short Youtube video will help you understand this complex process

Political socialization is how your positions on different issues are developed. As agents of socialization, your parents, families, friends, schools, media, and even the neighborhood where you live, impact the way you think about certain issues. Take the issue of gun control, for instance. What you believe about this issue depends on a variety of things: your experience with guns, what your parents and family members think, how your friends view gun use, and what you read or watch about gun use on TV or in the media. Where we live also shapes our views of society; individuals living in Utah will have different perspectives on policy than individuals from Maine or Louisiana or Arizona. Our interactions and experiences shape how we think politically. As these experiences change our opinions on public policy may change as well.

After watching the video above, make a chart that includes different policy issues (the environment, gun control, abortion, defense, marriage, etc). After that, next to each topic, write down your views on those issues, and which agent of socialization from the list above impacted your political beliefs.

Interactive 5.2 Crash Course - Public Opinion



Visit this website to learn more about how public opinion is formed.

Other Actors: Political Parties, Elections, Media and Interest Groups

As you learned in the last section, political socialization is the term for how individuals develop their unique opinions about the way our government should govern. As you can imagine, it is difficult, if not impossible, for one individual to affect public policy.

To help individuals interact with government, there are a multitude of other actors, also known as linking institutions, which connect people to government. This is how public policy is formed.

The linking institutions we will explore include **political parties**, elections, media and interest groups. Let's take a look at how political parties link us to government and link the government to us.

Political Parties

Now that you've thought about your positions on different policy issues, have you considered what political party best represents your perspective on various issues? Visit the website in this widget and take the quiz. You will learn which party best aligns with your views, what candidate(s) you agree with the most, and what issues are important to you.

Interactive 5.3 | Side With...



Visit this website and take the quiz. You will learn which party best aligns with your views, what candidate(s) you agree with the most, and what issues are important to you.

Other Actors Unit Activity:

1. Pick two or three topics that you feel strongly about. As you work your way through this section, you will explore which political party best represents your views.
2. You will do the same activity during the interest group and media sections of this chapter.
3. By doing this unit activity, you will learn what other actors (linking institutions) exist that feel as you do and how they can help you express your opinions (link you) to your state and federal government. You will learn the power behind how these groups connect you with your government and your government to you. You will begin this assignment in the Role of Parties section.

The History of Political Parties

“The common and continual mischiefs of the spirit of party are sufficient to make it the interest and duty of a wise people to discourage and restrain it.”

- George Washington in his farewell address, 1797

George Washington did not mince words when he warned the nation of the “mischiefs” of political parties, strongly advising us to be cautious of their impact.



<http://www.ushistory.org/gov/5a.asp>

During the 1860s, Thomas Nast — a cartoonist for the magazine Harper's Weekly — developed the idea of using the donkey and the elephant to represent the Democrats and Republicans, respectively. This cartoon — titled "Stranger Things Have Happened" — dates from 1879.

However, political parties (or factions as James Madison called them) are as old as our nation itself. Political Parties are groups of people who join together to advance their beliefs

through winning office and making laws. Beginning with the ratification of our Constitution, the Federalists and the Anti-federalists took sides for a more centralized, national government power against more state powers respectively.

