

Civics

Unit 5: Role of the Citizen in American Democracy

Time Frame: Approximately five weeks



Unit Description

This unit focuses on examining how citizens can participate responsibly and effectively in American civic and political life.

Student Understandings

Students understand the various rights and responsibilities of a citizen of the United States. Students explore the development and the extension of basic rights of citizenship to various groups in the United States (e.g., African Americans, women). Students distinguish between different types of propaganda and the role propaganda plays in political election campaigns. Students explain the difference between major political parties and special interest groups.

Guiding Questions

1. Can students describe the rights of American citizens?
2. Can students distinguish between personal, political, and economic rights of citizenship?
3. Can students describe how the duties and responsibilities of individual citizens protect the rights of all United States citizens?
4. Can students explain how and why the concept of individual rights changed and expanded over time?
5. Can students analyze the modern media's influence on the American political system?
6. Can students distinguish between different types of propaganda and explain the role of propaganda in political election campaigns?
7. Can students analyze the effects of campaigns, campaign finance, elections, the Electoral College, and the United States census in the American political system?
8. Can students evaluate the roles of political parties and special interests groups and describe how they affect the American political system?

Unit 5 Grade-Level Expectations (GLEs) and ELA Common Core State Standards (CCSS)

| Grade-Level Expectations | |
|---|--|
| GLE # | GLE Text |
| Foundations of American Government | |
| C.1.1 | Describe reasons why government is necessary, explaining competing ideas about the role of government in society |
| Role of the Citizen in American Democracy | |
| C.5.1 | Distinguish between personal, political, and economic rights of citizenship |
| C.5.2 | Differentiate between civic duties and responsibilities, including various forms of civic participation |
| C.5.3 | Describe how civil rights have evolved over time to include diverse groups of citizens |
| C.5.4 | Evaluate the role of the media and public opinion in American politics, including the use and effects of propaganda techniques |
| C.5.5 | Analyze the effects of campaigns, campaign finance, elections, the Electoral College, and the United States census in the American political system |
| C.5.6 | Describe key platform positions of the major political parties and evaluate the impact of third parties in election outcomes |
| C.5.7 | Explain historical and contemporary roles of special interest groups, lobbyists, and associations in United States politics |
| ELA CCSS for Literacy in History/Social Studies 6-12 | |
| CCSS # | CCSS Text |
| Reading Standards for Literacy in History/Social Studies 6–12 | |
| RH.9-10.2 | Determine the central ideas or information of a primary or secondary source; provide an accurate summary of how key events or ideas develop over the course of the text. |
| RH.9-10.4 | Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in a text, including vocabulary describing political, social, or economic aspects of history/social studies |
| Writing Standards for Literacy in History/Social Studies, Science, and Technical Subjects 6–12 | |
| WHST.9-10.7 | Conduct short as well as more sustained research projects to answer a question (including a self-generated question) or solve a problem; narrow or broaden the inquiry when appropriate; synthesize multiple sources on the subject, demonstrating understanding of the subject under investigation. |
| WHST.9-10.9 | Draw evidence from informational texts to support analysis, reflection, and research. |
| WHST.9-10.10 | Write routinely over extended time frames (time for reflection and revision) and shorter time frames (a single sitting or a day or two) for a range of discipline-specific tasks, purposes, and audiences |

Sample Activities

Activity 1: Rights of Citizens (GLEs: C.1.1, C.5.1; CCSS: RH.9-10.4, WHST.9-10.9, WHST.9-10.10)

Materials List: copies of Rights of Citizen BLM, copies of the Declaration of Independence http://archives.gov/exhibits/charters/declaration_transcript.html, United States Constitution <http://constitutionus.com/> and Bill of Rights http://www.archives.gov/exhibits/charters/bill_of_rights_transcript.html, student access to the Internet, chart paper and markers

Write the following *SQPL* ([view literacy strategy descriptions](#)) statement on the board so that students can see it when they enter the room:

The rights of United States citizens are granted by and listed in the United States Constitution.

