

Political Parties Rest in Peace

Overview

In this lesson, students will gain an understanding of the evolving presence of political parties in the history of the United States, as well as the role of third parties in the political process. In groups, students will apply what they have learned by designing a tombstone for a historical (or rather, “dead”) US political party.

Grade

10

North Carolina Essential Standards for Civics and Economics

- CE.C&G.1.3 - Evaluate how debates on power and authority between Federalists and Anti-Federalists have helped shape government in the United States over time (e.g., Hamilton, Jefferson, Madison, Federalist Papers, strong central government, protection of individual rights, Elastic Clause, Bill of Rights, etc.)
- CE.C&G.2.8 - Analyze America’s two-party system in terms of the political and economic views that led to its emergence and the role that political parties play in American politics (e.g., Democrat, Republican, promotion of civic responsibility, Federalists, Anti-Federalists, Influence of third parties, precincts, “the political spectrum”, straight ticket, canvass, planks, platform, etc.)
- CE.C&G.4.1 - Compare citizenship in the American constitutional democracy to membership in other types of governments (e.g., right to privacy, civil rights, responsibilities, political rights, right to due process, equal protection under the law, participation, freedom, etc.)
- CE.C&G.5.1 - Analyze the election process at the national, state and local levels in terms of the checks and balances provided by qualifications and procedures for voting (e.g., civic participation, public hearings, forums, at large voting, petition, local initiatives, local referendums, voting amendments, types of elections, etc.)

Essential Questions

- How have political parties developed throughout the history of the United States?
- How do political parties represent the diverse interests of the American people?
- How do third parties give voice to minority viewpoints in American society?

Materials

- Political Parties RIP Assignment sheets. attached
- Art supplies (poster paper, markers, scissors)
- Internet access (optional; only necessary if teachers want students to do additional research on their party)
- Student summary sheet, attached
- Sample Test Questions & Answers, attached

Duration

45+ minutes

Procedure

1. As a warmup, have the students consider the following questions:
 - Consider all of the changes that have taken place in American government since the drafting of the Declaration of Independence to today. With all these changes, do you think people are still arguing over the same political issues such as those the Federalists and the Anti-Federalists argued over? Explain.

- Are there particular political debates that are prominent right now? What are they?
 - Who typically constitute the opposing sides of political debates? (What are the current two major political parties?)
 - Do you think that we went straight from Federalist v. Anti-Federalist to Democrat v. Republicans? Explain.
2. Inform the students that over the past 200 years, political parties have arisen to deal with the changing issues faced by Americans and many have dissolved shortly thereafter. Tell students that today, they will plan to put these parties to proper rest in a mass funeral!
 3. Divide the class into 10 groups and give each group one of the attached *Political Parties RIP Assignment Sheet*. The students will study the information provided and then use the information to design a tombstone and plan a brief eulogy for their assigned political party. (Teachers can determine whether they would like students to do additional internet research on their party. Teachers should also use their discretion regarding how much time groups are given to complete the assignment; this can range from a quick class activity [20 minutes to plan and then hold funeral] or it can be extended into a longer and more detailed project assignment.)
 4. At the least, groups should be allowed 20 minutes of class time to plan their eulogy and create their tombstone. Circulate around the room as groups work, ensuring they are on the right track. If you are going to hold the funeral during a future class period, you may also wish to instruct students to come “dressed” in character, as they would dress if they were actually participating in a funeral.
 5. When it is time for students to present their work (a.k.a. “attend the funeral”) teachers should review expected behavior such as:
 - Remain respectful at all times and encourage one another.
 - Try your best and take the presentation seriously.
 - Listen when others are speaking.
 - While you should remain respectful and on-task, you can also have fun and be creative. For example, you may respond with appropriate funeral behavior (i.e. tears, sniffles, crying)
 6. Teachers may also choose to play soft music appropriate for a funeral in the background of student presentations.
 7. Once the expectations are clearly defined, pass out copies of Political Parties RIP Summary sheet. Students should fill in information while other groups present. (Group’s should present in chronological order.)