Interactive 5.4 The Federalist Papers #10



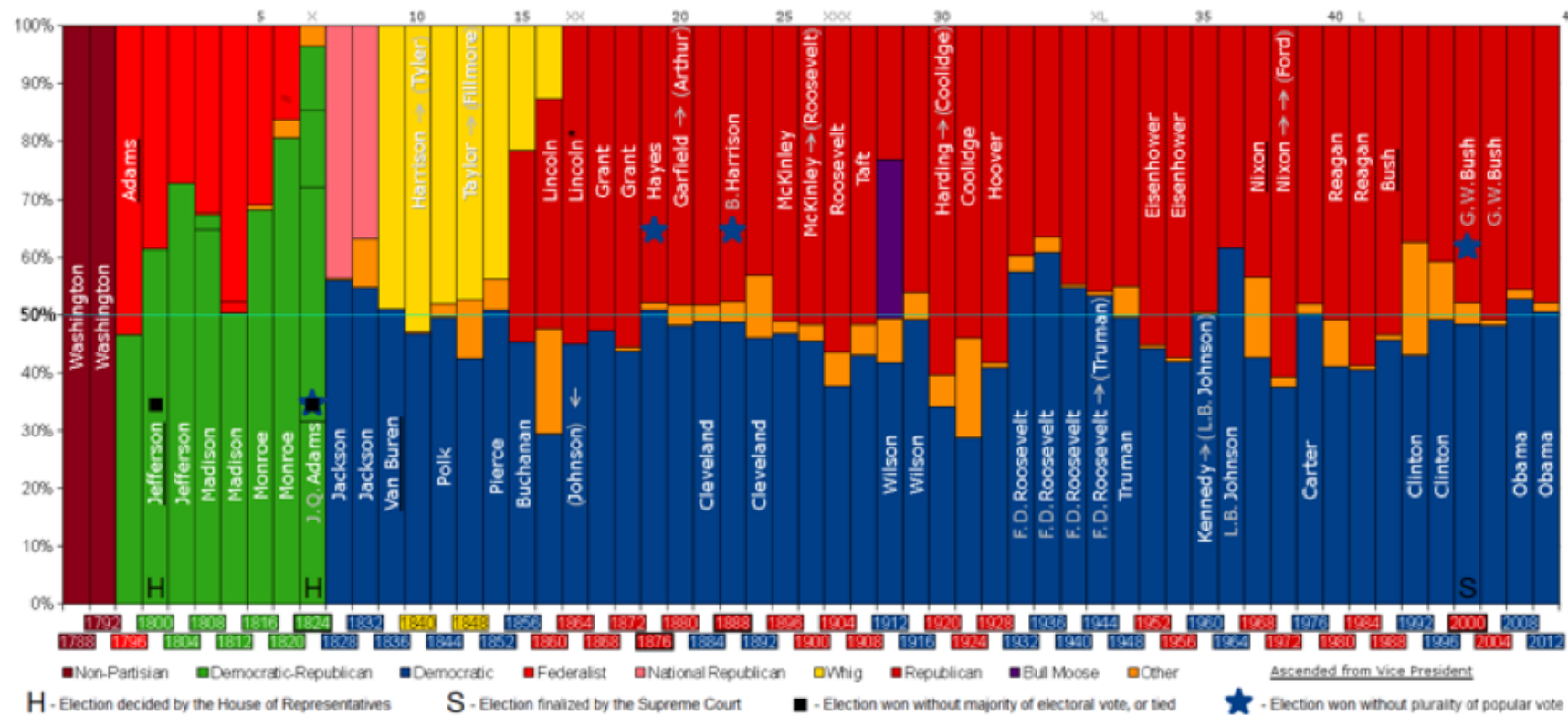
Review the Federalist Papers (Select Number 10) which you have already studied in an earlier chapter.

Interactive 5.5 The AntiFederalist Papers



Review AntiFederalist #1 Here.

Read and annotate each document comparing each individual's arguments for and against a federal form of government. Determine whose essay is the most compelling to its intended audience and explain why.



source: en.wikipedia.org

Throughout our history, political parties have galvanized citizens around issues and ideas. The Federalists and Democratic-Republicans were our nation's first two parties who were split over the federal government's scope of power. Then came the Whig party that disagreed with the king-like power moves of President Andrew Jackson. The Free Soil party developed when our nation expanded westward and new states were admitted as slave or free; they pushed their abolitionist agenda and fought hard for free states. The modern Republican party differs from the Democratic party in a number of beliefs like the level of US military strength and issues linked to family values.

Third parties do, in fact, play a legitimate role in our electoral process by bringing specific issues to voters' attention (like the Green Party and the environment), giving voters more alternatives than just the two parties, and taking votes from the major two parties which can significantly alter the outcome of an election. Though many people may argue that voting for a third party is simply "throwing your vote away", others suggest that voting for someone or a party that you truly believe in makes all the difference.

Since the early 1900s, strong Republican and Democratic parties have led to a primarily two-party system. Our two-party system does include minor or third parties, such as the Green Party, Constitution Party and Libertarian Party; however, our nation's winner-take-all Electoral College system as well as each individual state's rules for getting on the ballot, make it very difficult for a **third party** to be successful without a strong network to win a national office.

Interactive 5.6 Third Parties in the American Political Process



Read this PBS article about the impact third parties have had on our election. As you read, look for specific examples of third parties' impact on prior elections.

Role of Parties

As was stated earlier, political parties serve as a linking institution for citizens to connect with their government. Parties offer citizens a collection of viewpoints or opinions (**party platforms**) of how the government and our society should be governed.

Overall, Americans generally agree on big ideas such as compulsory education for all children ages 16 and under. Most also agree that our nation needs a strong military to defend itself from invasion, however, people may disagree on how much we should spend annually on our defense.

Political parties play an important role in engaging citizens. They recruit individuals to run for public office. Almost all elected officials (except for judges) run as either a Democrat, Republican or third party candidate. Because candidates choose to run for office as a Republican, Democrat or third party (known as a **party label**), voters know the party platform and therefore understand what the candidate's political beliefs are.

In their platforms, political parties inform the public about topics and issues affecting our country or world as they discuss what their solution to the issue would be. Dealing with health care

coverage or the cost of college education are two examples of the issues on which each party has taken a stance. If a major event occurs, each party will tell the citizens why it happened, what they would do differently, and how we should proceed.

Earlier in this section, you chose two issues that you feel strongly about. Using the websites look up what Republicans, Democrats, and a few third parties feel about your issues.

Determine which party is more aligned to your own views. When you are finished exploring the platforms, reflect on which party's views most align to your own. Are you surprised by the party with whom you most closely align? Why or why not? If you feel strongly enough, you can volunteer with your local political party and even join.