Working in pairs, have students discuss the *SQPL* statement and generate two or three questions related to the statement. Call on students to share their questions. Write each question on the board and highlight similar questions to indicate their importance. Provide appropriate feedback but do not coach or correct student questions until all students have shared. Be sure that questions cover all of these topics: origin and source of rights, types of rights (personal, political, and economic), number of rights, and limits on rights. If student questions do not cover all topics, create additional questions and add them to the student list of questions.

Distribute copies of the Declaration of Independence. Have students read the second paragraph of the document. A full text version can be found at http://archives.gov/exhibits/charters/declaration_transcript.html. Ask students to respond to the *SQPL* questions dealing with the origin and source of rights. Allow several students to respond before directing students' attention to the first sentence of the second paragraph of the Declaration of Independence that reads, "We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable rights, that among these are life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness." Lead students in a discussion of the context and time period in which this statement was written. Ask students to think about and discuss groups of people that this document did not pertain to at the time it was written. Rights in the Declaration of Independence are described as unalienable, meaning they cannot be taken away. The Declaration of Independence identifies "the people" as responsible for ensuring the government does not violate the rights of people.

Have students respond to the *SQPL* questions about the origin and source of rights in their *learning logs* ([view literacy strategy descriptions](#)). Call on students to share their responses. Provide appropriate feedback and correct responses when necessary.

Divide the class into seven groups. Assign each group an article of the Constitution to read. Instruct students to write down any individual rights they come across in the text of the article. Students should quickly realize the absence of any rights or privileges granted specially to United States citizens. Have students respond to the following question:

Why would the Constitution not include a list of individual rights and do you think this was the correct decision made by the Founding Fathers?

Have students share and discuss possible answers with their group. Call on students to share their response with the whole class. Provide appropriate feedback. Explain to the students the framers of the Constitution believed the government created to be so well conceived that a declaration of rights would be redundant and unnecessary. Also, many did not want to limit individual rights by listing them.

Give each student a copy of the Bill of Rights to read. On a piece of scratch paper, have students make notes of the rights granted to the individual citizen in the document. Ask students to compare their lists with other members of their group. Using sheets of chart paper, the groups should create a single list titled “Rights listed in the Bill of Rights.” Call on students to share a right their team listed with the class and explain what it means. Provide appropriate feedback and circulate among the groups to ensure groups have all of the rights listed in the Bill of Rights.

Draw students’ attention to Amendment IX and have one student read it aloud to the class. Lead students in a discussion of what the amendment means and why it was added to the Constitution. Students should understand this amendment makes it clear that not all rights of citizens are listed in the Bill of Rights. Draw students’ attention to the *SQPL* question dealing with the number of rights United States citizens have. Explain there is no exact number written in the Constitution, the Bill of Rights, or the other amendments. Have groups create a new list on their chart paper titled “Rights not listed in the Constitution” and write down as many rights individual citizens have in the United States as they can in five minutes. These should include rights such as the right to vote or right to privacy. When time is up, have one member from each group display their list of rights on the wall or board and briefly explain those rights to class as a whole. Provide appropriate feedback and correct student responses when necessary.

Discuss the various rights mentioned by all groups. Have students reflect in their *learning logs* on which one of the rights discussed in class is the most important and explain why. Call on students to share their response with the whole class. Provide appropriate feedback and ask probing questions of those students who fail to fully explain their choice.

Distribute copies of the Rights of Citizens BLM, a *graphic organizer* ([view literacy strategy descriptions](#)). Explain how the rights of United States citizens can be divided into three basic categories: personal, political, and economic. Personal rights are those rights which pertain to the individual person, such personal liberty, personal security, or private property. These require no action on the part of the citizen to use or exercise. Citizens simply have them. Political rights allow citizens to participate in the political

process of electing candidates, running for office, the right of citizenship, or joining a political party. These require the citizen to take some action and meet certain qualifications (e.g.; voting requires that you be at least 18 years old and register to vote in the county or parish in which you live). Economic rights involve a citizen's interaction with the economy such as starting a business, buying a car, or selling a baseball card collection on eBay. Have students apply their understanding of personal, political, and economic rights and to place a check in the correct column for each right listed. Add any additional rights from the student lists at the bottom of the chart in the spaces provided (see Rights of Citizens BLM and sample below).

