

Glossary

- absentee ballot** A voting ballot submitted by mail before an election. Voters use absentee ballots if they will be unable to go to the polls on Election Day.
- activists** People who dedicate their time, effort, and money to supporting a political party or particular candidates.
- adversarial system** A two-sided court structure in which lawyers on both sides of a case attempt to prove their argument over their opponent's version of the case.
- advertising** Actions taken by a member of Congress that are unrelated to government issues but have the primary goal of making a positive impression on the public, like sending holiday cards to constituents and appearing in parades.
- Aid to Families with Dependant Children (AFDC)** The federal welfare program in place from 1935 until 1996, when it was replaced by Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) under President Clinton.
- alliance** An agreement between two or more countries pledging support if one of those countries is attacked.
- amicus curiae** Latin for “friend of the court,” referring to an interested group or person who shares relevant information about a case to help the Court reach a decision. Usually *amicus* participants register their opinions in briefs, but they also may participate in oral arguments if one of the parties in the case gives them some of their allotted time.
- Antifederalists** Those at the Constitutional Convention who favored strong state governments over a strong national government.
- appeals courts** The intermediate level of federal courts that hear appeals from district courts. More generally, an appeals court is any court with appellate jurisdiction.
- appellate jurisdiction** The authority of a court to hear appeals from lower courts and change or uphold the decision.
- apportionment** The process of assigning the 435 seats in the House to the states based on increases or decreases in state populations.
- Articles of Confederation** Written in 1776, these were the first attempt at a new American government. It was later decided that the Articles restricted national government too much, and they were replaced by the Constitution.
- astroturf lobbying** Any lobbying method initiated by an interest group that is designed to look like the spontaneous, independent participation of many individuals.
- attack ads** Campaign advertising that criticizes a candidate's opponent—typically by making potentially damaging claims about the opponent's background or record—rather than focusing on positive reasons to vote for the candidate.
- attack journalism** A type of increasingly popular media coverage focused on political scandals and controversies, which causes a negative public opinion of political figures.
- attitudinalist approach** A way of understanding decisions of the Supreme Court based on the political ideologies of the justices.
- Baby Boom generation** Americans born between 1946 and 1964 who will be retiring in large numbers over the next twenty-five years.
- backbenchers** Legislators who do not hold leadership positions within their party caucus or conference.
- balanced budget** A spending plan in which the government's expenditures are equal to its revenue.
- bicameralism** The system of having two chambers within one legislative body, like the House and Senate in the U.S. Congress.
- bilateral agreements** Treaties between two nations.
- Bill of Rights** The first ten amendments to the Constitution; they protect individual rights and liberties.
- block grants** Federal aid provided to a state government to be spent within a certain policy area, which the state can decide how to spend within that area.
- brand names** The use of party names to evoke certain positions or issues. For instance, “Adidas” might immediately call to mind athletics in the same way that “Democrat” might remind you of environmental policies or universal health care.
- briefs** Written documents prepared by both parties in a case, and sometimes by outside groups, presenting their arguments in court.
- broadcast media** Communications technologies, such as television and radio, that transmit information over airwaves.
- budget deficit** The amount by which a government's spending in a given fiscal year exceeds its revenue.
- budget making** The processes carried out in Congress to determine how government money will be spent and revenue will be raised.
- budget maximizers** Bureaucrats who seek to increase funding for their agency whether or not that additional spending is worthwhile.
- budget reconciliation** The process by which congressional committees are held to the spending targets specified in the budget resolution. During this process the House and Senate Budget Committees combine the budgetary changes from all the legislative committees into an omnibus reconciliation bill to be approved by Congress.
- burden of proof** The responsibility of having to prove guilt; it rests with the plaintiff in criminal cases but could be with either party in a civil trial.
- bureaucracy** The system of civil servants and political appointees who implement congressional or presidential decisions; also known as the administrative state.
- bureaucratic drift** Bureaucrats' tendency to implement policies in a way that favors their own political objectives rather than following the original intentions of the legislation.
- Bush Doctrine** The foreign policy of President George W. Bush, under which the United States would use military force preemptively against threats to its national security.
- business cycle** The normal pattern of expansion and contraction of the economy.
- by-product theory of information transmission** The idea that many Americans acquire political information unintentionally rather than by seeking it out.
- cabinet** The group of fifteen executive department heads who implement the president's agenda in their respective positions.
- campaign platform** A candidate's description of his or her issue positions and the kinds of policies he or she will seek to enact in office.
- cases on appeal** Cases brought before the Supreme Court because Congress has determined that they require the Court's attention.
- casework** Assistance provided by members of Congress to their constituents in solving problems with the federal bureaucracy or addressing other specific concerns.
- categorical grants** Federal aid to state or local governments that is provided for a specific purpose, such as a mass transit program within the transportation budget or a school lunch program within the education budget.

caucus (congressional) The organization of Democrats within the House and Senate that meets to discuss and debate the party's positions on various issues in order to reach a consensus and to assign leadership positions.

caucus (political) A local meeting in which party members select a party's nominee for the general election.

centralized groups Interest groups that have a headquarters, usually in Washington, DC, as well as members and field offices throughout the country. In general, these groups' lobbying decisions are made at headquarters by the group leaders.

cert pool A system initiated in the Supreme Court in the 1970s in which law clerks screen cases that come to the Supreme Court and recommend to the justices which cases should be heard.

challenger A politician running for an office that he does not hold at the time of the election. Challengers run against incumbents or in open-seat elections.

checks and balances A system in which each branch of government has some power over the others.

citizen groups A type of interest group that seeks changes in spending, regulations, or government programs concerning a wide range of policies (also known as public interest groups).

civil liberties Basic political freedoms that protect citizens from governmental abuses of power.

civil rights Rights that guarantee individuals freedom from discrimination. These rights are generally grounded in the equal protection clause of the 14th Amendment and more specifically laid out in laws passed by Congress, such as the 1964 Civil Rights Act.

civil servants Employees of bureaucratic agencies within the government.