Republican platform website: <https://www.gop.com/platform/>

Democratic platform website: <https://www.democrats.org/party-platform>

All parties and issues website: <http://www.politics1.com>

Political parties act as a check on the power and influence of the other major party. This is more of a **watchdog** role. If the Republicans are the majority in Congress or in the White House, the Democrats will act as watchdogs by explaining to the public how the Republicans have made mistakes. The same is true of Republicans "watchdogging" Democrats. Next time you are looking at the headlines, or maybe while you are in government

class, skim through the headlines of a variety of news websites to see how many articles you can find where the parties are engaging in watchdog behavior.

Most importantly, however, is that political parties run our government. When a party wins a majority of the seats in the House or Senate, it becomes the majority party who controls the legislative agenda. The party will work to pass into law its policy platform. For instance, there is a Republican majority in both the House of Representatives and the Senate, so their agenda includes states rights, more charter schools, and pro-life legislation. It is important that you understand the platform for each party as it is what each party's legislative agenda will be.

Elections

QUESTIONS TO GUIDE INQUIRY

- 1. What roles do political parties, interest groups, the media and individuals play in the development of public policy?
- 2. What is the role of campaigns and elections in American politics?
- 3. To what extent can interest groups exert their power?
- 4. Is there a true balance of power between those in the political arena and the public with regard to the media’s role as a gatekeeper in dictating what topics influence public policy?

TERMS, PLACES, PEOPLE

Election	dark horse candidate
Open primary	initiative
run-off primary	primary election season
National Convention	blanket primary
Recall	Electoral College
invisible primary	general election
closed primary	referendum
caucus	

Elections

Elections are another structure that links people to their government and government to people in an attempt to ensure legitimacy in our system of government.

In the United States, we have over 500,000 elected offices. Nationally, citizens elect our president and vice president, 100 senators and 435 members of the House of Representatives. State and local offices account for over 500,000 more elected officials. That’s a lot of elections and elected officials including governors, state legislators and other state office holders, and local government officials.

Remember when you learned about concurrent powers in Chapter 3? Elections are an example of a power shared by both the national and state governments. Our national government is a representative republic and our state governments hold elections for those national positions. The U.S. Constitution states specific requirements such as age and years living in the district, state or country for those running for the House, Senate and Presidency as well as their terms of office: two, six, and four years respectively. Refer back Chapter 3 to locate where in the Constitution these qualifications and terms are found.

Interactive 5.7 How Many Elected Officials Are There?



There are three main types of elections: general, primary and special elections. We'll begin by looking at the process for electing the president of the United States.

Presidential Elections

This video is an overview of the entire presidential election process. While watching the video, create a timeline of events adding details to each section, especially the Electoral College part

The “Invisible” Primary

Running for the Presidency is a long and exhausting process. Deciding to run is the first major step. This occurs between two and four years before the actual Presidential election.

Potential candidates must determine if they have enough money, name recognition, and emotion/physical stamina to win. They have to assemble their campaign team and develop a campaign strategy. Basically, when they “throw their hat in the ring” and announce their candidacy, they hit the ground running. The following website

Interactive 5.8 Presidential Elections



This video is an overview of the entire process. We will break the process down section by section as well. Watch the video first and then go back to the chart and add more details to each section, especially the Electoral College part.

will show you all the candidates from the Republican and Democratic parties who ran during the primary election season and the primary election national results for both parties.