| Rights | Personal | Political | Economic | Limits |
|--------|----------|-----------|----------|--------|
| Speech | √ | | | |

Briefly discuss with students each right listed on the Rights of Citizens BLM and call on students to share with the class which category the rights best fit under. Provide appropriate feedback and correct student responses when necessary.

Direct students' attention to the *SQPL* questions about the types of rights of American citizens. Have students define in their own words the types of rights United States citizens have (personal, political, and economic rights) in their *learning logs* providing examples of each. Have students share their definitions and examples with a partner. Ask students to check their responses against a teacher key and display after all students have shared.

Have students examine the list of rights on their Rights of Citizens BLM and on the charts displayed in the classroom. Ask students to respond to this question,

Are any of these right limitless? Why or why not?

Lead a class discussion on the limits placed on the rights United States citizens. Placing limits on rights is based on the principle that one person's individual rights end where the rights of others begin. For example, freedom of speech is limited by slander or libel, the act of saying or writing false statements about someone. Also, yelling "fire" or "bomb" in crowded, public places is not protected by freedom of speech as other lives could be endangered. Assign each student a right listed on the Rights of Citizen BLM. Have students use their textbook, classroom encyclopedias, and the Internet to research limits placed on their assigned right. Call on students to explain the limit or limits of their assigned right. Provide appropriate feedback and correct responses when necessary. Have all students record the limits to the various rights of citizens on the Rights of Citizens BLM in the column labeled Limits.


Direct students' attention to the *SQPL* questions related to limits to the rights of United States citizens. Explain how limits on the rights of United States citizens are placed to

ensure that all citizens have the maximum amount of freedom possible while maintaining order and peace. Have students reflect in the *learning logs* on a right they believe to be limited too much or not enough and explain why. Call on students to share their responses with the class. Provide appropriate feedback and when necessary ask for further explanations to assess logic and understanding.

Activity 2: Duties and Responsibilities of United States Citizens (GLE: C.5.2; CCSS: RH.9-10.4, WHST.9-10.10)

Materials List: 3 x 5 index cards, copies of Duties or Responsibilities BLM

Have students create *vocabulary cards* ([view literacy strategy descriptions](#)) for the terms duty and responsibility. (See example below.)

| | |
|--|---|
| Definition: <i>task an individual is obliged to do for moral, legal or religious reasons</i> | Characteristics: <i>Critical task; possible legal accountability; no reward</i> |
| Duty | |
| Example: <i>serve in the defense of the nation</i> | Illustration:  |

Using their textbooks, classroom encyclopedias, and the Internet, have students define the terms, duty and responsibility. List characteristics that distinguish the two terms, provide examples of both, and create an illustration to symbolize the terms. Call on students to share their definition, characteristics, example, and illustration of the terms, duty and responsibility. Provide appropriate feedback and correct student responses when necessary.

Both duties and responsibilities are important tasks that should be fulfilled by all United States citizens. The key difference between a duty and a responsibility is that a responsibility is done for reasons other than reward, acknowledgment, or punishment. Acting responsibly is the right thing to do. Duties carry with them the concept of accountability; therefore, the possibility of legal consequences. For example, one of the duties of a citizen is to serve in the defense of the nation. Although citizens have the duty of serving in defense of the United States when it is at war, when the United States is not in a state of war, citizens are not arrested or punished for not serving in the military because today's military is a volunteer force. Citizens who do not volunteer in the military can act responsibly by supporting the United States military in other ways such as donating items for troops abroad or by helping family members of soldiers fighting overseas. However, all males over the age of 18 are required to sign up for the Selective Service. When the nation has a draft, any draft-eligible male has the duty to serve if drafted. If the person chooses not to serve, he can be imprisoned.