Civil War Amendments The 13th, 14th, and 15th Amendments to the Constitution, which abolished slavery and granted civil liberties and voting rights to freed slaves after the Civil War.

clash of civilizations The theory that terrorism is motivated by a hatred of Western culture and religion.

clear and present danger test Established in *Schenck v. United States*, this test allows the government to restrict certain types of speech deemed dangerous.

closed primary A primary election in which only registered members of a particular political party can vote.

closed rules Conditions placed on a legislative debate by the House Rules Committee prohibiting the addition of amendments to a bill.

cloture A procedure through which the Senate can limit the amount of time spent debating a bill (cutting off a filibuster), if a supermajority of sixty senators agree.

coattails The idea that a popular president can generate additional support for candidates affiliated with his party. Coattails are weak or nonexistent in most American elections.

coercion A method of eliminating nonparticipation or free riding by potential group members by requiring participation, as in many labor unions.

coercive federalism A form of federalism in which the federal government pressures the states to change their policies by using regulations, mandates, and conditions (often involving threats to withdraw federal funding).

Cold War The period of tension and arms competition between the United States and the Soviet Union that lasted from 1954 until 1991.

collective action problem A situation in which the members of a group would benefit by working together to produce some outcome, but each individual is better off refusing to cooperate and reaping benefits from those who do the work.

collusion Agreement between the litigants on the desired outcome of a case, causing a federal court to decline to hear the case. More generally, collusion can refer to any kind of conspiracy or complicity.

commerce clause Part of Article I, Section 8, of the Constitution that gives Congress "the power to regulate Commerce . . . among the several States." The Supreme Court's interpretation of this clause has varied, but today it serves as the basis for much of Congress's legislation.

commerce clause powers The powers of Congress to regulate the economy granted in Article I, Section 8, of the Constitution.

commercial speech Public expression with the aim of making a profit. It has received greater protection under the 1st Amendment in recent years but remains less protected than political speech.

common law Law based on the precedent of previous court rulings rather than on legislation. It is used in all federal courts and forty-nine of the fifty state courts.

competitive federalism A form of federalism in which states compete to attract businesses and jobs through the policies they adopt.

concentration The trend toward single-company ownership of several media sources in one area.

concurrent powers Responsibilities for particular policy areas, such as transportation, that are shared by federal, state, and local governments.

conditional party government The theory that lawmakers from the same party will cooperate to develop policy proposals.

confederal government A form of government in which states hold power over a limited national government.

confederations Interest groups made up of several independent, local organizations that provide much of their funding and hold most of the power.

conference The organization of Republicans within the House and Senate who meet to discuss and debate the party's positions on various issues in order to reach a consensus and to assign leadership positions.

conference committees Temporary committees created to negotiate differences between the House and Senate versions of a piece of legislation that has passed through both chambers.

consent of the governed The idea that government gains its legitimacy through regular elections in which the people living under that government participate to elect their leaders.

conservative One side of the ideological spectrum defined by support for lower taxes, a free market, and a more limited government; generally associated with Republicans.

considerations The many pieces of information a person uses to form an opinion.

constitutional authority (presidential) Powers derived from the provisions of the Constitution that outline the president's role in government.

constitutional courts Those courts established under Article III of the Constitution (or under the legislative power granted to Congress in Article III to create new courts): the Supreme Court, district courts, and appeals courts.

constitutional interpretation The process of determining whether a piece of legislation or governmental action is supported by the Constitution.

constitutional revolution A significant change in the Constitution that may be accomplished either through amendments (as in after the Civil War) or shifts in the Supreme Court's interpretation of the Constitution (as in the New Deal era).

containment An important feature of American Cold War policy in which the United States used diplomatic, economic, and military strategies in an effort to prevent the Soviet Union from expanding its influence.

cooperative federalism A form of federalism in which national and state governments work together to provide services efficiently. This form emerged in the late 1930s, representing a profound shift toward less concrete boundaries of responsibility in national-state relations.

Council of Economic Advisors (CEA) A group of economic advisers, created by the Employment Act of 1946, who provide objective data on

the state of the economy and make economic policy recommendations to the president.

credit claiming The acceptance of credit by a member of Congress for legislation that specifically benefits his constituents.

crosscutting A term describing issues that raise disagreements within a party coalition or between political parties about what government should do.

cross-ownership The trend toward single-company ownership of several kinds of media outlets.

culture wars Political conflict in the United States between “red state” Americans who tend to have strong religious beliefs and “blue state” Americans who tend to be more secular.

current account The balance of a country’s receipts and its payments in international trade and investment.

de facto Relating to actions or circumstances that occur outside the law or “by fact,” such as the segregation of schools that resulted from housing patterns and other factors rather than from laws.

de jure Relating to actions or circumstances that occur “by law,” such as the legally enforced segregation of schools in the American South before the 1960s.

dealignment A decline in the percentage of citizens who identify with one of the major parties, usually over the course of a decade or longer.

defendant The person or party against whom a case is brought.

delegate (congressional role) A member of Congress who loyally represents constituents’ direct interests.

delegates Individuals who attend their party’s national convention and vote to select their party’s nominee for the presidency. Delegates are elected in a series of primaries and caucuses that occur during winter and spring of an election year.

descriptive representation When a member of Congress shares the characteristics (like gender, race, religion, or ethnicity) of his or her constituents.

détente An approach to foreign policy in which cultural exchanges and negotiations are used to reduce tensions between rival nations, such as between the United States and the Soviet Union during the 1970s.

diplomacy The process of negotiation on international issues between national leaders.

direct incitement test Established in *Brandenburg v. Ohio*, this test protects threatening speech under the 1st Amendment unless that speech aims to and is likely to cause imminent “lawless action.”

direct lobbying Attempts by interest group staff to influence policy by speaking with elected officials or bureaucrats.

discount rate The interest rate that a bank must pay on a short-term loan from the Federal Reserve Bank.