Political Parties Rest in Peace **Dixicrats (1948-1960)**

Since the beginning of this great nation, political parties have come and gone, many without a proper burial. To help these parties rest in peace, we will have a funeral for all those parties that are no longer with us (and some that are slowly dying but are pretty much goners). Below is a short description of your group's political party. For this assignment, you will plan a brief eulogy to present to the class about the party and create a tombstone for your political party using the information provided.

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- ✓ At least one illustration that relates to party
- ✓ Neat, creative, and colorful

Dixicrats (1948-1960)

- The States' Rights party, also known as the "Dixiecrats," was a party that split off from the national Democratic party and ran candidates in the 1948 presidential election.
- The party sprang into existence on July 17, 1948 when it held its national convention in Birmingham, Alabama. It was the formal expression of a growing sectional and civil rights revolt against the national Democratic Party.
- South Carolina Governor J. Strom Thurmond and Mississippi Governor J. Fielding Wright were nominated, respectively, for president and vice-president.
- Alabamians played a major role in founding, directing, and sustaining the organization.
- Dixiecrats organized in response to President Harry S. Truman's proposed 1948 civil rights package, understood by many whites as the greatest threatened federal intrusion into the South since Reconstruction. The package consisted of four primary pieces of legislation: abolition of the poll tax, a federal anti-lynching law, desegregation legislation, and a permanent Federal Employment Practices Committee (FEPC) to prevent racial discrimination in jobs funded by federal dollars.
- Dixiecrats portrayed their movement in the best possible light, as one designed to guarantee state sovereignty and constitutionally guaranteed states' rights and reestablish Southern preeminence in the Democratic party. The real motive behind the movement was securing states' rights and constitutional principles in order to accomplish an overriding goal: preservation of white supremacy in the South.
- Faded with the election of John F. Kennedy in 1960 and the passage of the Civil Rights Act 3 years later.



Political Parties Rest in Peace **Federalist Party (1787-1816)**

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Federalist Party (1787-1816)

- The Federalist Party (or Federal Party) was an American political party in the period 1787 to 1816, with remnants lasting into the 1820s. The Federalists controlled the federal government until 1801. These supporters grew into the nationalistic Federalist Party, which wanted a fiscally sound and militarily strong nation state.
- Although the Federalist Party had not yet formed during the presidency of George Washington, many of the ideas he employed were strongly federalist. He wanted to foster national unity, assure a smoothly run administration, and develop a deep respect across the country for the national government.
- Alexander Hamilton, the father of the Federalist Party, was a very practical founding father, who possessed great foresight. His outlook, like that of Washington, was nationalistic. He feared the divisiveness of state's rights philosophy. Hamilton believed that the success of the new government depended on the support of the rich and most able. It was the duty of this class to forge a government for all others.
- The Federalist Party gained much momentum in the North, particularly New England. Its members included industrialists, bankers, and landowners. It favored a strong central government, with a loose interpretation of the Constitution.



Political Parties Rest in Peace
Anti-Federalist Party (1787-1792)

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Anti-Federalist Party (1787-1792)

- The Federalist movement of the 1780s was motivated by the proposition that the national government under the Articles of Confederation was too weak, and needed to be amended or replaced. Eventually, they managed to get the national government to sanction a convention to amend the Articles. Opposition to its ratification immediately appeared when the convention concluded and published the proposed Constitution.
- The opposition was composed of diverse elements, including those opposed to the Constitution because they thought that a stronger government threatened the sovereignty and prestige of the states, localities, or individuals; those that fancied a new centralized, disguised "monarchic" power that would only replace the cast-off despotism of Great Britain with the proposed government; and those who simply feared that the new government threatened their personal liberties. Some of the opposition believed that the central government under the Articles of Confederation was sufficient. Still others believed that while the national government under the Articles was too weak, the national government under the Constitution would be too strong.
- In every state the opposition to the Constitution was strong, and especially so in North Carolina and Rhode Island. Individualism was the strongest element of opposition; the necessity, or at least the desirability, of a bill of rights was almost universally felt.
- The Anti-Federalists played upon these feelings in the ratification convention in Massachusetts. By this point, five of the states had ratified the Constitution with relative ease, but the Massachusetts convention was far more bitter and contentious. Finally, after long debate, a compromise was reached. Massachusetts would ratify the Constitution with the promise of an addition by Congress of the bill of rights.
- The Anti-Federalist movement ended with the passage of the Constitution.