On the board draw a T-Chart *graphic organizer* ([view literacy strategy descriptions](#)). On the left side write the word Duties and on the right side write the word Responsibilities. (See example below)

| Duties | Responsibilities |
|--|------------------------------|
| <i>Serving in defense of the nation at war</i> | <i>Voting in an election</i> |

Instruct students to draw the T-Chart in their *learning logs* ([view literacy strategy descriptions](#)). Using the Duties or Responsibilities BLM, have students discuss with a partner if the task described is a duty or a responsibility. (See BLM and sample below.) Students should record their decisions on their T-Chart. Encourage students to use their *vocabulary cards* to aide in their decision-making. Call on students to share their decisions on the duties and responsibilities of good citizens with the class. Provide appropriate feedback and correct student responses when necessary. Remind students to use their vocabulary cards for review of these and other important terms and concepts.

- | |
|--|
| 1. Obey the laws of your local, state, and federal government. |
|--|

Have students reflect in their *learning logs* on a duty they feel should be a responsibility of all citizens and explain why. Call on students to share their responses with the whole class. Provide appropriate feedback and question students' explanations when necessary.

Activity 3: Extending Civil Rights to all Americans (GLE: C.5.1, C.5.3; CCSS: RH.9-10.2, WHST.9-10.7, WHST.9-10.9)

Materials List: chart paper, markers, copies of the Declaration of Independence or textbook, access to the Internet and these websites:

Voting Rights Timeline <http://www.aclu.org/timelines/timeline-voting-rights-act>
 Women's Rights Timeline <http://www.legacy98.org/timeline.html>
 Rise of the Common Man <http://www.ushistory.org/us/24a.asp>
 African American Civil Rights Timeline
http://www.pbs.org/wnet/aaworld/timeline/building_01.html
 26th Amendment and 18 year old suffrage <http://www.history.com/topics/the-26th-amendment>

Ask students to think of various groups of Americans that have been denied basic civil rights enjoyed by United States citizens today (e.g., voting, equal treatment under the law). List the groups on the board. Discuss the circumstances in which these groups were denied civil rights (e.g., women, African Americans). For example, women were not allowed to vote in most states because they were viewed by society as weak, naive, or incapable of acquiring a "man's wisdom" and judgment to participate in the political process.

Using the Extending Civil Rights BLM as a guide, have students use *split-page notetaking* ([view literacy strategy descriptions](#)) to record obstacles that prevented these groups from enjoying full civil rights, the events and movements that brought about change, important laws, amendments, or Supreme Court rulings associated with these changes. (See BLM and sample below.)

| Dates: | Extending Civil Rights |
|----------------|--|
| The Common Man | <p>Obstacles: <i>requirement of owning property, poll taxes, and literacy tests restrict voting to the wealthy land-owning elite in many states.</i></p> <p>Event and Movements: <i>In 1792, New Hampshire is first state to eliminate property requirements; election of Andrew Jackson, first president of the “Log Cabin” presidents, encouraged change in the voter qualifications in many states removing property restrictions allowing all white males the right to vote in most states. In 1856, North Carolina is the last state to eliminate property requirement.</i></p> <p>Law, amendment, court rulings: <i>various state constitutional amendments, Constitutional Amendment 26</i></p> |

Throughout the course of American history, five groups: the “common man,” African Americans, Native Americans, women, and youth (under 21), have been denied their basic rights of citizenship such as the right to vote, hold public office, or have equal treatment under the law. These groups over long periods of time and with great effort have come to enjoy the same rights as all Americans today. Divide the class into five groups. Assign each group a different category of Americans who were denied full civil rights. Student groups should use available classroom resources (textbooks, encyclopedias, and the Internet) to research the obstacles that prevented these groups from obtaining full civil rights, the events and movements that brought about change, and the important laws, amendments, or Supreme Court rulings associated with these changes. Students should use the Extending Civil Rights BLM to take notes on their research. Have each group check their research for accuracy and make a short presentation to the whole class. The other students should take notes from the presentations, give appropriate feedback for each group presenting and provide additional information when necessary. Remind students of the study aid feature of *split-page notes* for test and assessments.