discretionary spending Expenditures that can be cut from the budget without changing the underlying law.

disenfranchised To have been denied the ability to exercise a right, such as the right to vote.

disparate impact standard The idea that discrimination exists if a practice has a negative effect on a specific group, whether or not this effect was intentional.

distributive theory The idea that members of Congress will join committees that best serve the interests of their district and that committee members will support each other’s legislation.

district courts Lower level trial courts of the federal judicial system that handle most U.S. federal cases.

divided government A situation in which the House, Senate, and presidency are not controlled by the same party, such as if Democrats hold the majority of House and Senate seats, and the president is a Republican.

docket A calendar listing of cases that have been submitted to a court.

doctrine of interposition The idea that if the national government passes an unconstitutional law, the people of the states (through their state legislatures) can declare the law void. This idea provided the basis for southern secession and the Civil War.

domino theory An idea held by American foreign policy makers during the Cold War that the creation of one Soviet-backed communist nation would lead to the spread of communism in that nation’s region.

double jeopardy Being tried twice for the same crime. This is prevented by the 5th Amendment.

dual federalism The form of federalism favored by Chief Justice Roger Taney in which national and state governments are seen as distinct entities providing separate services. This model limits the power of the national government.

due process clause Part of the 14th Amendment that forbids states from denying “life liberty or property” to any person without the due process of law. (A nearly identical clause in the 5th Amendment applies only to the national government.)

due process rights The idea that laws and legal proceedings must be fair. The Constitution guarantees that the government cannot take away a person’s “life, liberty, or property, without due process of law.” Other specific due process rights are found in the 4th, 5th, 6th, and 8th amendments, such as protection from self-incrimination and freedom from illegal searches.

Duverger’s law The principle that in a democracy with single-member districts and plurality voting, like the United States, only two parties’ candidates will have a realistic chance of winning political office.

earmarks Federally funded local projects attached to bills passed through Congress.

economic depression A deep, widespread downturn in the economy, like the Great Depression of the 1930s.

economic groups A type of interest group that seeks public policies that will provide monetary benefits to its members.

economic individualism The autonomy of individuals to manage their own financial decisions without government interference.

elastic clause Part of Article I, Section 8, of the Constitution that grants Congress the power to pass any law that is related to one of its expressed powers.

election cycle The two-year period between general elections.

electoral college The body that votes to select America’s president and vice president based on the popular vote in each state. Each candidate nominates a slate of electors who are selected to attend the meeting of the college if their candidate wins the most votes in a state or district.

electoral connection The idea that congressional behavior is centrally motivated by members’ desire for reelection.

electoral vote Votes cast by members of the electoral college; after a presidential candidate wins the popular vote in a given state, that candidate’s slate of electors will cast electoral votes for the candidate on behalf of that state.

entitlement Any federal government program that provides benefits to Americans who meet requirements specified by law.

enumerated powers Powers explicitly granted to Congress, the president, or the Supreme Court in the first three articles of the Constitution. Examples include Congress’s power to “raise and support armies” and the president’s power as commander in chief.

equal time provision An FCC regulation requiring broadcast media to provide equal airtime on any non-news programming to all candidates running for an office.

establishment clause Part of the 1st Amendment that states, “Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion,” which has been interpreted to mean that Congress cannot sponsor or favor any religion.

exclusionary rule The principle that illegally or unconstitutionally acquired evidence cannot be used in a criminal trial.

executive agreement An agreement between the executive branch and a foreign government, which acts as a treaty but does not require Senate approval.

Executive Office of the President (EOP) The group of policy-related offices that serve as support staff to the president.

executive orders Proclamations made by the president that change government policy without congressional approval.

executive powers clause Part of Article II, Section 1, of the Constitution that states, “The executive Power shall be vested in a President of the United States of America.” This broad statement has been used to justify many assertions of presidential power.

executive privilege The right of the president to keep executive branch conversations and correspondence confidential from the legislative and judicial branches.

factions Groups of like-minded people who try to influence the government. American government is set up to avoid domination by any one of these groups.

fairness doctrine An FCC regulation requiring broadcast media to present several points of view to ensure balanced coverage. It was created in the late 1940s and eliminated in 1987.

fast-track authority An expedited system for passing treaties under which support from simple majority, rather than a two thirds majority, is needed in both the House and Senate, and no amendments are allowed.

federal civil service A system created by the 1883 Pendleton Civil Service Act in which bureaucrats are hired on the basis of merit rather than political connections.

Federal Communications Commission (FCC) A government agency created in 1934 to regulate American radio stations, and later expanded to regulate television, wireless communications technologies, and other broadcast media.

Federal Election Commission The government agency that enforces and regulates campaign finance laws; made up of six presidential appointees, of whom no more than three can be members of the same party.

federal funds rate (FFR) The interest rate that a bank must pay on an overnight loan from another bank.

federal preemptions Impositions of national priorities on the states through national legislation that is based on the Constitution’s supremacy clause.

Federal Reserve Board The group of seven presidential appointees who govern the Federal Reserve System.

Federal Reserve System An independent agency that serves as the central bank of the United States to bring stability to the nation’s banking system.

federalism The division of power across the local, state, and national levels of government.

Federalist Papers A series of eighty-five articles written by Alexander Hamilton, James Madison, and John Jay that sought to sway public opinion toward the Federalists’ position.

Federalists Those at the Constitutional Convention who favored a strong national government over strong state governments.

fighting words Forms of expression that “by their very utterance” can incite violence. These can be regulated by the government but are often difficult to define.

filibuster A tactic used by senators to block a bill by continuing to hold the floor and speak—under the Senate rule of unlimited debate—until the bill’s supporters back down.

filtering The influence on public opinion that results from journalists’ and editors’ decisions about which of many potential news stories to report.

fire alarm oversight A method of oversight in which members of Congress respond to complaints about the bureaucracy or problems of

implementation only as they arise rather than exercising constant vigilance.

first-mover advantage The president’s power to initiate treaty negotiations. Congress cannot initiate treaties and can only consider them once they have been negotiated.

fiscal federalism A form of federalism in which federal funds are allocated to the lower levels of government through transfer payments or grants.

fiscal policy Government decisions about how to influence the economy by taxing and spending.

