

VIII. Summary (pp. 262-263)

**LEARNING OBJECTIVES**

*After studying Chapter 8, you should be able to:*

1. Discuss the meaning and functions of a political party.
2. Discuss the nature of the party-in-the-electorate, party organizations, and the party-in-government.
3. Describe the party eras in American history and how parties realign and dealign.
4. Evaluate the two-party system, its consequences, and the place of third parties in the system.
5. Identify the challenges facing the American political parties and explain their relationship to American democracy, individualism, and the scope of government.

*The following exercises will help you meet these objectives:*

Objective 1: Discuss the meaning and functions of a political party.

1. Define the term "political party."
2. Explain the three heads of the political party as a "three-headed political giant."
  - 1.
  - 2.
  - 3.
3. What are the five tasks political parties should perform if they are to serve as effective linkage institutions?

- 1.
  - 2.
  - 3.
  - 4.
  - 5.
4. Draw a graph or diagram depicting Anthony Downs' rational-choice model of political parties.

Objective 2: Discuss the nature of the party-in-the-electorate, party organizations, and the party-in-government.

1. What has been the most prominent trend in party identification in recent years?
2. What is meant by "ticket-splitting"?
3. Draw an organizational chart of an American political party and then mark where most of the power actually exists.
4. What is meant by a "party machine"?

5. What is the difference between the following types of party primaries?
  1. closed primaries
  2. open primaries
  3. blanket primaries
6. What is the function of each of the following national party organizations?
  1. National Convention:
  2. National Committee:
  3. National Chairperson:
7. What is the relationship between party promises and party performance?

Objective 3: Describe the party eras in American history and how parties realign and dealign.

1. List four elections which might be considered "critical" or "realigning" and explain why.
  - 1.
  - 2.
  - 3.
  - 4.
2. Complete the following table on party eras.

Party Era	Major Party	Major Party Coalition	Minor Party	Minor Party Coalition	Prominent President(s)
1796-1824					
1828-1856					
1860-1892					
1896-1928					
1932-1964					

3. List the six presidents since 1968 and complete the following table on divided government.

President and Party Affiliation	Number Of Years With Republican Congress	Number Of Years With Democratic Congress

4. What is meant by "party neutrality"?

Objective 4: Evaluate the two-party system, its consequences, and the place of third parties in the system.

1. What are the three basic varieties of third parties?
  - 1.
  - 2.
  - 3.
2. What are two ways in which third parties can have an impact on American politics?
  - 1.
  - 2.
3. What is the most important consequence of two-party governance in the United States?

Objective 5: Identify the challenges facing the American political parties, and explain their relationship to American democracy, individualism, and the scope of government.

1. List the four conditions that advocates of the responsible party model believe the parties should meet.
  - 1.
  - 2.
  - 3.
  - 4.
2. What is the major consequence of the prominence of individualism within American political parties?

3. How does the American party system affect the scope of government?
4. What is the key problem of the American political parties today?

### KEY TERMS

*Identify and describe:*

party competition

political party

linkage institutions

party image

rational-choice theory

party identification

ticket-splitting

party machines

patronage

closed primaries

open primaries

blanket primaries

national convention

national committee

national chairperson

coalition

party eras

critical election

party realignment

New Deal Coalition

party dealignment

party neutrality

third parties

winner-take-all system

proportional representation

coalition government

responsible party model

*Compare and contrast:*

political party and linkage institutions

party identification and ticket-splitting

party machines and patronage



closed primaries, open primaries, and blanket primaries

national convention, national committee, and national chairperson

party eras and critical election

party realignment and party dealignment

party realignment and New Deal Coalition

party dealignment and party neutrality

winner-take-all system and proportional representation

*Name that term:*

1. The battle between the parties for the control of public offices.  
\_\_\_\_\_
2. The perception of what the Republicans and Democrats stand for.  
\_\_\_\_\_
3. This seeks to explain political processes and outcomes as consequences of purposive behavior.  
\_\_\_\_\_