Political Parties Rest in Peace

Whig Party (1832-1860)

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Whig Party (1832-1860)

- The Whig Party, in the United States, was for most of its history concerned with promoting internal improvements, such as roads, canals, railroads, deepening of rivers, etc. This was of interest to many Westerners in this period, isolated as they were and in need of markets. Abraham Lincoln was a Whig for most of this period.
- Henry Clay and others had called themselves National Republicans - based on their vision of the United States as nation while others saw it as a confederation of states - taking strong national measures like building inter-state roads. When a number of southern Democrats like John C. Calhoun, threw their lot in with the National Republicans, they were united only by their opposition to the growing "kinglike" strength of the president.
- The Whig party ran, for some years, mostly in strong second place to the Democrats. They elected William Henry Harrison, in the famous "Tippecanoe and Tyler Too" campaign of nonsense, copied from the Jackson Democrats, but Harrison (the hero of Tippecanoe) died just days into his presidency, and was succeeded by Tyler, one of the anti-Jackson democrats, who showed himself to be basically a firm Democrat, and was "read out of the Whig party". They also elected Zachary Taylor (another war hero and no politician) who was died fairly early in the term, making Millard Fillmore president.
- In the 1850s when the nation became increasingly divided over slavery, a new Republican party formed, primarily to keep slavery quarantined off in the South, while Southern sentiment was for their right to move, with their way of life, into any new territory. Their methods of agriculture and their best cash crops tended to deplete the soil, so that Southerners were among the most aggressive Western expansionists. The Republican Party, while it also attracted many anti-slavery Democrats, drew off so many Whigs that they effectively killed the Whig party.



Political Parties Rest in Peace
Democratic-Republican (1792-1825)

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Democratic-Republican (1792-1825)

- The Democratic-Republican Party was founded by Thomas Jefferson and James Madison around 1792. It became the dominant political party until the 1820s, when it split into competing factions, one of which became the modern-day Democratic Party.
- Jefferson and Madison created the party in order to oppose the economic and foreign policies of the Federalists, a party created a year or so earlier by Treasury Secretary Alexander Hamilton. Foreign policy issues were central; the Democratic-Republican party opposed the Jay Treaty of 1794 with Britain (then at war with France) and supported good relations with France before 1801. The party insisted on a strict construction of the Constitution and denounced many of Hamilton's proposals (especially the national bank) as unconstitutional.
- The party promoted states' rights and the primacy of the yeoman farmer over bankers, industrialists, merchants, and other moneyed interests. From 1792 to 1816 the party opposed such Federalist policies as high tariffs, a navy, military spending, a national debt, and a national bank. After the military defeats of the War of 1812, however, the party split on these issues. Many younger party leaders, notably Henry Clay, John Quincy Adams and John C. Calhoun, became nationalists and wanted to build a strong national defense.
- The party's elected presidents were Thomas Jefferson (1800 and 1804), James Madison (1808 and 1812), and James Monroe (1816 and 1820). The party soon dominated Congress and most state governments outside of New England. By 1820, the Federalists were no longer acting as a national party; there was little to hold the Democratic-Republican Party together.



Political Parties Rest in Peace
Populist Party (1890-1908)

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Populist Party (1890-1908)

- The Populist Party grew out of the agrarian revolt that rose to the collapse of agriculture prices following the Panic of 1873. The Farmers' Alliance, formed in Texas in 1876, promoted collective economic action by farmers and achieved widespread popularity in the South and Great Plains. By the late 1880s, the Alliance had developed a political agenda that called for regulation and reform in national politics, most notably an opposition to the gold standard to counter the deflation in agricultural prices.
- The drive to create a new political party out of the movement arose from the refusal of both Democrats and Republicans to take up and promote the policies advocated by the Alliance. The Populist Party was formed by members of the Alliance, in conjunction with the Knights of Labor, in 1889–1890.
- The party's platform, commonly known as the Omaha Platform, called for the abolition of national banks, a graduated income tax, direct election of Senators, civil service reform, a working day of eight hours and Government control of all railroads, telegraphs, and telephones. In the 1892 Presidential election, James B. Weaver received 1,027,329 votes. Weaver carried four states (Colorado, Kansas, Idaho, and Nevada) and received electoral votes from Oregon and North Dakota as well.
- The party flourished most among farmers in the Southwest and Great Plains, as well as making significant gains in the South, where they faced an uphill battle given the firmly entrenched monopoly of the Democratic Party. The Populists were the first political party in the United States to actively include women in their affairs.
- By 1896, the Democratic Party took up many of the Populist Party's causes at the national level, and the party began to fade from national prominence.