The Primary Election Season

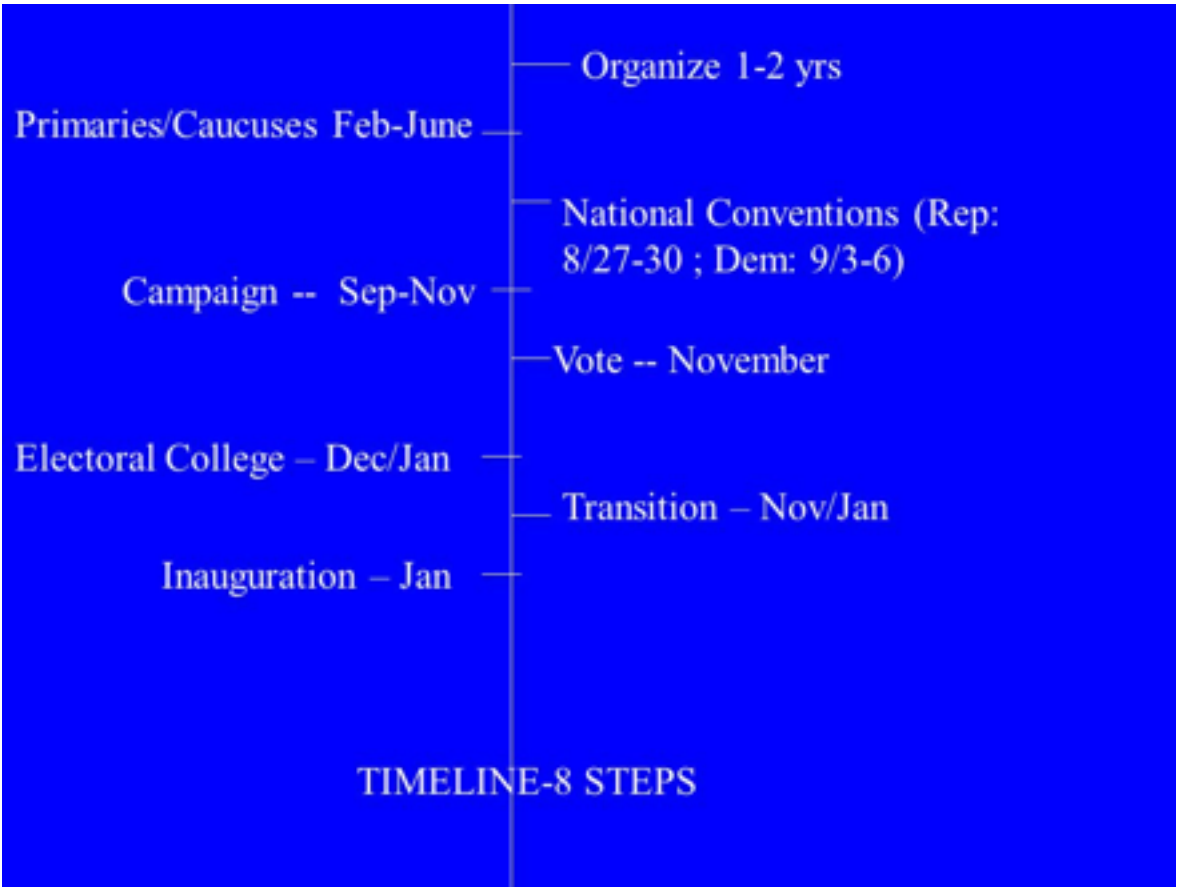


Image source: www.slideplayer.com

There are two types of elections in the United States: primaries and the general election. Each party uses a primary election to select one candidate who will run in the general election. The nominating process is done by primary elections.

State political parties determine which type of primary election they will use in the nominating process. An **open primary** allows voters to select which party's primary they wish to participate in on the day of the election; they can only vote in one party's primary. A **closed primary** allows only registered party members to vote in the party's primary election. A closed primary prevents opposing party members from voting in their primary to skew the results. A blanket primary is not widely used in the United States.

This type of primary allows voters to participate in all party's primary elections by putting them on one ballot. There is also the **run-off primary** that is used if no clear winner emerges with a majority of the votes from the first primary.

During the nominating process, state parties can also choose to run a **caucus** rather than a closed or open primary. During a caucus, party members gather in predetermined locations at predetermined times to discuss the pros and cons of each party's candidate. They debate who

they believe is the best candidate, and then cast their vote for one candidate.

The candidate with the majority of support receives the delegates for that district or precinct. The most well known caucus is the Iowa Caucus held in February of

Interactive 5.9 The Iowa Caucus



the election year.

Caucuses are the oldest form of selecting or nominating a candidate for the general election. At the beginning of political parties in our country, party leadership met without the input from the local party members (grassroots) to pick who they wanted to run in the general election. In 1820, presidential candidate Andrew Jackson nicknamed the process "King Caucus" which gave it a negative reputation. In an attempt to weaken the influence of national party leadership, state party leaders and grassroots members called for a national party convention. At the convention, state delegates select their nominee by using the caucus system. However, the party boss power that the Progressive Movement hoped to weaken, took control at the **national convention** by brokering deals in the selection and nomination process. To end the continued influence of King Caucus, grassroots reformers created the presidential primary election season.

The primary election season runs from January to June of the general election year. All 50 states host a primary or caucus.

Each state's proportionally distributed election results are tallied over the months and the candidate who receives the specific amount determined by the party receives the nomination.

National Convention

Each party holds a national convention over four days in the summer during the presidential election season. It signals the end of the primary election season and the beginning of the general election season. The party's national convention is where the power of the party exists. With all fifty states represented, delegates make rules and decisions that govern state parties. Once the national convention is over, the Republican and Democratic National Committees and their committee chairs keep things running until the next convention. During the national conventions, delegates meet to debate, modify, and vote on their party's platform, and verify each state's primary election results to make the vote official. They also hear speeches from current party favorites and possible future candidates, and rally around their presidential and vice presidential nominees. It's a

Interactive 5.10 Romney Address to RNC



As you watch Mitt Romney give the keynote address at the 2012 Republican National Convention, describe all the political party details that you see from our chapter.

Interactive 5.11 Obama Address to DNC



As you watch Senator Barack Obama give the keynote address at the 2004 Democratic National Convention, describe all the political party details that you see from our chapter.

serious meeting of party delegates and a pep assembly for the party.

National conventions of the past used to be mysterious caucuses that the nation tuned into for the duration of the four day event.