4. Voting with one party for one office and another for other offices.  
\_\_\_\_\_
5. One of the key inducements used by political machines.  
\_\_\_\_\_
6. A set of individuals and groups who support a political party.  
\_\_\_\_\_
7. Political party eras are punctuated by these.  
\_\_\_\_\_
8. Often a consequence of proportional representation; many European governments are ruled by these.  
\_\_\_\_\_
9. Examples of these include the Free Soil party, the Jobless party, and the American Independent party.  
\_\_\_\_\_
10. Advocates of this reform believe that it would make it easier for party promises to be turned into governmental policy.  
\_\_\_\_\_

### USING YOUR UNDERSTANDING

1. Investigate the party system of another Western democratic political system that is of interest to you, such as Great Britain. Try to identify the major features of the political parties in the system in terms of the party-in-the-electorate, the party as organization, and the party-in-government. Briefly describe what you found in comparison to the two-party system in the United States. Include a discussion of whether the party system is experiencing realignment, dealignment, or another form of change.

2. Gerald Pomper's study of party platforms covered the years 1944-1976. Follow up on this study by examining the Republican Party platforms for 1980, 1984, 1988, and 2000 and the Democratic Party platforms for 1992 and 1996. Make a list of the promises made in the Republican platforms and compare them to the accomplishments of the Reagan, George Bush, and George W. Bush administrations. Make a list of the promises of the 1992 and 1996 Democratic platform and compare them to the policy initiatives of the Clinton administration. For the party not occupying the presidency, you might compare legislative initiatives by that party in Congress with their party platform. Evaluate the degree to which the parties keep the policy promises they set forth. If possible, look at public opinion polls to see if public opinion supports platform positions on key issues. Develop an analysis of the importance of party platforms in the electoral process and in making public policy.

## REVIEW QUESTIONS

Check ☒ the correct answer:

1. The framers of the U.S. Constitution approved of the formation of political parties.  
☐ True  
☐ False
2. Which of the following statements regarding political parties is FALSE?  
☐ a. The main goal of political parties is to try to win elections.  
☐ b. Party teams are well disciplined and single-minded.  
☐ c. Party leaders often disagree about policy.  
☐ d. Between elections the parties seem to all but disappear.
3. The largest component of the political party is the  
☐ a. party-in-the-electorate.  
☐ b. party as an organization.  
☐ c. party-in-government.  
☐ d. local party machine.
4. The people who keep the party running between elections and make its rules are members of the  
☐ a. party-in-the-electorate.  
☐ b. party as an organization.  
☐ c. party-in-government.  
☐ d. local party machine.

5. Which of the following is NOT one of the four key linkage institutions?
- ☐ a. parties
  - ☐ b. elections
  - ☐ c. interest groups
  - ☐ d. policymakers
6. According to Kay Lawson, the key tasks that parties perform, or should perform, include
- ☐ a. articulating policies.
  - ☐ b. picking policymakers.
  - ☐ c. running campaigns.
  - ☐ d. all of the above.
7. The concept of party image is most important for parties to
- ☐ a. pick policymakers.
  - ☐ b. run campaigns.
  - ☐ c. give cues to voters.
  - ☐ d. articulate party policies.
8. According to Anthony Downs, political parties and voters are both irrational.
- ☐ True
  - ☐ False
9. According to the Downsian model, the most successful political parties would be
- ☐ a. extremely conservative.
  - ☐ b. liberal.
  - ☐ c. moderate.
  - ☐ d. slightly conservative.
10. More than half of the population currently feels that important differences exist between the parties.
- ☐ True
  - ☐ False
11. Party identification
- ☐ a. requires formal membership with one of the parties.
  - ☐ b. is strongest for young Americans.
  - ☐ c. has declined while there has been an upsurge of people identifying as independents.
  - ☐ d. can always predict voting behavior.