Political Parties Rest in Peace
The Prohibition Party (1869-1933)

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The Prohibition Party (1869-1933)

- As the name implies, the party advocated for the prohibition of the use of beverages containing alcohol and was an integral part of the temperance movement. While never one of the nation's leading parties, it was an important force in US politics in the late 19th century and the early years of the 20th century.
- The party was founded in 1869. Its first National Committee Chairman was John Russell of Michigan, who served from 1867-1872. The party succeeded in getting many communities and a number of states to outlaw the production and sale of intoxicating beverages.
- At the same time, the party's ideology broadened to include aspects of progressivism. The party contributed to the third-party discussions of the 1910s and sent Charles H. Randall to the 64th, 65th and 66th Congresses as the representative of California's 9th congressional district. Prohibitionist Sidney J. Catts was elected Governor of Florida in 1916, serving 1917-1921.
- The party's greatest success was in 1919, with the passage of the 18th Amendment to the United States Constitution, which outlawed the production, sale, transportation, import, and export of alcohol. The era of illegal alcohol in the USA is generally known as "Prohibition". The enactment of national prohibition took away the party's main issue, and the party declined in importance. The "Prohibition" era saw the rise of "Speakeasies", bootleggers, and a great growth of organized crime. By the start of the Great Depression, the cause of prohibition was considered discredited by much of the public. National prohibition was repealed by the 21st Amendment in 1933. While hardline prohibitionists objected, the US Prohibition Party declined into insignificance.



Political Parties Rest in Peace
Progressive Party (1912-1916)

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Progressive Party (1912-1916)

- The United States Progressive Party of 1912 was a political party created by a split in the Republican Party in the presidential election 1912. It was formed by Theodore Roosevelt when he lost the Republican nomination to Taft and pulled his delegates out of the convention.
- After walking out on the Republican Convention and forming the new Progressive Party, President Roosevelt, when suggested by reporters that he was no longer fit for the office, retorted "I'm as fit as a bull moose" (giving the new party its nickname), and he called his own convention and nominated a national ticket. The platform echoed Roosevelt's 1907-08 proposals, calling for vigorous government intervention to protect the people from the selfish interests.
- The great majority of Republican governors, congressmen, editors and local leaders refused to join the new party, even if they had supported Roosevelt before. However, many independent reformers signed up.
- Roosevelt had the satisfaction of outpolling Taft in the popular vote and by a large margin of 88–8 in the electoral vote, but the split engendered in the Republican vote allowed Woodrow Wilson to win the presidency. The Progressive party did poorly in the 1914 elections and faded away. Most members, including Roosevelt returned to the Republican Party by 1916.
- The central problem faced by Progressive Party was that the Democrats were more united and optimistic than they had been in decades. The Bull Moosers fancied they had a chance to elect Roosevelt by drawing out progressive elements from both the Republican and Democratic parties. That dream evaporated in July, when the Democrats nominated their most articulate and prominent progressive, Woodrow Wilson.



Political Parties Rest in Peace
Know-Nothing Party (1849-1860)

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Know-Nothing Party (1849-1860)