No one knew what the outcome would be, so the suspense drew large TV news audiences. Sometimes candidates that no one expected would eventually win the nomination (**dark horse candidates**), such as James K. Polk (1844), Franklin Pierce (1852), and Abraham Lincoln (1860.) In current times, because delegate totals are tallied throughout the primary election season, there is little suspense so conventions are more of a pep assembly meant to build momentum for their candidate.

The General Election

The general election season is when the political party nominees compete against one another. It begins immediately after the national convention. The goal for each candidate is to win the 270 Electoral College votes needed to win the presidency.

The Electoral College

The Electoral College was created during the nation's founding. As a way to insulate our national government from the "transient impulses of the public", the founders created the Electoral College as the way to select the President. Each state was granted a specific number of electors equal to the number in its

Congressional delegation (two Senators plus the number of House of Representative members) On Election Day, as each state's election results are tallied, the Electoral College ballots are awarded to the winner of the state. For most states, this is a winner-take-all process. However, Nebraska and Maine distribute their electors proportionally. As the candidates are campaigning throughout the United States, they are paying close attention to those states where they are close to winning, the states they need to win, and the states that support them. The campaign teams use tracking polls to determine this information.

Election Day occurs on the first Tuesday after the first Monday in November. Participating in both the primary and general elections is a very important part of civic life. It allows voters to communicate with elected officials about their opinions about public policy. If Democrats win the majority of seats in the House and Senate, that is a cue to officials that a majority of citizens want the Democratic platform to be enacted. The same is true if Republicans win. This is how elections act as a linking institution: the election results tell our elected officials what the electorate wants. If a candidate wins by a lot, it means his or her ideas and message are what the voters want the government to do. This is what John Locke intended with his Social Contract theory; that the consent of the governed is alive in the United States Republic.

Other Ballot Uses

Voting for elected officials is just one way citizens can enact policy change. Locally, groups can place issues as initiatives on the ballot for voters to decide. Or if people do not like a law passed by their state legislators, they can place a **referendums** on the ballot so the people can decide the outcome of the law.

Groups can try to **recall** elected officials that they want out of office. An initiative allows citizens of a state to place a proposal on the ballot for the voters of the state to decide the outcome. This process circumvents the typical way bills become law. Using initiatives, citizens impact the policy making process in their state. Watch the video below to see what initiatives were placed on the 2014 Michigan ballot. While watching this video, write down what ballot initiatives were introduced and whether or not you agree with them.

A referendum is similar to an initiative but has significant differences. A referendum is used by a state legislature if the body needs the approval of the voters before it can go into effect. For example, if a state legislature wants to make a change to the state's

Interactive 5.12 Ballot Initiatives and Referendums



constitution or to get general support for a heated issue, they will use a referendum. A referendum can also be used by the voters of the state to either vote down a law that the state government passed or to show support for the measure.

A recall is used to remove an elected official from office by vote of the public. If enough citizens vote to remove the official, the official is removed. However, if not enough votes are garnered, the official stays in office.

Given all the talk about public policy creation through linking institutions, it is important that you engage in your civic duty.

Once you've identified what issues and political party you support, make sure you voice your opinion through voting. When you turn 18, register to vote. Check out the site to see where that is. <https://www.usa.gov/voting> It is important to know that you can register to vote before you are 18 as long as you will turn 18 before the next election date. In Michigan, you must register a month before the election. If you will turn 18 in the month before the election, you can still register.

Interest Groups

QUESTIONS TO GUIDE INQUIRY

1. What roles do political parties, interest groups, the media and individuals play in the development of public policy?
2. What is the role of campaigns and elections in American politics?
3. To what extent can interest groups exert their power?
4. Is there a true balance of power between those in the political arena and the public with regard to the media's role as a gatekeeper in dictating what topics influence public policy?

TERMS, PLACES, PEOPLE

Interest groups	Class action lawsuit
economic interest groups	super pac
Public interest groups	political action group (PAC)
lobbying	Federal Elections Commission
indirect lobbying	
Electioneering	
litigation	
amicus curiae brief	

An interest group (also called an advocacy group, lobbying group, pressure group, or special interest) is a group, however loosely or tightly organized, that is determined to encourage or prevent changes in public policy without trying to be elected.

Interest Groups are another linking institution. Their goal is to educate the public and elect candidates who support their cause. Interest groups organize around specific public policies and work to make their policy goals a reality. They do this by galvanizing people around their cause, **lobbying** government officials, electioneering to help candidates win office, suing in court, and bringing media attention to an issue.

Some would argue that Interest groups have been around since the birth of our nation. The Founders believed that human nature is selfish and that individuals would protect their self interests. In Federalist No. 10, James Madison discussed the idea of mischief by factions or interests groups. During the 1880s, when the nation's economy changed from agrarian to industrial, and individuals were swarming to cities, interest groups formed around workers' rights, child labor, and immigrant protections. Toward the middle of the 20th century, anti-drinking groups started the prohibition movement resulting in the 18th Amendment and in the 20th century, Mother's Against Drunk Driving (MADD) successfully worked to raise the drinking age to 21. In 1980, Candace Lightner founded MADD in

response to losing her 13 year old daughter in a hit and run accident by a drunk driver. Interest groups are as American as the Constitution itself.