Activity 4: The Role of the Media and Public Opinion (GLEs: C.5.2, C.5.4, C.5.5, C.5.6, C.5.7; CCSS: WHST.9-10.7, WHST.9-10.10)

Materials List: Influencing the Government BLM

Distribute copies of the Influencing the Government BLM *vocabulary self-awareness* ([view literacy strategy descriptions](#)) chart. Have students review the list of terms and record their familiarity with each term. A plus sign (+) indicates a high degree of comfort

and knowledge, a check mark (✓) indicates uncertainty, and a minus sign (--) indicates the word is brand new to them. Have students write definitions for the terms in their own words and provide an example as best they can at this stage. As content related to the terms on the chart are covered, allow students to revisit the chart to revise and add additional information. The goal is for students to turn all minuses and checkmarks into pluses by the time they have encountered and learned the key terms from the chart.

Discuss with students the importance of public opinion in American society. Public opinion has three components: direction, intensity, and stability. Direction is expressed in positive or negative terms indicating public support for or against an action, candidate, or law. Intensity refers to how strong opinions are on the issue. Stability means the opinion holds steady in direction and intensity over a long period of time. Public opinion is measured through the use of opinion polls. These are random samples or surveys that ask people or potential voters questions about political issues. The data from these polls are used by politicians, candidates, or interest groups to influence government decisions or to win an election. Have students reexamine their *vocabulary self-awareness* chart and make necessary changes.

Have students draw a T-Chart *graphic organizer* ([view literacy strategy descriptions](#)) to examine the pros and cons of opinion polls. (See example below.)

| Opinion Polls | |
|---|--|
| Pros | Cons |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Monitor constituents' feelings on issues between elections</i> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Distort elections</i> |

Have students use their textbook, encyclopedias, and the Internet to research the use of opinion polls in the United States and to record the pros and cons of opinion polls on the T-chart. Call on students to share their responses with the whole class. Provide appropriate feedback and correct responses when necessary.

Ask students to name the various types of media used to distribute news, opinions, and community information. List the responses on the board. Explain that media can be categorized into either print or electronic media. Print media include newspapers, magazines, newsletters, and books. Electronic media include radio, television, and the Internet. Have students examine the types of media listed on the board. Write a "P" beside those that are print media. Write the letter "E" beside those that are electronic media. The importance of electronic media has changed greatly over the last few decades with television and the Internet now dominating how people access news and information. Ideas, news, and information can be quickly transmitted through television and the Internet. This has made the messages of candidates, politicians, and interest groups more readily available to the general public. Have students reexamine their *vocabulary self-awareness* chart and make necessary changes.

Have students create a *graphic organizer* to record the various roles the media play in American democracy (see example below).

| The Media's Role in American Democracy | | | | | |
|---|-----------------------------------|---|----------------------|-------------------|---|
| Setting Public Agenda | Covering Candidates and Elections | Relationship of the Media and Elected Officials | Government Watch Dog | Consumer Advocate | Citizens need to know vs. National Security |
| <i>Media exposure of an issue increases public call for action.</i> | | | | | |

Have students use their textbook, encyclopedias, the Internet, or other classroom resources to describe the different roles the media has in American democracy. Call on students to share their responses with the class. Provide appropriate feedback and correct students' responses when necessary. Have students reexamine their *vocabulary self-awareness* chart and make necessary changes.

Lead students in a discussion of the different effects print and electronic media have on public opinion. Print media generally represent the ideas, goals, and plans of a candidate or government official in more detail than electronic media. Electronic media such as television focuses on short, visual representations of a candidate or officials and generally does not provide the same level of detail as print.

Have students reflect in their *learning logs* ([view literacy strategy descriptions](#)) on the effects electronic media have on elections compared to print media. Have students compare their responses with a partner. Call on students to share their response with the class. Provide appropriate feedback and correct student responses when necessary.