- The Know-Nothing Party originated in 1849. Its members strongly opposed immigrants and followers of the Catholic Church. The majority of white Americans followed Protestant faiths. Many of these people feared Catholics because members of this faith followed the teachings of the Pope. The Know-Nothings feared that the Catholics were more loyal to the Pope than to the United States. More radical members of the Know-Nothing Party believed that the Catholics intended to take over the United States of America. The Know-Nothing Party intended to prevent Catholics and immigrants from being elected to political offices. Its members also hoped to deny these people jobs in the private sector, arguing that the nation's business owners needed to employ true Americans. The majority of Know-Nothings came from middle and working-class backgrounds. These people feared competition for jobs from immigrants coming to the United States. Critics of this party named it the Know-Nothing Party because it was a secret organization. Its members would not reveal the party's doctrines to non-members. Know-Nothings were to respond to questions about their beliefs with, "I know nothing." The Know-Nothing Party adopted the American Party as its official name in 1854.
- Nationally, in 1856, the American Party ran Millard Fillmore as its candidate for President of the United States. While Fillmore finished last, he still received almost 900,000 votes out of the approximately four million votes cast in the election. Although many Americans opposed the Catholic faith and lived in fear of immigrants, slavery and its expansion was a more important issue to them. The Know-Nothing Party refused to take a stand on slavery. As a result of the party's refusal to take a position on slavery, the Know-Nothing Party had declined by the presidential election of 1860. It did not run a candidate for president in this election, as many of its followers had joined the Republican Party.



Political Parties Rest in Peace **The Reform Party**

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The Reform Party

- The Reform Party of the United States of America was a political party in the United States, founded by Ross Perot in 1995 who said Americans were disillusioned with the state of politics—as being corrupt and unable to deal with vital issues—and desired a viable alternative to the Republican and Democratic Parties. Its biggest victory came when Jesse Ventura was elected governor of Minnesota in 1998.
- The Party grew out of Perot's efforts in the 1992 presidential election, where—running as an independent—he became the first non-major party candidate since 1912 to have been considered viable enough to win the presidency. Perot made a splash by bringing a focus to fiscal issues such as the federal deficit and national debt; government reform issues such as term limits, campaign finance reform, and lobbying reform; and issues on trade. A large part of his following was grounded in the belief he was addressing vital problems largely ignored by the two major parties. On these strengths, he won two of the three presidential debates and placed second in the other, according to some polls at the time.
- A Gallup poll showed Perot with a slim lead, but on July 16 he suspended his campaign, accusing Republican operatives of threatening to sabotage his daughter's wedding, and was accused by Newsweek Magazine of being a "Quitter" in a well-publicized cover-page article. Even after resuming his campaign on October 1, Perot was consistently dogged by the "quitter" moniker and other allegations concerning his character, to the extent that on Election Day many voters were confused as to whether or not Perot was actually still a candidate. He ended up receiving about 18.9% of the popular vote, a record level of popularity not seen in an independent candidacy since former President Theodore Roosevelt ran on the "Bull Moose" Progressive ticket in 1912.

Political Parties Rest in Peace: Student Summary Sheet

Party Name	Time Period	Summary

Sample Test Questions

1. Which best describes the difference between the Federalists and the Anti-Federalists?
 - A Federalists supported continued union with Great Britain and Anti-Federalists desired independence
 - B Federalists supported a strong connection between church and state and Anti-Federalist fought for greater religious tolerance
 - C Federalists were composed primarily of aristocrats and the Anti-Federalists were composed most of yeoman farmers
 - D Federalist supported having a strong central government and the Anti-Federalists favored to continue to allow states governments to dominate
2. Which reason best explains why many Anti-Federalists finally agreed to the ratification of the U.S. Constitution?
 - A the addition of the Bill of Rights
 - B arguments by George Washington
 - C a desire to create a better relationship with the Federalists
 - D a fear that civil war would break out if the dispute were not settled
3. What is the most likely reason that single-issue third parties in the United States have short life-spans?
 - A most states does not allow third party candidates name to be placed on elections ballots
 - B popular third-party goals eventually become planks in the platforms of the major parties
 - C The United States has steadily moved from a two-party system to a multiparty system.
 - D An increasing number of citizens have grown weary of party politics and fail to vote in elections
4. Which historical political party had a platform that was most similar to the beliefs of the Anti Federalists?
 - A Labor party
 - B Know Nothing party
 - C Progressive party
 - D Democratic-Republican party
5. Which statement best describes the evolution of political parties over the history of the United States?
 - A Most of the current US political parties have origins from the British political heritage
 - B The two main political parties dominate United States elections with occasional third party presence
 - C The United States has a multi-party system similar to Canada and many European nations
 - D The United States has not allowed political parties for fear of instability due to factionalism

Sample Test Questions- ANSWER KEY

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