

POLITICAL BELIEFS AND BEHAVIORS

❖POLITICAL CULTURE AND IDEOLOGY

1. **Political culture** – The widely shared beliefs, values, and norms about how citizens relate to governments and to one another.
2. **Social capital** – Democratic and civic habits of discussion, compromise, and respect for differences, which grow out of participation in voluntary organizations.
3. **Natural rights** – The rights of all people to dignity and worth; also called human rights.
4. **Democratic consensus** – Widespread agreement on fundamental principles of democratic governance and the values that undergird them.
5. **Majority rule** – Governance according to the expressed preferences of the majority.
6. **Popular sovereignty** – A belief that ultimate power resides in the people.
7. **American dream** – The widespread belief that the United States is a land of opportunity and that individual initiative and hard work can bring economic success.
8. **Capitalism** – An economic system characterized by private property, competitive markets, economic incentives, and limited government involvement in the production, distribution, and pricing of goods and services.
9. **Suffrage** – The right to vote.
10. **Monopoly** – Domination of an industry by a single company that fixes prices and discourages competition; also, the company that dominates the industry by these means.
11. **Antitrust legislation** – Federal laws (starting with the Sherman Act of 1890) that tried to prevent a monopoly from dominating an industry and restraining trade.
12. **Political ideology** – A consistent pattern of beliefs about political values and the role of government.
13. **Liberalism** – A belief that government can and should achieve justice and equality of opportunity.
14. **Conservatism** – A belief that limited government insures order competitive markets and personal opportunity.
15. **Socialism** – An economic and governmental system based on public ownership of the means of production and exchange.
16. **Libertarianism** – An ideology that cherishes individual liberty and insists on minimal government, promoting a free market economy, a noninterventionist foreign policy, and an absence of regulation in moral, economic, and social life.
17. **Environmentalism** – An ideology that is dominated by concern for the environment but also promotes grassroots democracy, social justice, equal opportunity, nonviolence, respect for diversity, and feminism.

❖PUBLIC OPINION, PARTICIPATION, AND VOTING

1. **Public opinion** – The distribution of individual preferences or evaluations of a given issue, candidate, or institution within a specific population.
2. **Random sample** – In this type of sample, every individual has unknown and random chance of being selected.
3. **Margin of error** – Rate of error in a random sampling – usually +/- 3% for a sample of at least 1,500 individuals.
4. **Intensity** – How strongly people feel about certain political issues.
5. **Latency** – Political opinions that exist but have not been fully expressed.
6. **Salience** – Extent to which people believe issues are relevant to them.
7. **Political socialization** – The process – most notably in families and schools – by which we develop our political attitudes, values, and beliefs.
8. **Attentive public** – Those citizens who follow public affairs carefully.
9. **Voter registration** – System designed to reduce voter fraud by limiting voting to those who have established eligibility to vote by submitting the proper documents.
10. **Australian ballot** – A secret ballot printed by the state.
11. **General election** – Elections in which voters elect officeholders.

12. **Primary election** – Elections in which voters determine party nominees.
13. **Presidential election** – Elections held in years when the president is on the ballot.
14. **Midterm election** – Elections held midway between presidential elections.
15. **Off-year elections** – Elections held in odd-numbered calendar years.
16. **Turnout** – The proportion of the voting age public that votes, sometimes defined as the number of registered voters that vote.
17. **Party identification** – An informal and subjective affiliation with a political party that most people acquire in childhood.
18. **Candidate appeal** – How voters feel about a candidate's background, personality, leadership ability, and other personal qualities.
19. **Prospective issue voting** – Voting based on what a candidate pledges to do in the future about an issue if elected.
20. **Retrospective issue of voting** – Holding incumbents, usually the president's party, responsible for their records on issues, such as the economy or foreign policy.

❖CAMPAIGNS AND ELECTIONS

1. **Fixed term** – length of term in office is specified, not indefinite.
2. **Staggered term** – Not all offices are up for election at the same time; this occurs in the Senate where 1/3 of seats are up for reelection every two years.
3. **Lame duck** – A politician who cannot, or has announced he or she will not, run again.
4. **Winner-take-all system** – An election system in which the candidate with the most votes wins.
5. **Majority** – Receiving more than half of the votes cast.
6. **Plurality** – Receiving the largest number of votes (can be less than half).
7. **Single-member district** – An electoral district in which voters choose one representative or official.
8. **Proportional representation** – Election system in which each party running receives the proportion of legislative seats corresponding to its proportion of the vote.
9. **Electoral college** – Electoral system used in electing the president and vice president, in which voters vote for electors pledged to cast their ballots for particular party's candidates.
10. **Safe seat** – Elected office that is predictably won by one party or the other, so the success of the party's candidate is almost taken for granted.
11. **Coattail effect** – The boost that candidates may get in an election because of the popularity of candidates above them on the ballot, especially the president.
12. **Caucus** – A meeting of local party members to choose party officials or candidates for public office and to decide the platform.
13. **National party convention** – A national meeting of delegates elected at primaries, caucuses, or state conventions who assemble once every four years to nominate candidates for president and vice president, ratify the party platform, elect officers, and adopt rules.
14. **Interested money** – Financial contributions by individuals or groups in the hope of influencing the outcome of the election and subsequently influencing policy.
15. **Federal Election Commission (FEC)** – A commission created by the 1974 amendments to the Federal Election Campaign Act to administer election reform laws. It consists of six commissioners appointed by president and confirmed by the Senate. Its duties include overseeing disclosure of campaign finance information and public funding of presidential elections, and enforcing contribution limits.
16. **Soft money** – Contributions to a state or local party for party-building purposes.
17. **Hard money** – Donations made to political candidates, party committees, or groups which, by law, are limited and must be declared.
18. **Issue advocacy** – Promoting a particular position or an issue paid for by interest groups or individuals but not candidates. Much issue advocacy is often electioneering for or against a candidate, and until 2004 had not been subject to any regulation.
19. **527 groups** – Interest groups organized under section 527 of the Internal Revenue Code may advertise for or against candidates. If their source of funding is corporations or unions, they have some restrictions on broadcast advertising. 527 organizations were important in recent elections.
20. **Independent expenditures** – Money spent by individuals or groups not associated with candidates to elect or defeat candidates for office.