12. In America, ticket-splitting is  
☐ a. rare.  
☐ b. illegal.  
☐ c. near an all-time high.  
☐ d. a sign of party renewal.
13. Power in the American political parties is highly centralized.  
☐ True  
☐ False
14. Urban political machines depended on  
☐ a. specific inducements.  
☐ b. material inducements.  
☐ c. patronage.  
☐ d. all of the above.
15. The national parties are actually a loose aggregation of state parties.  
☐ True  
☐ False
16. State party organizations are better organized and have more funds than most national interest groups in Washington.  
☐ True  
☐ False
17. Primaries that allow voters to decide on election day whether they want to participate in the Democratic or Republican contests are called  
☐ a. closed primaries.  
☐ b. open primaries.  
☐ c. blanket primaries.  
☐ d. political primaries.
18. The supreme power within each of the parties is the  
☐ a. national chairperson.  
☐ b. national convention.  
☐ c. local party organization.  
☐ d. president.
19. The day-to-day activities of the national party are the responsibility of the  
☐ a. president.  
☐ b. national committee.  
☐ c. national chairperson.  
☐ d. national convention.

20. (bonus) Which of the following presidents failed to keep his campaign promise to balance the budget?
- ☐ a. Lyndon Johnson
  - ☐ b. Richard Nixon
  - ☐ c. Jimmy Carter
  - ☐ d. Ronald Reagan
21. Most promises by presidential candidates are kept once they take office.
- ☐ True
  - ☐ False
22. Gerald Pomper found that party platforms
- ☐ a. do not predict party performance.
  - ☐ b. are ignored after elections.
  - ☐ c. consist of promises that are kept more often than not.
  - ☐ d. are very similar for the two major parties.
23. Most democratic nations have a
- ☐ a. one-party system.
  - ☐ b. two-party system.
  - ☐ c. multi-party system.
  - ☐ d. regional party system.
24. During party eras, one party is the dominant majority party for long periods of time.
- ☐ True
  - ☐ False
25. Party eras are punctuated by
- ☐ a. critical elections.
  - ☐ b. party reforms.
  - ☐ c. national party conventions.
  - ☐ d. political coalitions.
26. Party realignment occurs with great frequency in American party politics.
- ☐ True
  - ☐ False

27. The coalition behind the Democratic-Republican Party included
- ☐ a. Federalists.
  - ☐ b. capitalists.
  - ☐ c. farmers.
  - ☐ d. silver interests.
28. More than anyone else, the person who founded the modern American political party was
- ☐ a. Alexander Hamilton.
  - ☐ b. Andrew Jackson.
  - ☐ c. Martin Van Buren.
  - ☐ d. Abraham Lincoln.
29. Which of the following was NOT a part of the Republican era from 1860 to 1928?
- ☐ a. the battle to outlaw slavery
  - ☐ b. the fight to establish the gold standard
  - ☐ c. a shifting of party coalitions
  - ☐ d. the New Deal
30. The New Deal was a political response to the
- ☐ a. Great Depression.
  - ☐ b. Civil War.
  - ☐ c. rise of agrarian interests.
  - ☐ d. resurgence of capitalism.
31. Which of the following groups were NOT associated with the New Deal coalition?
- ☐ a. Catholics and Jews
  - ☐ b. urban working classes
  - ☐ c. Republicans
  - ☐ d. intellectuals
32. Lyndon Johnson's programs to help the poor, dispossessed, and minorities are known as the
- ☐ a. New Deal.
  - ☐ b. Fair Deal.
  - ☐ c. New Frontier.
  - ☐ d. Great Society.
33. The Democratic Party was torn apart in 1968 by
- ☐ a. Johnson's War on Poverty.
  - ☐ b. Johnson's Vietnam War policies.
  - ☐ c. economic depression.
  - ☐ d. the Watergate scandal.