501(c) organization A tax code classification that applies to most interest groups; this designation makes donations to the group tax-deductible but limits the group’s political activities.

527 organization A tax-exempt group formed primarily to influence elections through voter mobilization efforts and issue ads that do not directly endorse or oppose a candidate. Unlike political action committees, they are not subject to contribution limits and spending caps.

foreign policy Government actions that affect countries, corporations, groups, or individuals outside America’s borders.

framing The influence on public opinion caused by the way a story is presented or covered, including the details, explanations, and context offered in the report.

free exercise clause Part of the 1st Amendment stating that Congress cannot prohibit or interfere with the practice of religion.

free market An economic system based on competition between businesses without government interference.

free rider problem The incentive to benefit from others’ work without contributing that leads individuals in a collective action situation to refuse to work together.

free riding The practice of relying on others to contribute to a collective effort, while failing to participate on one’s own behalf and still benefiting from the group’s successes.

free trade zones Designated areas where tariffs on imports and exports between specific countries do not apply.

frontloading The practice of states moving their presidential primaries or caucuses to take place earlier in the nomination process, often in the hopes of exerting more influence over the outcome.

full employment The theoretical point at which all citizens who want to be employed have a job.

full faith and credit clause Part of Article IV of the Constitution requiring that each state’s laws be honored by the other states. For example, a legal marriage in one state must be recognized across state lines.

gag order An aspect of prior restraint that allows the government to prohibit the media from publishing anything related to an ongoing trial. 116

general election The election in which voters cast ballots for House members, senators, and (every four years) a president and vice president.

general revenue sharing (GRS) A type of grant used in the 1970s and 1980s in which the federal government provided state governments with funds to be spent at each state’s discretion. These grants provided states with more control over programs.

gerrymandering Attempting to use the process of redrawing district boundaries to benefit a political party, protect incumbents, or change the proportion of minority voters in a district.

go public A president’s use of speeches and other public communications to appeal directly to citizens about issues the president would like the House and Senate to act on.

GOTV A campaign’s efforts to “get out the vote” or make sure their supporters vote on Election Day (also known as the ground game).

government The system for implementing decisions made through the political process.

grandfather clause A type of law enacted in several southern states to allow those who were permitted to vote before the Civil War, and their descendants, to bypass literacy tests and other obstacles to voting, thereby exempting whites from these tests while continuing to disenfranchise African Americans and other people of color.

grassroots lobbying A lobbying strategy that relies on participation by group members, such as a protest or a letter-writing campaign.

Great Compromise A compromise between the large and small states, proposed by Connecticut, in which Congress would have two houses: a Senate with two legislators per state and a House of Representatives in which each state's representation would be based on population (also known as the Connecticut Compromise).

Great Society The wide-ranging social agenda promoted by President Lyndon Johnson in the mid-1960s that aimed to improve Americans' quality of life through governmental social programs.

Greenspan Commission The informal name of the National Commission on Social Security Reform created by President Ronald Reagan in 1981 to address short-term and long-term problems facing the Social Security program.

gridlock An inability to enact legislation because of partisan conflict within Congress or between Congress and the president.

gross domestic product (GDP) The value of a country's economic output taken as a whole.

ground game A campaign's efforts to "get out the vote" or make sure their supporters vote on Election Day (also known as GOTV).

hard money Donations that are used to help elect or defeat a specific candidate.

hard news Media coverage focused on facts and important issues surrounding a campaign.

hate speech Expression that is offensive or abusive, particularly in terms of race, gender, or sexual orientation. It is currently protected under the 1st Amendment.

head of government One role of the president, through which he or she has authority over the executive branch.

head of state One role of the president, through which he or she represents the country symbolically and politically.

horse race A description of the type of election coverage that focuses more on poll results and speculation about a likely winner than on substantive differences between the candidates.

hostile media phenomenon The idea that supporters of a candidate or issue tend to feel that media coverage is biased against their position, regardless of whether coverage is actually unfair.

idealism The idea that a country's foreign policy decisions are based on factors beyond self-interest, including upholding important principles or values.

ideological polarization The effect on public opinion when many citizens move away from moderate positions and toward either end of the political spectrum, identifying themselves as either liberals or conservatives.

ideology A cohesive set of ideas and beliefs used to organize and evaluate the political world.

impeachment A negative or checking power of Congress over the other branches allowing them to remove the president, vice president, or other "officers of the United States" (including federal judges) for abuses of power.

implied powers Powers supported by the Constitution that are not expressly stated in it.

income support Government programs that provide support to low-income Americans, such as welfare, food stamps, unemployment compensation, and the Earned Income Tax Credit.

incumbency safety The relative infrequency with which members of Congress are defeated in their attempts for reelection.

incumbent A politician running for reelection to the office she currently holds.

independent agencies Government offices or organizations that provide government services and are not part of an executive department.

inflation The increase in the price of consumer goods over time.

informational theory The idea that having committees in Congress made up of experts on specific policy areas helps to ensure well-informed policy decisions.

initiative A direct vote by citizens on a policy change proposed by fellow citizens or organized groups outside government. Getting a question on the ballot typically requires collecting a set number of signatures from registered voters in support of the proposal. There is no mechanism for a national-level initiative.

inside strategies Tactics used by interest groups within Washington, DC, to achieve their policy goals.

interest group An organizations of people who share common political interests and aim to influence public policy by electioneering and lobbying.

interest group entrepreneurs The leaders of an interest group who define the group's mission and its goals and create a plan to achieve them.

interest group state A government in which most policy decisions are determined by the influence of interest groups.

intermediate scrutiny standard The middle level of scrutiny the courts use when determining whether unequal treatment is justified by the effect of a law; this is the standard used for gender-based discrimination cases and for many cases based on sexual orientation.

