

Chapter 11 Notes:

Lesson 1- Who Can Vote?

1. Expanding Suffrage:
 - a. Early Suffrage (right to vote) limited to small groups of people
 - i. Typically white landowners
 - b. Expansion of voting rights was accomplished by adding amendments to the Constitution
 - i. 15th Amendment- African Americans right to vote (1870)
 - ii. 19th Amendment- Women right to vote (1920)
 - iii. 26th Amendment- Changed voting age from 21 to 18 (1971)
 - c. Some groups of people may not be eligible to vote
 - i. Individuals that are imprisoned
 - ii. People who suffer from mental illness
 - iii. Mentally People who immigrated to the United States (must become citizens)
2. Steps in the Voting Process:
 - a. Register to Vote- officially sign-up to vote (add your name to an eligible voter list)
 - i. Make sure you do it on time (25 days before an election)
 1. Some states allow registration on election day
 - ii. Fill out registration form- name, address, age, political party preference
 - iii. Must provide a driver's license, birth certificate, or other form of valid ID
 - iv. May register to vote through mail, online, or at public places
 - v. National Voter Registration Act- requires states to allow voters to register when they renew their driver's license (Motor Voter Law)
 - b. Preparing to Vote- being informed and educated on current events and public issues
 - i. Keeping up with the news (TV, internet, newspaper, radio)
 - ii. Candidates' speeches, literature, and debates
 1. Bias information
 - iii. Ask yourself the following questions:
 1. Does the candidate stand for issues I think are important?
 2. Is the candidate reliable and honest?
 3. Does the candidate have relevant past experience?
 4. Will the candidate be effective in office?
 5. Does the candidate have a real chance of winning?
 - c. Casting your Vote
 - i. Early voting- voters vote during a set time period before election day
 1. Each state has their own rules
 - ii. Polling place- place you go to vote
 1. Public buildings (schools, libraries, and community centers)
 2. Each precinct or voting district has one polling place
 - iii. Different types of ballots
 1. Computer touch screen, punch card, or check boxes
 2. Absentee ballot- allows people to vote not present on election day
3. Reasons to Vote:
 - a. Right and responsibility of citizenship
 - b. Express satisfaction or dissatisfaction
 - c. Voice in how your community, state, and country run
 - d. "the most powerful instrument ever devised... for breaking down injustice."
 - i. Lyndon B. Johnson 1965

4. Voter Participation:

- a. Turn out is often less than 50%
 - i. Apathy- lack of interest or people feel they are too busy
 - ii. People fail to register after relocating

Lesson 2- Campaigns and Elections:

1. Types of Elections:

- a. Primary Election- 1st step in the process
 - i. Held in spring and summer
 - ii. Select 1 candidate from each party to become the nominee
 - iii. Person with most votes becomes party's candidate for office
 - iv. Runoff election- held if no person wins majority of votes
- b. General Election- elect senators, representatives, the president, and state officials
 - i. Held on the 1st Tuesday after the 1st Monday (11/8/2016 and 11/3/2018)
 - ii. National elections held even numbered years
 - iii. House of Representatives and 1/3 of Senators up every 2 years
 - iv. Presidential elections held every 4 years
 - v. Most states candidate with most votes wins
 1. (President has special rules- the Electoral College)
- c. Initiatives and Referendums- topics or issues of public interest
 - i. Initiative- process that lets voters propose new amendments or laws
 - ii. Referendum- ask voters to accept or reject a law passed by state/ local legislators
- d. Special Elections
 - i. Recall election- people vote to remove an official from office
 1. Starts with a petition
 2. Majority votes to remove, the official must leave office
 - ii. Special election- when a seat is left vacant by death or resignation
- e. Presidential Elections: people cast popular vote for a candidate
 - i. Voters elect special representatives called electors (Electoral College)
 - ii. 538 total electors- based on state representation in Congress
 1. Washington D.C- 3 electors (2 senators, and 1 Representative)
 - iii. December winning electors meet in state capitols to cast ballots
 1. President and Vice President
 2. Send ballots to the Senate to be counted
 - iv. January the House of Representatives and Senate meet to count votes
 1. 270 is the magic number

2. Criticisms of the Electoral College:

- a. Most states are winner-takes-all
 - i. 2 states that split electors (Maine and Nebraska)
 - ii. A candidate who loses the popular vote can still win the Electoral Vote
 - iii. Extremely hard for 3rd party candidates to be represented
 - iv. Constitution set-up the Electoral College
 1. People have direct control over the government
 2. Feared people would be affected by emotion
 3. Mixed System- Electors elect the president, people elect the electors

3. Running for Office:
 - a. Meet qualifications for office
 - b. Form an exploratory committee
 - c. Several candidates running against each other for same office
 - i. Chosen through Primaries
 - ii. Ratified at the national convention
 - iii. Delegates to convention chosen by majority vote
 - iv. National Convention are huge, ceremonial, and televised events
 - v. Once chosen candidate hits campaign trail
 1. Speeches, interviews, and events
 - d. Campaign staff help reach voters
 - i. Canvass neighborhoods, telephone, and internet
 - ii. Advice on how to appeal to voters
 - e. Boost image by endorsements
 - i. Celebrities, politicians, newspapers, unions, and etc.
 - ii. Advertise on TV, bumper stickers, yard signs, and etc.
4. Campaign Finance:
 - a. Range from hundred thousand to millions of dollars
 - b. Money comes from donations
 - i. Individuals, corporations, unions, private groups, and etc.
 - c. Political Action Groups (PACs)
 - i. Groups set up by Interest groups to donate and direct money to candidates
 - d. Federal Election Commission (FEC)
 - i. Regulates campaigns and how they are run
 - ii. People worried politicians will help people who donated money