

# CHAPTER 5 Political Parties

## Warmup



### Does the two-party system help or harm democracy?

- A.** When you think of the term *political party*, what comes to mind? What do you think political parties do in our system? What associations do you make with this term? In the chart below, record some positive associations, or impressions, you hold about political parties and some negative associations.

Political Parties	
Positive Associations	Negative Associations
•	•
•	•
•	•

- B.** Think about what you know about how political parties work in our system of government, and then answer the questions below.

**1.** What are some possible advantages of having only two powerful political parties?

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**2.** What are some possible disadvantages of having only two powerful political parties?

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# Exploration

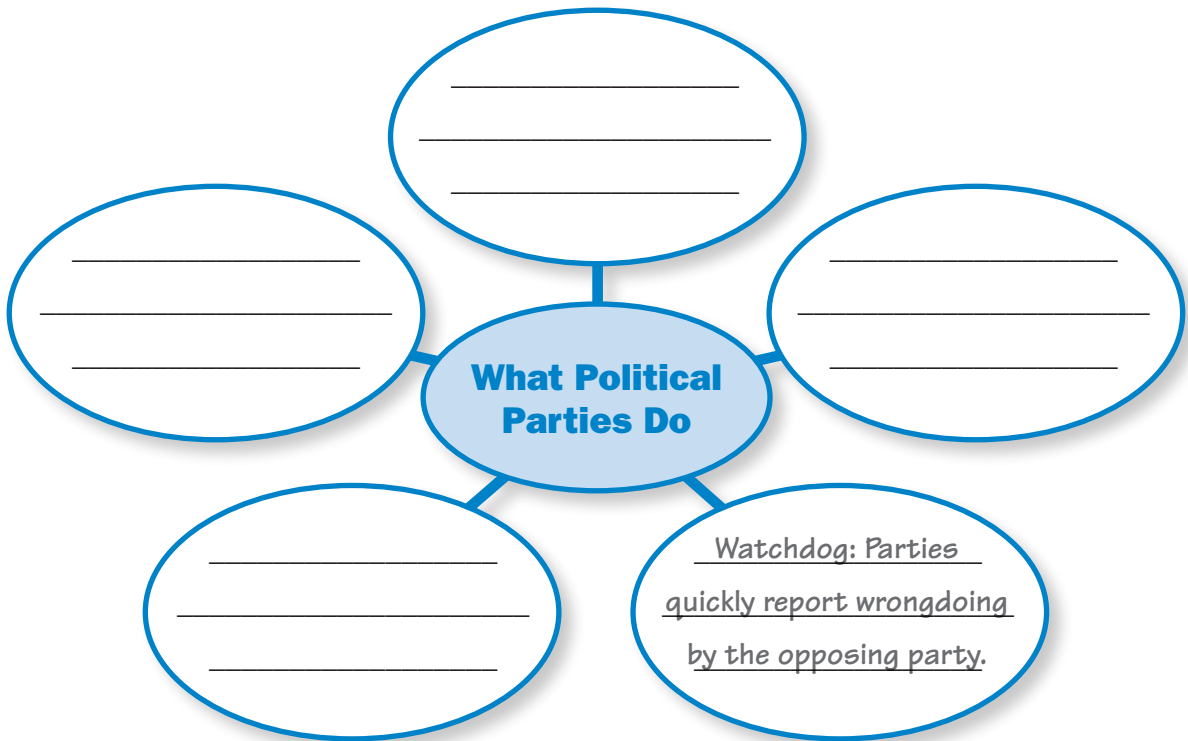
## I. What Political Parties Do

### ➔ Find Out

**A.** A political party is a complicated concept. It includes a number of different parts and components. Using your print or online textbook, identify and describe the elements that answer the question, “What is a party?”

- 1. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
- 2. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
- 3. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**B.** Using your print or online textbook, identify five different roles filled by political parties in our system of government, and record them in the concept web below. Include an example or explanation of each role in the balloon.



**What Do You Think?**

**C.** The Framers were generally not in favor of political parties, and the Constitution does not include any mention of them. Yet parties quickly appeared in the new nation. What might government be like if there were no political parties? Could government as we know it function without them? Why or why not?

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## II. Why Do We Have a Two-Party System?

**Find Out**

**A.** Review the history of the development of political parties in the United States. Then record details of the significance of each of the events listed in the chart below as they relate to the rise of political parties.