International Monetary Fund A nongovernmental organization established in 1944 to help stabilize the international monetary system, improve economic growth, and aid developing nations.

internationalism The idea that the United States should be involved in the affairs of other nations, out of both self-interest and moral obligation.

investigative journalists Reporters who dig deeply into a particular topic of public concern, often targeting government failures and inefficiencies.

isolationism The idea that the United States should refrain from involvement in international affairs.

issue scale A survey response format in which respondents select their answers from a range of positions between two extremes.

issue voters People who are well-informed about their own policy preferences and knowledgeable about the candidates—and use all of this information when they decide how to vote.

Jim Crow laws State and local laws that mandated racial segregation in all public facilities in the South, many border states, and some northern communities between 1876 and 1964.

joint committees Committees that contain members of both the House and Senate but have limited authority.

judicial activism The idea that the Supreme Court should assert its interpretation of the law even if it overrules the elected executive and legislative branches of government.

judicial restraint The idea that the Supreme Court should defer to the democratically elected executive and legislative branches of government rather than contradicting existing laws.

judicial review The Supreme Court's power to strike down a law or executive branch action that it finds unconstitutional.

Judiciary Act of 1789 The law in which Congress laid out the organization of the federal judiciary. The law refined and clarified federal court jurisdiction and set the original number of justices at six. It also created the Office of the Attorney General and established the lower federal courts.

jurisdiction The sphere of a court's legal authority to hear and decide cases.

K Street A shorthand term for Washington lobbyists, derived from the name of the street in Washington, DC, where lobbying firms were once concentrated.

Keynesian economics The theory that governments should use economic policy, like taxing and spending, to maintain stability in the economy.

Kyoto Protocol An international agreement signed in 1997 that set limits on carbon emissions in an effort to slow global warming.

latent A term describing a group of politically like-minded people that is not represented by any interest group.

latent opinion An opinion formed on the spot, when it is needed (as distinct from a deeply held opinion that is stable over time).

leak The release of either classified or politically embarrassing information by a government employee to a member of the press.

legislative courts Limited jurisdiction courts created by Congress under Article I of the Constitution.

legislative veto A form of oversight in which Congress overturns bureaucratic decisions.

Lemon test Established in *Lemon v. Kurtzman*, the Supreme Court uses this test to determine whether a practice violates the 1st Amendment's establishment clause.

level of conceptualization The amount of complexity in an individual's beliefs about government and policy, and the extent to which those beliefs are consistent with each other and remain consistent over time.

libel Written false statements that damage a person's reputation. Such statements can be regulated by the government but are often difficult to distinguish from permissible speech.

liberal One side of the ideological spectrum defined by support for stronger government programs and more market regulation; generally associated with Democrats.

liberal-conservative ideology A way of describing political beliefs in terms of a position on the spectrum running from liberal to moderate to conservative.

libertarians Those who prefer very limited government and therefore tend to be quite conservative on issues such as welfare policy, environmental policy, and public support for education, but very liberal on issues of personal liberty like free speech, abortion, and the legalization of drugs.

limited government A system in which the powers of the government are restricted to protect against tyranny.

living Constitution A way of interpreting the Constitution that takes into account evolving national attitudes and circumstances rather than the text alone.

lobbying Efforts to influence public policy through contact with public officials on behalf of an interest group.

mainstream media (MSM) Media sources that predate the Internet, such as newspapers, magazines, television, and radio.

majority leader The elected head of the party holding the majority of seats in the House or Senate.

majority voting A voting system in which a candidate must win more than 50 percent of votes in order to win the election. If no candidate wins enough votes to take office, a runoff election is held between the top two vote-getters.

mandatory spending Expenditures that are required by law, like the funding for Social Security.

market-based solutions Reform options for social policies that are based on tax credits, flexible spending accounts, and other approaches that rely on competition in the free market.

markup One of the steps through which a bill becomes a law, in which the final wording of the bill is determined.

mass associations Interest groups that have a large number of dues-paying individuals as members.

mass media Sources like newspapers, television networks, radio stations, and Web sites, that provide information to the average citizen.

mass survey A way to measure public opinion by interviewing a large sample of the population.

media conglomerates Companies that control a large number of media sources across several types of media outlets.

media effects The influence of media coverage on average citizens' opinions and actions.

Medicaid An entitlement program funded by the federal and state governments that provides health care coverage for low-income Americans who would otherwise be unable to afford health care.

Medicare The federal health care plan created in 1965 that provides coverage for retired Americans for hospital care (Part A), medical care (Part B), and prescription drugs (Part D).

melting pot The idea that as different racial and ethnic groups come to America, they should assimilate into American culture, leaving their native languages, customs, and traditions behind.

Miller test Established in *Miller v. California*, the Supreme Court uses this three-part test to determine whether speech meets the criteria for obscenity. If so, it can be restricted by the government.

minority leader The elected head of the party holding the minority of seats in the House or Senate.

Miranda rights The list of civil liberties described in the 5th Amendment that must be read to a suspect before anything the suspect says can be used in a trial.

Missouri Compromise An agreement between pro- and anti-slavery groups passed by Congress in 1820 in an attempt to ease tensions by limiting the expansion of slavery while also maintaining a balance between slave states and free states.

mobilization Motivating supporters to vote in an election and, in some cases, helping them get to the polls on Election Day.

modified rules Conditions placed on a legislative debate by the House Rules Committee allowing certain amendments to a bill while barring others.

monarchy A form of government in which power is held by a single person, or monarch, who comes to power through inheritance rather than election.

monetarist theory The idea that the amount of money in circulation (the money supply) is the primary influence on economic activity and inflation.

monetary policy Government decisions about how to influence the economy using control of the money supply and interest rates.

money primary Fund-raising by candidates prior to the primaries or caucuses. The amounts that candidates manage to raise in this period are often considered indicative of their respective chances of winning.