Discuss different techniques used by candidates, governments, businesses, and interest groups to change public opinions: name-calling, endorsement, plain folks, symbols, bandwagon, stacked cards, and glittering generality. Display various campaign and advertising posters on the board or projection screen. Ask students to identify different kinds of propaganda exemplified by the ad or poster.

Examples of propaganda:

Wilson Campaign Poster Symbol

http://images.uprinting.com/article_pages/presidential-campaign-posters-01.jpg

Roosevelt Truman Campaign Poster Glittering Generality [http://media-](http://media-1.web.britannica.com/eb-media/20/78320-004-FEDF0D46.jpg)

[1.web.britannica.com/eb-media/20/78320-004-FEDF0D46.jpg](http://media-1.web.britannica.com/eb-media/20/78320-004-FEDF0D46.jpg)

U.K. attack ad Name Calling http://i.dailymail.co.uk/i/pix/2010/03/28/article-1261303-08E5BF0A000005DC-227_634x317.jpg

JFK Campaign button Bandwagon

<http://0.tqn.com/d/collectibles/1/7/x/k/3/kennedypin.jpg>

McDonald's 99 billion Served sign Bandwagon

http://4.bp.blogspot.com/_v4J5P0vIZhw/TUWpuEOUizI/AAAAAAAAABTQ/GOUO0s_ytuM/McDonald's%20and%20the%20Bandwagon%20Appeal.jpg

Service on the Home Front Plain Folks http://4.bp.blogspot.com/_hzbVFXqz-RA/TIeo6ytXOrI/AAAAAAAAAIw/L1CJA3RyIMM/s1600/family.jpg

Briefly discuss each piece of propaganda and the message it portrays. Ask students to consider whether or not the ad or poster is effective and to list the elements that make it effective. Call on students to share their responses with the class. Provide appropriate feedback and correct responses when necessary. Have students reexamine their *vocabulary self-awareness* chart and make any necessary changes.

Have the class create a list of important national (if they can only choose a national issue, then they cannot use a state official) issues (e.g., unemployment, affordable health care, housing, student loan debt, taxes). Assign pairs of students a current candidate for a state or national office or allow students to choose their own (e.g. governor, president, senator). Student pairs should research their candidate's stances on those issues. Using one of the propaganda techniques, have the pairs create a political ad using the *RAFT writing* ([view literacy strategy descriptions](#)) below.

Role – Campaign Manager

Audience -- General public

Format – Political Ad

Topic – Present-day issues facing United States citizens

Create a simple opinion poll using the assigned candidates. Administer the poll to the class and post the results on the board. Have each pair present their political ad before the class. Re-administer the poll to the class and track the changes made as a result of the ads. Have students reflect in their *learning logs* which ad they found the most effective and explain why. Call on students to share their response with the class. Provide appropriate feedback. Display the exemplary ads in the classroom.

Activity 5: Political Campaigns and Elections (GLEs: C.5.4, C.5.5; CCSS: WHST.9-10.10)

Materials List: copies of the American Political System BLM, Presidential Election Results 2000 <http://www.uselectionatlas.org/RESULTS/national.php?f=0&year=2000>

Distribute copies of the American Political System BLM. Working in pairs, have students use their textbook, encyclopedias, and the Internet to describe political campaigns, campaign finances, elections, the Electoral College, the United States census and their effects on the American political system. (See American Political System BLM and sample below).

| Characteristics | Description | Effects |
|-----------------|--|---|
| Campaigns | <i>Candidates compete through debates, political ads, and making speeches to win over voters in primary and general elections.</i> | <i>Well-organized campaigns tend to draw more attention toward the candidate who is leading in the polls.</i> |

Call on students to share their research with the class. Provide appropriate feedback and correct responses when necessary.

Lead a class discussion on the Electoral College explaining the process, its benefits (e.g. reduces the “power of mob,” and its criticisms (e.g., outdated). Have the class examine the election results of 2000 pointing out that even though Al Gore won the popular vote by a narrow margin, George W. Bush won the electoral vote and, therefore, the presidency.