34. The recent party dealignment has been characterized by a
- ☐ a. growing party neutrality.
  - ☐ b. dramatic decline in voter participation.
  - ☐ c. decline in party organization.
  - ☐ d. growth in the strength of third parties.
35. Party loyalty today is at an all-time high.
- ☐ True
  - ☐ False
36. Which of the following observations about the parties today is FALSE?
- ☐ a. In recent years, the party system has dealigned rather than realigned.
  - ☐ b. Party loyalty has declined.
  - ☐ c. Party dealignment has been characterized by a growing party neutrality.
  - ☐ d. Most Americans today have extremely negative attitudes toward the parties.
37. Throughout American history, third parties have
- ☐ a. developed as offshoots of a major party.
  - ☐ b. promoted specific causes.
  - ☐ c. developed as an extension of a popular presidential aspirant.
  - ☐ d. all of the above.
38. Which of the following consequences is LEAST associated with third parties in America?
- ☐ a. serving as safety valves for popular discontent
  - ☐ b. bringing new groups into the electorate
  - ☐ c. consistent victories in federal offices
  - ☐ d. "sending a message" to Washington
39. Consequences of the two-party system include
- ☐ a. increased political conflict.
  - ☐ b. moderation of conflict and policy ambiguity.
  - ☐ c. more distinct policy choices.
  - ☐ d. representation of extreme ideologies.
40. The founding of the world's first party system in the United States was seen as a risky adventure in the uncharted waters of democracy.
- ☐ True
  - ☐ False



41. The system in which whoever gets the most votes wins the election is called the
- ☐ a. winner-take-all system.
  - ☐ b. proportional representation system.
  - ☐ c. coalition system.
  - ☐ d. multi-party system.
42. In a system that employs proportional representation,
- ☐ a. whoever gets the most votes wins the election.
  - ☐ b. parties are awarded legislative seats in proportion to their votes.
  - ☐ c. every party gets represented in the legislature.
  - ☐ d. there is very little difference between the political parties.
43. According to the responsible party model, which of the following is NOT one of the functions of the parties?
- ☐ a. They should present distinct, comprehensive programs.
  - ☐ b. They should implement their programs once in office.
  - ☐ c. They should create a fragmented decisional system.
  - ☐ d. They should accept responsibility for the performance of government.
44. (bonus) The 1991 Republican nominee for Governor of Louisiana who was denounced by Republican President George Bush was
- ☐ a. George Wallace.
  - ☐ b. David Duke.
  - ☐ c. Ross Perot.
  - ☐ d. David Mayhew.
45. Which of the following statements is FALSE?
- ☐ a. American parties are too decentralized to take a single national position and then enforce it.
  - ☐ b. Party discipline in America has resulted in members of Congress voting with their party over 90 percent of the time.
  - ☐ c. Most candidates are self-selected, gaining their nomination by their own efforts and not the party's.
  - ☐ d. Parties do not have control over those who run under their labels.
46. A major consequence of individualism in American party politics is
- ☐ a. party cooperation in Congress.
  - ☐ b. the need for coalition building.
  - ☐ c. gridlock in policymaking.
  - ☐ d. the growth of third-party politics.

47. The lack of disciplined and cohesive parties in America explains much of why the scope of governmental activity is less in the United States compared to other established democracies.  
☐ True  
☐ False
48. Which of the following is NOT one of the contemporary rivals of the political parties?  
☐ a. the media  
☐ b. urban machines  
☐ c. interest groups  
☐ d. campaign technology

### ESSAY QUESTIONS

1. What is the meaning of a political party? What functions do parties in America perform? How well do you think they perform them, especially in comparison to other linkage institutions?
2. What is the Downsian model of party government? What are its limitations as a normative model for the American party system?
3. How has party identification changed over the years and what affect has it had on elections?
4. Describe the organization of the American political parties. How do party politics at the local, state, and national levels differ? Which level is most important and why?
5. How did the American two-party system evolve? How were coalitions important to this evolution? Include in your answer a discussion of party eras and critical elections.
6. What are the political and policy consequences of having a two-party system? How have third parties made a difference?
7. What is the responsible party model and what are its consequences for democracy?
8. In what ways have the American political parties declined? What are the principal rivals of the political parties? Speculate on the future of political parties in America.