

## **Unit 2: Citizens and Politics in Action**

### **Side 1**

**Key Learning:** American citizens can be active participants at any level of government and can address problems using political and social action to change policies.

**Unit Essential Question:** How can American citizens effectively participate in the political system and have such involvement impact current issues?

### **Concept: Elections**

#### **Lesson Essential Questions:**

1. What are the roles of candidates and voters in the election process?
2. How can potential voters evaluate a candidate for political office?
3. How does the primary system work?
4. How do political campaigns and elections impact individuals and groups?

#### **Vocabulary:**

**ballot:** the method of secret voting by on printed sheets or voting machines.

**polling place:** a place at or in which votes in an election are cast.

**precinct:** Also called election district. One of a fixed number of districts, each containing one polling place, into which a city, town, etc., is divided for voting purposes.

**caucus:** a meeting of party leaders to select candidates, elect convention delegates, etc.

**debate:** a discussion, as of a public question in an assembly, involving opposing viewpoints

**nominate:** to appoint to a duty or office

**registration:** an official act of placing one's name in the list of qualified voters.

**primary:** an election in which voters of each party nominate candidates for office

### **Concept: Political Parties**

#### **Lesson Essential Questions:**

1. How have political parties developed over time?
2. What methods do political parties use to appeal to voters?
3. What are the current political parties in the U.S. and their ideas about government?

#### **Vocabulary:**

**political party:** a group of people with common opinions about how the government should be run. They work together to gain influence, governmental control and for directing government policy

**independent voters:** Voters who are not members of a political party

**Democrats:** Members of the older and more liberal of the two major political parties in the United States.

**Republicans:** Members of the more conservative of the two major political parties in the US.

**third parties:** Minor political parties in a two party system

**platform:** A written statement outlining a political party's views on issues and describing the programs it proposes.

**liberal:** believing that government should be active in supporting social and political change

**conservatives:** believing in the value of established and traditional practices in politics and society

**Libertarian:** a person who believes that people should be allowed to do and say what they want without any interference from the government

**Communists:** people who believe the government owns the things that are used to make and transport products (such as land, oil, factories, ships, etc.) and there is no privately owned property

**Socialists:** people who believe major industries should be owned and controlled by the government rather than by individual people and companies.

**Turn over for the rest of the unit's objectives**

## Unit 2: *Citizens and Politics in Action*

### Concept: Influencing Government

#### Lesson Essential Questions:

1. How do special interest groups influence our political decisions?
2. How does the political/physical geography of a region or state influence voters' selection of a candidate?

#### Vocabulary:

**mass media:** Forms of communication that transmit information to large numbers of people.

**special interest groups:** a group that is determined to encourage or prevent changes in public policy without trying to be elected.

**lobby:** an interest group

**lobbyist:** A person paid to represent an interest group's point of view.

factions:

**political action committee (PAC):** The political arm of an interest group that collects voluntary contributions from members to fund political candidate and parties the interest group favors.

**factions:** a group within a larger group that has different ideas and opinions than the rest of the group.

**watchdog:** a person or organization that makes sure that companies, governments, etc., are not doing anything illegal or wrong

### Concept: Media

#### Lesson Essential Questions:

1. What techniques does the media use to influence the political views of American citizens?
2. What is the impact of media and individuals on monitoring and influencing government?

#### Vocabulary:

**propaganda: ideas used to influence people's thinking or behavior**

**bias:** a prejudice for or against one person or group, especially in a way considered to be unfair.

**symbolism:** using symbols, images, and indirect suggestion to express ideas or emotions.

**political cartoons:** an illustration which is designed to convey a social or political message. Often found on the editorial pages of newspapers and magazines.

### Concept: Public Policy

#### Lesson Essential Questions:

1. What is public policy and how is it determined?
2. How can citizens affect public policy in a democracy?
3. How do multiple perspectives develop on public policy and current issues?

#### Vocabulary:

**public opinion:** a phrase that is used to convey the intent and desire of the general population on issues of political importance

**public policy:** an attempt by a government to address a public issue by instituting laws, regulations, decisions, or actions that deals with the problem.

**Turn over for the rest of the unit's objectives**