At the beginning of this unit you explored a public policy and analyzed which political party best represents your views on the policy. Now it's time to do the same thing for interest groups.

Spend the next few minutes googling what interest groups support your stance on your policy. Explore the group's website to see what it is doing to advocate on your behalf. Find out what benefits the interest group's members receive, what issues it supports and how you can help. You can donate your time or money, become a member, go to meetings, write letters to your elected officials, etc. To understand which interest groups support which party and why, watch the video "The Basics of Political Interest Groups."

Interactive 5.13 The Basics of Political Interest Groups



To understand which interest groups support which party and why, watch this Crash Course:

Interest groups generally fall into categories such as economic interest groups, single-issue interest groups, ideological interest groups, government groups, and public-interest groups.

Economic interest groups include business groups or trade associations, labor unions, agricultural groups, professional associations, and intergovernmental lobbies. These groups work to have an impact on the economic and business decisions that lawmakers make. Business groups, like the National Association of Manufacturers, hope to have fewer governmental regulations, where labor groups, like the Service Employees International Union, want more collective bargaining rights. Professional associations, like the American Medical Association, are groups that require special degrees like education, law, and medicine. Again, they hope to assist their profession's issues and concerns. Intergovernmental lobbies or government groups, like the National League of Cities, consist of state government departments or national government agencies lobbying for more money in their budget or fewer or more regulations.

Ideological groups attempt to bring social change to our society. They promote civil liberties and civil rights and attempt to change social norms. Explore the following websites to check out what these groups are fighting for at this time.

National Organization of Women: <http://now.org/>

American Civil Liberties Union: <https://www.aclu.org/>

American Association of Retired Persons: <http://www.aarp.org/>

Public-Interest Groups: Like the name suggests, these groups work to improve society as a whole with a broad range of issues.

Environmental groups, consumer advocacy groups, and human rights groups fall under this category. Ralph Nader established the public interest group U.S. PIRG in 1971. You can check out this group online to discover what their latest campaign entails at www.uspirg.org.

Influencing Public Policy Formation

The main goal for interest groups is to influence the creation of public policy in a way that pleases its members. People join interest groups because their individual voice is stronger in a group. Interest groups communicate members' goals to the legislative, executive and judicial branches so that as the legislative branch writes bills, the executive branch signs or vetoes bills and the Supreme Court determines the constitutionality of laws, each branch understands the impact of their decisions on the interest group's goals.

Interest groups influence public policy in four main ways: direct and indirect lobbying, electioneering, litigation, and shaping the issues through the media.

Lobbying

Interest groups hire individuals called lobbyists that have offices in Washington, D.C. or the capital of their state. A lobbyist's job is to keep interest group members informed about legislative proposals that affect the goals of the interest group. For example, say an agricultural interest group wants the national government to pursue using corn for biodiesel. Their lobbyist will keep track of any bills that are introduced to the House of Representatives or Senate about biodiesel. The lobbyist will talk to both House and Senate Agriculture Committee members as well as the president about the benefits of using corn for biodiesel; and the lobbyist will report back to the interest group.

Lobbyists are a crucial information source for legislators as lobbyists provide detailed information about the topic. Lobbyists can also help write legislation for legislators about the issue.

Lobbyists become experts in this field and use their expertise to craft legislation. Lobbyists also testify in committee hearings about the legislation that the committee is working on.

Indirect lobbying involves the members of the interest group.

When a bill makes its way through the process, interest groups have their members contact their elected officials to voice their opinion. This form of lobbying is very persuasive as it tells legislators citizens' views about an issue. Legislators want and need citizens' votes to be re-elected and interest group members

want to make sure the legislator is representing their group’s interest.

Electioneering

Electioneering is when interest group members campaign on behalf of a candidate who supports their stance on an issue. For example, if a candidate is pro-life, Operation Rescue members make phone calls, send out postcards, canvas door-to-door, make TV ads, and donate money to the candidate. Interest groups do not run candidates in an election; they help political party candidates who support their issue win the election.

The Federal Elections Commission (FEC) monitors interest group electioneering activities. After the 1970s Watergate scandal,

Congress and the President responded by passing the Federal Elections Campaign Act (FECA). This law created the FEC to oversee campaign contributions and interest group activity. If an interest group wants to donate to a candidate’s campaign, it must register as a political action committee (PAC) first. The FEC established limits on PAC donations and over the years, Congress has modified the amounts they are able to give.

Interactive 5.14 Open Secrets



Discover which PACs contribute to each party. If you compare each party’s platform stances to the PACs contributing to their campaign, you may be able to draw some parallels.

