

UNIT 5A: INTEREST GROUPS

Political Participation Vocab

1. **Linkage institutions** – Institutions (elections, interest groups, political parties, mass media) that connect the citizens of America to the policy-making institutions (Congress, president, courts, bureaucracy).
2. **Interest group** – A collection of people who share a common interest or attitude and seek to influence government for specific ends. Interest groups usually work within the framework of government and try to achieve their goals through tactics such as lobbying.
3. **Faction** – A term the founders used to refer to political parties and special interests or interest groups.
4. **Federalist #10** – Paper that stated one of the strongest arguments in favor of the Constitution is the fact that it establishes a government capable of controlling the violence and damage caused by factions.
5. **Policy Agenda** – The set of issues to which government officials, voters, and the public are paying attention.
6. **Collective Action** – Political action that occurs when individuals contribute their energy, time, or money to a larger group goal.
7. **Pluralism** – A theory of government that holds that open, multiple, and competing groups can check the asserted power by any one group.
8. **Free rider** – An individual who does not to join a group representing his or her interests yet receives the benefit of the group's influence.
9. **amicus curiae brief** – Literally, a "friend of the court" brief, filed by an individual or organization to present arguments in addition to those presented by the immediate parties to a case.
10. **Iron Triangle** – Alliances among bureaucrats, interest groups, and congressional subcommittee members sometimes form to promote their common causes.
11. **Issue network** – Network that consists of people in interest groups, on congressional staffs, in bureaucratic agencies, in universities, and in the mass media who regularly debate an issue.
12. **Political action committee (PAC)** – The political arm of an interest group that is legally entitled to raise funds on a voluntary basis from members, stockholders, or employees to contribute funds to candidates or political parties.
13. **Super PACs** – Independent expenditure-only PACs are known as Super PACs because they may accept donations of any size and can endorse candidates. Their contributions and expenditures must be periodically reported to the FEC.
14. **Bundling** – A tactic in which PACs collect contributions from like-minded individuals (each limited to \$2000) and present them to a candidate or political party as a "bundle," thus increasing the PAC's influence.
15. **Lobbyist** – A person who is employed by and acts for an organized interest group or corporation to try to influence policy decisions and positions in the executive and legislative branches.
16. **Lobbying** – Engaging in activities aimed at influencing public officials, especially legislators, and the policies they enact.
17. **Revolving door** – Employment cycle in which individuals who work for governmental agencies that regulate interests eventually end up working for interest groups or businesses with the same policy concern.
18. **Hard money** – Political contributions given to a party, candidate, or interest group that are limited in amounts and fully disclosed. Raising such limited funds is harder than raising unlimited funds, hence the term *hard money*.
19. **Soft money** – Money raised in unlimited amounts by political parties for party-building purposes. Now largely illegal except for limited contributions to state and local parties for voter registration and get-out-the-vote efforts.
20. **Bipartisan Campaign Reform Act (BCRA) of 2002** – Effort to ban soft money and reduce attack ads with "Stand by Your Ad" provision: "I'm [candidate name] and I approve this message."
21. **Independent expenditures** – The Supreme Court has ruled that individuals, groups, and parties can spend unlimited amounts in campaigns for or against candidates as long as they operate independently from the candidates. When an individual, group, or party does so, they are making an independent expenditure.
22. **Issue advocacy** – Unlimited and undisclosed spending by an individual or group on communications that do not use words like "vote for" or "vote against," although much of this activity is actually about electing or defeating candidates.
23. **501(c)** – Nonprofit groups that are exempted from reporting their contributions and can receive unlimited contributions. Section 501(c) of the tax code specifies that such groups cannot spend more than half their funds on political activities.
24. **Dark money** – Refers to political spending meant to influence the decision of a voter, where the donor is not disclosed and the source of the money is unknown. Depending upon the circumstances, Dark Money can refer to funds spent by a political nonprofit or a super PAC.

UNIT 5B: POLITICAL PARTIES

Political Participation Vocab

1. **Political party** – An organization that seeks political power by electing people to office so that its positions and philosophy become public policy.
2. **Nonpartisan election** – A local or judicial election in which candidates are not selected or endorsed by political parties and party affiliation is not listed on ballots.
3. **Patronage** – The dispensing of government jobs to persons who belong to the winning political party.
4. **Honeymoon** – Period at the beginning of the new president's term during which the president enjoys generally positive relations with the press and Congress, usually lasting about six months.
5. **Caucus** – A meeting of local party members to choose party officials or candidates for public office and to decide the platform.
6. **Party convention** – A meeting of party delegates to vote on matters of policy and in some cases to select party candidates for public office.
7. **Direct primary** – Election in which voters choose party nominees.
8. **Open primary** – Primary election in which any voter, regardless of party, may vote.
9. **Crossover voting** – Voting by member of one party for a candidate of another party.
10. **Closed primary** – Primary election in which only persons registered in the party holding the primary may vote.
11. **Proportional representation** – An election system in which each party running receives the proportion of legislative seats corresponding to its proportion of the vote.
12. **Winner-take-all system** – Election system in which the candidate with the most votes wins.
13. **Realigning election** – An election during periods of expanded suffrage and change in the economy and society that proves to be a turning point, redefining the agenda of politics and the alignment of voters within parties.
14. **Minor party** – A small political party that rises and falls with a charismatic candidate or, if composed of ideologies on the right or left, usually persists over time; also called a *third party*.
15. **Divided government** – Governance divided between the parties, as when one holds the presidency and the other controls one or both houses of Congress.
16. **National party convention** – A national meeting of delegates elected in 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.
17. **Platform** – A document stating the policy positions of the party. Details general party-wide issue stances.
18. **Party registration** – The act of declaring party affiliation; required by some states when one registers to vote.
19. **Party identification** – An affiliation with a political party that most people acquire in childhood. The best predictor of voting behavior in partisan candidate elections.
20. **Dealignment** – Weakening of partisan preferences that point to a rejection of both major parties and a rise in the number of independents.

UNIT 5C: MASS MEDIA
Political Participation Vocab

1. **Mass media** – Sources of information designed to reach a wide audience, including newspapers, radio, television, and internet outlets.
2. **News media** – A broad term that includes newspapers, magazines, radio, television, internet sources, blogs, and social-media postings that cover important events.
3. **Broadcast media** – Outlets for news and other content including radio and television that bring stories directly into people’s homes.
4. **24/7 news cycle** – News is now constantly updated and presented via Internet sites like the *New York Times* or *Wall Street Journal* and cable news sources like CNN, Fox News, and MSNBC.
5. **Selective exposure** – The process by which individuals screen out messages that do not conform to their own biases.
6. **Selected perception** – The process by which individuals perceive what they want to in media messages.
7. **Horse race** – A close contest; by extension, any contest in which the focus is on who is ahead and by how much rather than on substantive differences between the candidates.
8. **Agenda setting** – The media’s ability to highlight certain issues and bring them to the attention of the public.
9. **Wire service** – An organization that gathers and reports on news then sells the stories to other outlets.
10. **Investigative journalism** – An approach to newsgathering in which reporters dig into stories, often looking for instances of wrongdoing.
11. **Media consolidation** – The concentration of ownership of the media into fewer corporations.
12. **Partisan bias** – The slanting of political news coverage in support of a particular political party or ideology.
13. **Horse-race journalism** – Coverage of political campaigns that focuses more on the drama of the campaign than on policy issues.