Monroe Doctrine The American policy initiated under President James Monroe in 1823 stating that the United States would remain neutral in conflicts between European nations, and that these nations should stop colonizing or occupying areas of North and South America.

mootness The irrelevance of a case by the time it is received by a federal court, causing the court to decline to hear the case.

most-favored-nation status A standing awarded to countries with which the United States has good trade relations, providing the lowest possible tariff rate. World Trade Organization members must give one another this preferred status.

multilateral action Foreign policy carried out by a nation in coordination with other nations or international organizations.

multilateral agreements Treaties among multiple nations.

mutually assured destruction The idea that two nations that possess large stores of nuclear weapons—like the United States and the Soviet Union during the Cold War—would both be annihilated in any nuclear exchange, thus making it unlikely that either country would launch a first attack.

nation building The use of American resources, including the military, to help create democratic institutions abroad and prevent violence in other countries.

national committee An American political party's principal organization, comprised of party representatives from each state.

National Economic Council (NEC) A group of economic advisers created in 1993 to work with the president to coordinate economic policy.

National Security Council (NSC) Within the Executive Office of the President, a committee that advises the president on matters of foreign policy.

national supremacy clause Part of Article VI, Section 2, of the Constitution stating that the Constitution is the "supreme Law of the Land," meaning national laws take precedent over state laws if the two conflict.

nationalized election An atypical congressional election in which the reelection rate is relatively low for one party's House and Senate incumbents and national-level issues exert more influence than usual on House and Senate races.

natural rights Also known as "unalienable rights," the Declaration of Independence defines them as "Life, Liberty, and the pursuit of Happiness." The Founders believed that upholding these rights should be the government's central purpose.

neutral competence The idea, credited to theorist Max Weber, which suggests that bureaucrats should provide expertise without the influence of elected officials, interest groups, or their own political agendas.

New Deal The set of policies proposed by President Franklin Roosevelt and enacted by Congress between 1933 and 1935 to promote economic recovery and social welfare during the Great Depression.

New Deal Coalition The assemblage of groups who aligned with and supported the Democratic Party in support of New Deal policies during the fifth party system, including African Americans, Catholics, Jewish people, union members, and white southerners.

New Jersey Plan In response to the Virginia Plan, smaller states at the Constitutional Conventions offered this plan in which each state would receive equal representation in the national legislature, regardless of size.

news cycle The time between the release of information and its publication, like the twenty-four hours between issues of a daily newspaper.

nodes Groups of people who belong to, are candidates of, or work for a political party, but do not necessarily work together or hold similar policy preferences.

nominating convention A meeting held by each party every four years at which states' delegates select the party's presidential and vice-presidential nominees and approve the party platform.

nomination The selection of a particular candidate to run for office in a general election as a representative of his or her political party.

nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) Groups operated by private institutions (rather than governments) to promote growth, economic development, and other agendas throughout the world.

normal election A typical congressional election in which the reelection rate is high, and the influences on House and Senate contests are largely local.

normalization hypothesis The idea that media sources will increasingly make their news available online as more people begin using the Internet.

North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) An international alliance between the United States, Canada, and several European nations originally created to provide security against the Soviet Union during the Cold War.

notice and comment procedure A step in the rule-making process in which proposed rules are published in the *Federal Register* and made available for debate by the general public.

off the record A term describing comments a politician makes to the press on the condition that they can be reported only if they are not attributed to that politician (also known as "on background").

Office of Management and Budget (OMB) An office within the Executive Office of the President that is responsible for creating the president's annual budget proposal to Congress, reviewing proposed rules, and other budget-related tasks.

omnibus legislation Large bills that often cover several topics and may contain extraneous, or pork-barrel, projects.

on background A term describing comments a politician makes to the press on the condition that they can be reported only if they are not attributed to that politician (also known as "off the record").

on-line processing A way of forming a political opinion in which a person develops a preference regarding a candidate, party, or policy but does not remember the original reasons behind the preference.

op-ed Short for "opinion editorial," this type of article is written by a journalist or guest writer who expresses his or her opinion on a given issue without necessarily attempting to be objective.

open market operations The process by which the Federal Reserve System buys and sells securities to influence the money supply.

open primary A primary election in which any registered voter can participate in the contest, regardless of party affiliation.

open rules Conditions placed on a legislative debate by the House Rules Committee allowing the addition of relevant amendments to a bill.

open seat An elected position for which there is no incumbent.

opposition research Attempts by a candidate's campaign or other groups of supporters to uncover embarrassing or politically damaging information about the candidate's opponent.

oral arguments Spoken presentations made in person by the lawyers of each party to a judge or appellate court outlining the legal reasons why their side should prevail.

original intent The theory that justices should surmise the intentions of the Founders when the language of the Constitution is unclear.

original jurisdiction The authority of a court to handle a case first, as in the Supreme Court's authority to initially hear disputes between two states.

outside strategies Tactics used by interest groups outside Washington, DC, to achieve their policy goals.

oversight Congressional efforts to make sure that laws are implemented correctly by the bureaucracy after they have been passed.

ownership society The term used to describe the social policy vision of President George W. Bush, in which citizens take responsibility for their own social welfare and the free market plays a greater role in social policy.

paradox of voting The question of why citizens vote even though their individual votes stand little chance of changing the election outcome.

parliamentary system A system of government in which legislative and executive power are closely joined. The legislature (parliament) selects the chief executive (prime minister) who forms the cabinet from members of the parliament.

parties in service The role of the parties in recruiting, training, contributing to, and campaigning for congressional and presidential candidates. This aspect of party organization grew more prominent during the sixth party system.

party coalitions The groups who identify with a political party, usually described in demographic terms, such as African American Democrats or evangelical Republicans.

party identification (party ID) A citizen's loyalty to a specific political party.

party in government The group of officeholders who belong to a specific political party and were elected as candidates of that party.

party in power Under unified government, the party that controls the House, Senate, and the presidency. Under divided government, the president's party.

party in the electorate The group of citizens who identify with a specific political party.