Presidential Election Results 2000

<http://www.uselectionatlas.org/RESULTS/national.php?f=0&year=2000>

Have students respond to the following *SPAWN* writing ([view literacy strategy descriptions](#)) prompt into their *learning logs* ([view literacy strategy descriptions](#)).

Problem Solving: Having learned about the Electoral College System and its shortcomings, how can the system be improved or modified?

Call on students to share their response with the entire class. Provide appropriate feedback and ask for clarification of students’ logic when necessary.

Activity 6: Political Parties (GLE: C.5.6; CCSS: WHST.9-10.7)

Materials List: copies of Party Platforms BLM, copies of selected issues from both the Republican Party and Democratic Party platforms

Lead a class discussion on the emergence of political parties and the two-party system in the United States. Parties emerged from the debate between Federalists and Anti-Federalists. Both the modern Democratic and Republican parties are in some ways descendents of those groups. Both political parties have embraced various platforms over the years and carried different names but represent two main ideas: conservative and liberal ideologies. Conservative ideology primarily embraces the status quo or traditional ways. Liberal ideology primarily desires to bring about change or reform. American democracy has supported only two major parties due to the winner-take-all system. This

makes it difficult for additional political parties to gain a foothold in the political system as opposed to proportional systems. Proportional systems allow political parties to gain the number of seats in the congress or parliament equal to the percentage of the votes won in the election. Smaller parties do exist in the United States, but third parties have only played a meaningful role in close elections. When a third party's platform is similar to a major party's platform, third parties play the role of "spoiler" in close elections as they receive votes that normally would go for one of the major parties. Such a situation occurred in 1992 when, Bill Clinton, a Democrat, defeated George H.W. Bush, a Republican, by a narrow margin. Ross Perot, a Reform Party candidate, received a small percentage of the vote. Without Perot's running as a third party candidate, many of Perot's supporters would have voted for Bush, potentially changing the outcome. Have students reflect in their *learning logs* ([view literacy strategy descriptions](#)) on the role third parties play in the American democracy. Call on students to share their responses with the class. Provide appropriate feedback and correct student responses when necessary.

Have students respond to the statements in the Party Platform's *anticipation guide* ([view literacy strategy descriptions](#)). Using their prior knowledge of party platforms, students should circle true if they believe the statement is accurate and false if they do not. (See Party Platforms BLM and sample below).

Party Platforms Anticipation Guide

Instructions: Using your prior knowledge of the party platforms of the two major political parties in the United States, distinguish the following statements as either being true or false by circling a T for true and F for false. Be prepared to discuss and defend your answer.

1. The Republican Party platform supports an individual's right to own a firearm. T or F

Call on students to share their responses to the *anticipation guide* with the class before covering the content. Do not give answers at this point, but instead urge students to listen closely for information about each statement. Explain the purpose of a party platform as the position the party takes on specific issues such as health care reform, foreign policy, domestic spending, or energy.

Working in pairs, have students examine the Democratic and Republican parties' position on these issues: health care reform, the environment, the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, other foreign policy issues, domestic spending, and energy. Have students use the Internet or provide copies of the current position or party platforms on the issues.

Have students record the parties' positions on a *graphic organizer* ([view literacy strategy descriptions](#)). (See the example which follows).

| The Issue | Democratic Platform | Republican Platform |
|---------------------------|--|---|
| <i>Immigration Reform</i> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Securing the border from illegal traffic in both directions</i> • <i>Hold business accountable for exploiting undocumented workers</i> • <i>Provide an acceptable path to citizenship for undocumented workers in good standing</i> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Securing the border by completing a border fence, using complementary strategies at our ports of entry, and increase enforcement of existing laws to reduce illegal immigration</i> • <i>Require employers to use the E-Verify system to ensure workers are here legally and prevent identify theft</i> • <i>Opposes amnesty</i> |

Call on students to share their research on the Democratic and Republican parties' platforms with the class. Provide appropriate feedback and correct student responses when necessary.