Development of Political Parties			
Ratification Debate	Conflicts During Washington's Presidency	Adams's Presidency	Election of 1800

**B.** Using your print or online textbook, identify four different reasons for the development of our two-party system.

1. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
4. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**What Do You Think?**

C. What do you think are the strongest factors working to preserve the two-party system today? Explain your choices.

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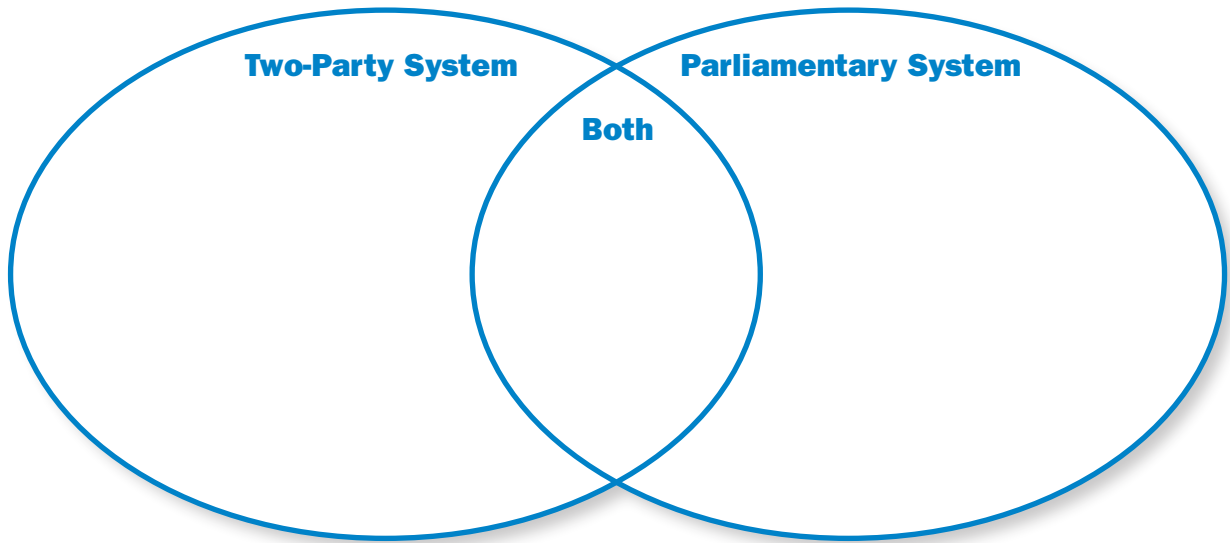
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### III. Alternatives to the Two-Party System

**Find Out**

A. Review the structure of the parliamentary system of government. Compare and contrast that system of government with the two-party system by completing the Venn diagram, below.



**What Do You Think?**

B. Both multiparty systems and two-party systems are designed to be responsive to the people. That is, they are designed to promote the election of officials who represent and respond to the desires of voters. In your opinion, which system is most likely to be most responsive to voters? Explain.

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 **Find Out**

**C.** Using your print or online textbook or other sources, briefly describe the impact of minor political parties in the following presidential elections:

**1. 1892:** \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**2. 1912:** \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**3. 1948:** \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**4. 1968:** \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**5. 1992:** \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**6. 2000:** \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

 **What Do You Think?**

**D.** Why do you think it might be worth supporting a minor political party in the United States even if that candidate has little chance of winning?

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

# Apply What You've Learned Activity

In today's world, does it really matter to what party a person belongs? Use this worksheet to help you answer the Apply What You've Learned questions in your print or online textbook. Use the space below to record information about the party identification of the person you interview.

With what party does your subject identify?

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On what issues does your subject most closely agree and disagree with his or her party?

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What might cause your subject to switch parties?

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Does your subject think the two-party system helps or harms democracy?

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**A.** Does your interview subject closely identify with a party?

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**B.** Do you think your interview subject is likely to support the same party in a future election? Explain your answer.

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**C.** Do you think your interview subject is more interested in the success of a particular party at the ballot box or in seeing certain policies enacted? Explain your answer.

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## Essay



### Does the two-party system help or harm democracy?

Our system of government was designed to be democratic. However, it was not designed to have political parties—or the two-party system that has developed over time. As you read the quotations below, consider how, or if, the two-party system serves the needs and interests of the country.

**That's the real beauty of our two-party system. Neither major party is strong enough to win with just its stalwarts. The winner must capture a majority of independents, crossovers or newly registered voters.**

—USA Today *editorial*, 2000

**With a number of viable parties to choose from rather than only two, people tend to feel that their party truly embodies their specific interests, and hence they are more likely to vote.**

—Martin P. Wattenberg, *The Boston Globe*, September 21, 2003



### What Do You Think?

What is your opinion? Write a response to the Essential Question, **Does the two-party system help or harm democracy?** Consider your thoughts on the quotations above, the Guiding Questions in your textbook, and the activities you have completed in your Journal. See page 219 for a rubric for writing an Essential Question essay.



### Don't Forget

Your answer to this question will help you think about the Unit 2 Essential Question: **In what ways should people participate in public affairs?**