party organization A specific political party's leaders and workers at the national, state, and local levels.

party platform A set of objectives outlining the party's issue positions and priorities—although candidates are not required to support their party's platform.

party principle The idea that a political party exists as an organization distinct from its elected officials or party leaders.

party ratio The proportions of seats in the House and Senate that are controlled by each major party.

party system A period of time in which the names of the major political parties, their supporters, and the issues dividing them remain relatively stable.

party unity The extent to which members of Congress in the same party vote together on party votes.

party votes A vote in which the majority of one party opposes the position of the majority of the other party.

party associations Interest groups whose members are businesses or other organizations rather than individuals.

penny press A term describing reduced-price newspapers sold for one cent in the 1830s, when more efficient printing presses made newspapers available to a larger segment of the population.

permanent campaign The actions officeholders take throughout the election cycle to build support for their reelection.

phone banks Groups of organized supporters who contact likely voters by phone to encourage support for their party or candidate.

picket fence federalism A more refined and realistic form of cooperative federalism in which policy makers within a particular policy area work together across the levels of government.

plaintiff The person or party who brings a case to court.

plea bargain An agreement between a plaintiff and defendant to settle a case before it goes to trial or the verdict is decided. In a civil case this usually involves an admission of guilt and an agreement on monetary damages; in a criminal case it often involves an admission of guilt in return for a reduced charge or sentence.

pluralism The idea that having a variety of parties and interests within a government will strengthen the system, ensuring that no group possesses total control.

plurality voting A voting system in which the candidate who receives the most votes within a geographic area wins the election, regardless of whether that candidate wins a majority (more than half) of the votes.

pocket veto The automatic death of a bill passed by the House and Senate when the president fails to sign the bill in the last ten days of a legislative session.

polarized A term describing the alignment of both parties' members with their own party's issues and priorities, with little crossover support for the other party's goals.

police patrol oversight A method of oversight in which members of Congress constantly monitor the bureaucracy to make sure that laws are implemented correctly.

policy agenda The set of desired policies that political leaders view as their top priorities.

policy mood The level of public support for expanding the government's role in society; whether the public wants government action on a specific issue.

political action committee (PAC) An interest group or division of an interest group that can raise money to contribute to campaigns or to spend on ads in support of candidates. The amount a PAC can receive from each of its donors and its expenditures on federal campaigning are strictly limited.

political appointees People selected by an elected leader, such as the president, to hold a government position.

political business cycle Attempts by elected officials to manipulate the economy, increasing economic growth and reducing unemployment and inflation around election time, with the goal of improving evaluations of their performance in office.

political machine An unofficial patronage system within a political party that seeks to gain political power and government contracts, jobs, and other benefits for party leaders, workers, and supporters.

political socialization The process by which an individual's political opinions are shaped by other people and the surrounding culture.

politico A member of Congress who acts as a delegate on issues that constituents care about (like civil rights) and as a trustee on more complex or less salient issues (like some foreign policy or regulatory matters).

politics The process that determines what government does.

popular vote The votes cast by citizens in an election.

population The group of people that a researcher or pollster wants to study, such as evangelicals, senior citizens, or Americans.

pork barrel Legislative appropriations that benefit specific constituents, created with the aim of helping local representatives win reelection.

position taking Any public statement in which a member of Congress makes her views on an issue known to her constituents.

positive externalities Benefits created by a public good that are shared by the primary consumer of the good and by society more generally.

power of the purse The constitutional power of Congress to raise and spend money. Congress can use this as a negative or checking power over the other branches by freezing or cutting their funding to punish executive agencies.

precedent A legal norm established in court cases that is then applied to future cases dealing with the same legal questions.

present pro tempore A largely symbolic position usually held by the most senior member of the majority party in the Senate.

presidential approval The percentage of Americans who feel that the president is doing a good job in office.

press conference Events at which politicians speak to journalists and, in most cases, answer their questions afterward.

primary A ballot vote in which citizens select a party's nominee for the general election.

prime time Evening hours when television viewership is at its highest and networks often schedule news programs.

priming The influence on the public's general impressions caused by positive or negative coverage of a candidate or issue.

principal-agent game The interaction between a principal (like the president or Congress), who needs something done, and an agent (like a bureaucrat), who is responsible for carrying out the principal's orders.

prior restraint A limit on freedom of the press that allows the government to prohibit the media from publishing certain materials.

privacy rights Liberties protected by several amendments in the Bill of Rights that shield certain personal aspects of citizens' lives from governmental interference, such as the 4th Amendment's protection against unreasonable searches and seizures.

privatization The process of transferring the management of a government program (like Social Security) from the public sector to the private sector.

privileges and immunities clause Part of Article IV of the Constitution requiring that states must treat non-state residents within their borders as they would treat their own residents. This was meant to promote commerce and travel between states.

problem of control A difficulty faced by elected officials in ensuring that when bureaucrats implement policies, they follow these officials' intentions but still have enough discretion to use their expertise.

progressive A term describing taxes that require upper-income people to pay a higher tax rate than lower-income people, such as income taxes.

proportional allocation During the presidential primaries, the practice of determining the number of convention delegates allotted to each candidate based on the percentage of the popular vote cast for each candidate. All Democratic primaries and caucuses use this system, as do some states' Republican primaries and caucuses.

protectionism The idea under which some people have tried to rationalize discriminatory policies by claiming that some groups, like women or African Americans, should be denied certain rights for their own safety or well-being.

public goods Services or actions (such as protecting the environment) that, once provided to one person, become available to everyone. Government is typically needed to provide public goods because they will be under-produced by the free market.

public opinion Citizens' views on politics and government actions.

purposive benefits Satisfaction derived from the experience of working toward a desired policy goal, even if the goal is not achieved.

push polling A type of survey in which the questions are presented in a biased way in an attempt to influence the respondent.

random digit dialing A method of random sampling used in telephone surveys, in which the interviewers call respondents by dialing random telephone numbers in order to include those with unlisted numbers.