<div>Recipient</div> <div>Contributor</div>	Candidate	PAC (Multicandidate or Non-Multicandidate)	State and Local Party Committees (combined limit for each state and its local committees; each state has a separate limit)
Individual	\$2,700/election	\$5,000/year	\$10,000/year
Multicandidate PAC	\$5,000/election	\$5,000/year	\$5,000/year
Non-Multicandidate PAC	\$2,700/election	\$5,000/year	\$10,000/year

Image source: www.politicallawbriefing.com

One of the controversial additions to campaign finance law over the past few years is the creation of super PACs. **Super PACs** are legally able to raise unlimited sums of money to advocate or support the candidates of their choice. Their actions must be independent of those candidates' campaigns. The Supreme Court has determined that donating money to a campaign is symbolic freedom of speech, however, these large donations allow PACs unfettered access to elected officials. This creates a conflict of interest for the elected official. Explore the contributions of super PACs in the interactive below.

Interactive 5.15 Super PACs



Explore the contributions of super PACs

TITLE IX

“NO PERSON IN THE UNITED STATES SHALL, ON THE BASIS OF SEX, BE EXCLUDED FROM PARTICIPATION IN, BE DENIED THE BENEFITS OF, OR BE SUBJECTED TO DISCRIMINATION UNDER ANY EDUCATION PROGRAM OR ACTIVITY RECEIVING FEDERAL FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE.”

Litigation

Another avenue interest groups can use to influence public policy is to **litigate** or make the subject of a lawsuit through the judicial branch.

Civil Rights is one area where interest groups have been particularly successful in using the courts. An example of this is equal treatment for women's sports. The passage of Title IX ensured government protection of women's sports from unequal treatment. To learn more about the protections provided female athletes, check out the links below.

Interactive 5.16 Title IX Legislative Chronology



Click here to learn more about the protections provided female athletes

Interactive 5.17 Sporting Chance Trailer



View the "Sporting Chance" trailer here.

Another example of an interest group advancing its goals using the courts is when Thurgood Marshall represented the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) in the Supreme Court case *Brown vs. the Board of Education*. To learn more about the history leading up to *Brown v. the Board of Education*, visit the interactive below.

Interactive 5.18 *Brown v Board of Education*



Learn more about Brown v Board in this website from the National Parks Service.

Interest Groups can also use **amicus curiae briefs** to influence court decisions. Amicus briefs are used when the interest group is neither the plaintiff nor the defendant in the case, but will be affected by the outcome. Lawyers for the interest group write their brief to educate the judge about her decision's impact on them. Read the following article regarding Apple's suing

Samsung over its Galaxy smartphone to learn more about amicus curiae briefs.

Interactive 5.20 *Letter in Defense of Apple*



Interest groups also use **class action lawsuits**. These suits combine plaintiffs with similar circumstances into one court case. Class action suits allow plaintiffs to share costs and cover individuals who may not even know there they have a case. Check out the top ten class action lawsuits below.

Interactive 5.19 *Class Action Lawsuits*



Finally, interest groups do well when they have the power of public opinion on their side. Interest groups engage with traditional media and social media to spark the attention of the public. TV ads and radio ads helps interest groups spread their message. Interest groups also publish polls and research studies that support their stance on issues.

Have you ever watched Whale Wars? This Animal Planet show is an example of how an interest group shaped public opinion around an issue.

Interactive 5.21 Whale Wars



How successful do you feel Sea Shepherds have been in changing the public's view of whale hunting?



How successful do you feel Sea Shepherds have been in changing the public's view of whale hunting?

The Media

QUESTIONS TO GUIDE INQUIRY

1. What roles do political parties, interest groups, the media and individuals play in the development of public policy?
2. What is the role of campaigns and elections in American politics?
3. To what extent can interest groups exert their power?
4. Is there a true balance of power between those in the political arena and the public with regard to the media's role as a gatekeeper in dictating what topics influence public policy?

TERMS, PLACES, PEOPLE

Media

gatekeeper

agenda

bias

The last linking institution that we will explore is media. **Media** includes radio, TV, magazines, the internet, and newspapers. Have you ever thought about the power of media? Do you believe that media create our reality, our perceptions, our **bias**, and aspirations?

Take a moment to review online news sites such as Fox News, CNN, The Washington Post, and the Wall Street Journal. What do their front pages say? What are their top stories? Are the stories' facts consistent? Do you notice a bias in the site's presentation of the news? Look at the images each site uses. Is the site presenting individual's in a good light or bad? Are the stories sensational, positive or negative? Then ask yourself, is this all that is happening in the United States today or are these simply the stories they made today's edition?

Media as Gatekeeper

Media acts as a **gatekeeper** by controlling what stories are printed or talked about. Gatekeeping allows media to filter or alter the way it presents a news story. Broadcast media presents stories in sound bites and 30 second clips. This type of communication often leaves the viewer with very little real information. Print media sources have more spaces to communicate details and data within their stories. However, they also choose which stories to cover each day. Editors, both

broadcast and print, choose what to report, how they do so impacts what we know and view as our reality.

Politicians use the media to their advantage when they can. For instance, when they want to make an announcement or hold a press conference, they do so in time for nightly news coverage or on a Friday so that their story will be covered over the weekend. If they need to persuade the American public, they will appear on a variety of news programs like morning news shows, late night talk shows, and the Sunday morning news circuit to get their message out.