Have students reexamine their initial responses to *anticipation guide* and make any necessary changes. Have students share the changes to their responses or perceptions of the two parties. Provide appropriate feedback.

Activity 7: Special Interest Groups (GLE: C.5.7; CCSS: WHST.9-10.7, WHST.9-10.10)

Material List: chart paper, markers, Special Interests Split-Page Notes BLM

Explain historical and contemporary roles of special interest groups, lobbyists, and associations in United States politics to the class in the form of a teacher-led discussion, videos, or multimedia presentation.

Lead a class discussion of the functions of special interest groups and lobbyists and the roles they play in American politics. Special interests groups seek to advance one issue, group, or idea in government. Many special interest groups hire lobbyists to meet and speak directly with representatives to convince them to support legislation that favors a special interest group's positions.

Divide the class into ten groups. Assign each group one of the following historic or contemporary special interest groups. Have students research their assigned group and give a basic description of the group's purpose, describe their political goals, and list their political accomplishments.

- Women's Temperance Movement

- Tea Party
- Populists
- Labor Unions
- NAACP
- Women’s Movement
- PETA
- NRA
- BBB
- Green Peace

Distribute copies of Special Interests Split-Page Notes BLM. Using their textbooks, classroom encyclopedias, and the Internet, have each group research one historical or contemporary special interest groups. Have each group use *split-page notetaking* ([view literacy strategy descriptions](#)) to record their research on a piece of chart paper. (See BLM and sample below.)

| Date: | Historic and Contemporary Special Interest Groups |
|---------------------------|---|
| Women Temperance Movement | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 19th and 20th Century movement seeking to make the manufacturing, transportation, and sale of alcohol illegal in the United States. • Succeeded in getting the 18th Amendment passed • Became part of the foundation of the Women’s Suffrage Movement. |

Have each group make a short presentation of their special interest group posting the *split-page notes* page on the board. Briefly discuss each group presentation, provide appropriate feedback and correct or add to the group’s information if necessary. Have all students copy the *split-page notes* on to their Special Interests Split-Page Notes BLM to study later for summative assessments.

Have students reflect in their *learning logs* ([view literacy strategy descriptions](#)) on whether they feel special interest groups and lobbying helps or hinders the American democratic process. Call on students to share their responses with the whole class. Provide appropriate feedback and ask for clarification of student logic when necessary.

Sample Assessments

General Guidelines

- Students should be monitored during all activities via teacher observation, data collection logs, writing products, class discussion, and journal entries.
- All student-developed products should be evaluated as the unit progresses.

- Assessments should be selected that are consistent with the types of products that result from the student activities.
- Student investigations and projects should be evaluated with criteria assigned specific point values. The criteria should be distributed to the students when assignments are made and, when possible, students should assist in the development of the scoring criteria.
- A variety of performance assessments should be used to determine student comprehension consistent with the type of products resulting from the selected student activities.
- Teacher-created, comprehensive unit exams assessing the GLEs should consist of the following:
 - a variety of formats for objective, convergent test items
 - depth of knowledge at various stages of Bloom's taxonomy
 - EOC-like constructed response items
 - open-ended response items requiring supporting evidence
 - test items aligned to the verbiage of the GLEs.

Activity-Specific Assessments

- Activity 1: Have students write a persuasive essay that describes which personal, political, or economic right is the most important and why. Assess the essay based on predetermined criteria.
- Activity 4: Have students examine an election campaign poster and write a short response categorizing it as one the seven types of propaganda and explaining whether the poster is effective in changing public opinion. Assess the accuracy of the categorization and the detail and logic of the explanation based on predetermined criteria.
- Activity 6: Have students identify which political party platform has been traditionally consistent with the following position: Explain.
 - The government should play an active role in preventing discrimination based on race, creed, or gender in the workplace.Assess the accuracy of the response against the current and historic major party platforms.