The media acts as gatekeeper by bringing attention to issues that people might not have been aware. In this article, Israel is attempting to bring more security guidelines for commercial airplanes flying into Israel. Although this piece doesn't affect us, it's important because it is about the world's safety and how to improve it.

Interactive 5.22 Israel Exempts E.U. Pilots from Security Program



The History of Media's Use in Policy Making

Political communication through media is nothing new to American politics. The Federalists used letters to the editor to persuade voters in each of the 13 colonies to ratify the Constitution. Franklin D. Roosevelt used his “fireside chats” to calm a nation during the Great Depression and WWII. Using the radio, he spoke to Americans in their living room. The persuasive power of this technique can not be understated. Even former president Ronald Reagan as a former Hollywood actor knew the power of visual images and choreographed every press conference and media event he did. All presidents understand the power of media in persuading the public. Congress does as well. It has always been a powerful tool to those who use it well.

Read the following Wikipedia selection where the history of American newspapers is chronicled. Pay attention to the Revolutionary epoch and early national era: 1770–1820 and the press in the Party System: 1820–1890. These sections demonstrate how media has always had an impact on public opinion and policy-making. Not much has changed.

Interactive 5.23 History of American Newspapers



Read this overview of the news in America.

As you can see from the paragraphs on the previous page, political communication through media is not new to American politics. Throughout history many have utilized this powerful medium in a variety of forms to help underscore their message, values, and beliefs. It started (and continues) in print form but over time has grown to include other forms of media, including: radio, television, and the Internet. Social media has become a powerful place from which people from all walks of life can interact and share their thoughts and opinions.

Historians love to analyze the first televised debate between John F. Kennedy and Richard M. Nixon.. As the History Channel's own perspective states:

"In 1960, John F. Kennedy and Richard Nixon squared off in the first televised presidential debates in American history. The Kennedy-Nixon debates not only had a major impact on the election's outcome, but ushered in a new era in which crafting a public image and taking advantage of media exposure became essential

Interactive 5.24 Kennedy Nixon Debate



Watch this Youtube clip of the first televised debate between John F. Kennedy and Richard Nixon. Who do you think won?

ingredients of a successful political campaign. They also heralded the central role television has continued to play in the democratic process." <http://www.history.com/topics/us-presidents/kennedy-nixon-debates>

Reading through their analysis, you see that viewers who watched the debates thought Kennedy won, however, those that listened to the debates felt that Nixon's answers were more detailed, coherent and presidential. This debate ushered in the era of image and politicians reliance on media image has only grown since. As much as politicians need media, the media needs them. This is a reciprocal relationship.

Media sets the National Agenda

As a gatekeeper, media also gets to set the agenda. Choosing what stories to cover or not cover creates the talking points for citizens. The way a story is covered also makes a difference.

Stories that received a lot of coverage in Michigan and nationally include: how did the Flint Water Crisis unfold and who is to blame, is the economy growing or not, should government mandate that all citizens need health care?

Media as Watchdog

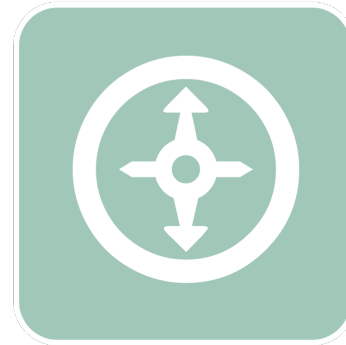
Media also acts as a watchdog, bringing to the public's attention any wrongdoing or problems that arise in industry, government, environment, or other areas of interest. The media's goal when acting in this fashion is to make sure there is transparency. Media

keeps society informed, uncovering facts and data that otherwise might be kept a secret.

In this article, the Huffington Post uncovered alleged wrongdoing in the banking industry:

This article provides a good example of the media being a watchdog. The watchdog exposes scandals and supplies the public with information that could influence them. In this article, the media is exposing the downfall of in Prince George's County Police Department. The arresting of nine police officers that were involved with guns and drugs shows that the police weren't following the law that they enforce. This gives the police department a bad image and reputation.

Interactive 5.25 The Big Banks



In this article, the Huffington Post uncovered alleged wrongdoing in the banking industry

Interactive 5.26 Watch Dog Media



Media as Scorekeeper

The last role of media is that of scorekeeper. Whenever a story has winners and losers, during a primary election season for example, the media reports who's ahead, who is behind, and what different results mean to the campaign teams. This type of journalism is also known as horserace journalism. An issue with this type of journalism is that it feeds into polling numbers and not the actual policy positions of the candidates. This type of reporting fits into the 30 second sound bite or insta-news cycle that outlets prefer, but it takes its toll on the American electorate that stays ignorant of candidate's stances.

This article explains the media's role as a scorekeeper. The article shows the outcome of the electoral process in each state election. The media defines scorekeeper as being the resource that people use to find out who won an election.

Interactive 5.27 Horse Race Journalism



Interactive 5.28 Score Keeper Media