random sample A subsection of a population chosen to participate in a survey through a selection process in which every member of the population has an equal chance of being chosen. This kind of sampling improves the accuracy of public opinion data.

realignment A change in the size or composition of the party coalitions or in the nature of the issues that divide the parties. Realignments typically occur within an election cycle or two, but they can also occur gradually over the course of a decade or longer.

realism The idea that a country's foreign policy decisions are motivated by self-interest and the goal of gaining more power.

reasonable basis test The use of evidence to suggest that differences in the behavior of two groups can rationalize unequal treatment of these groups, such as charging sixteen- to twenty-one-year-olds higher prices for auto insurance than people over twenty-one because younger people have higher accident rates.

reasonable vote A vote that is likely to be consistent with the voter's true preference about the candidates.

recess appointment When a person is chosen by the president to fill a position, such as an ambassadorship or the head of a department, while the Senate is not in session, thereby bypassing Senate approval. Unless approved by a subsequent Senate vote, recess appointees serve only to the end of the congressional term.

reciprocity The informal congressional norm whereby a member votes for a bill that he might not otherwise support because a colleague strongly favors it—in exchange for the colleague's vote for a bill that the member feels strongly about (also known as logrolling).

red tape Excessive or unnecessarily complex regulations imposed by the bureaucracy.

redistributive tax policies Policies, generally favored by Democratic politicians, in which taxation is used to attempt to create greater social equality, i.e. higher taxation of the rich to provide programs for the poor.

redistricting Redrawing the geographic boundaries of legislative districts. This happens every ten years to ensure that districts remain roughly equal in population.

referendum A direct vote by citizens on a policy change proposed by a legislature or another government body. While referenda are common in state and local elections, there is no mechanism for a national-level referendum.

regional primaries A practice whereby several states in the same area of the country hold presidential primaries or caucuses on the same day.

regressive A term describing taxes that take a larger share of poor people's income than wealthy people's income, such as sales taxes and payroll taxes.

regulation A rule that allows the government to exercise control over individuals and corporations by restricting certain behaviors.

regulatory capture A situation in which bureaucrats favor the interests of the groups or corporations they are supposed to regulate at the expense of the general public.

remedial legislation National laws that address discriminatory state laws. Authority for such legislation comes from Section 5 of the 14th Amendment.

republican democracy A form of government in which the interests of the people are represented through elected leaders.

republicanism The belief that a form of government in which the interests of the people are represented through elected leaders is the best form of government.

reserve requirement The minimum amount of money that a bank is required to have on hand to back up its assets.

responsible parties A system in which each political party's candidates campaign on the party platform, work together in office to implement the platform, and are judged by voters based on whether they achieve the platform's objectives.

retail politics A mode of campaigning in which a candidate or campaign staff contact citizens directly, as would happen at a rally, a talk before a small group, or a one-on-one meeting between a candidate and a citizen.

retrospective evaluation A citizen's judgment of an officeholder's job performance since the last election.

revolving door A term describing the movement of individuals from government positions to jobs with interest groups or lobbying firms, and vice versa.

ripeness A criterion that federal courts use to decide whether a case is ready to be heard. A case's ripeness is based on whether its central issue or controversy has actually taken place.

robo-poll A type of survey in which a computer program, rather than a live questioner, interviews respondents by telephone.

roll call vote A recorded vote on legislation; members may vote yes, no, abstain, or present.

running tally A frequently updated mental record that a person uses to incorporate new information, like the information that leads a citizen to identify with a particular political party.

runoff election Under a majority voting system, a second election held only if no candidate wins a majority of the votes in the first general election. Only the top two vote-getters in the first election compete in the runoff.

salience The level of familiarity with an interest group's goals among general population.

sample Within a population, the group of people surveyed in order to gauge the whole population's opinion. Researchers use samples because it would be impossible to interview the entire population.

sampling error A calculation that describes what percentage of the people surveyed may not accurately represent the population being studied. Increasing the number of respondents lowers the sampling error.

sanction A trade penalty that one nation places on another to encourage the penalized nation to change its actions or policies.

seat shift A change in the number of seats held by Republicans and Democrats in the House or Senate.

select committees Committees in the House or Senate created to address a specific issue for one or two terms.

selective incentives Benefits that can motivate participation in a group effort because they are available only to those who participate, such as member services offered by interest groups.

selective incorporation The process through which the civil liberties granted in the Bill of Rights were applied to the states on a case-by-case basis through the 14th Amendment.

senatorial courtesy A norm in the nomination of district court judges in which the president consults with his party's senators from the relevant state in choosing the nominee.

seniority The informal congressional norm of choosing the member who has served the longest on a particular committee to be the committee chair.

"separate but equal" The idea that racial segregation was acceptable as long as the separate facilities were of equal quality; supported by *Plessy v. Ferguson* and struck down by *Brown v. Board of Education*.

separation of powers The division of government power across the judicial, executive, and legislative branches.

shield laws Legislation, which exists in some states but not at the federal level, that gives reporters the right to refuse to name the sources of their information.

shuttle diplomacy Negotiations carried out by a third party mediator who travels between two nations to relay information when those two nations' negotiators refuse to meet face-to-face.

signing statement A document issued by the president when signing a bill into law explaining his interpretation of the law, which often differs from the interpretation of Congress, in an attempt to influence how the law will be implemented.

single-issue groups A type of interest group that has a narrowly focused goal, seeking change on a single topic, government program, or piece of legislation.

single-member districts An electoral system in which every elected official represents a geographically defined area, such as a state or congressional district, and each area elects one representative.

slander Spoken false statements that damage a person's reputation. Such statements can be regulated by the government but are often difficult to distinguish from permissible speech.

slant The imbalance in a story that covers one candidate or policy favorably without providing similar coverage of the other side.

social policy An area of public policy related to maintaining or enhancing the well-being of individuals.

Social Security A federal social insurance program that provides cash benefits to retirees based on payroll taxes they have paid over the course of their careers. It is a "pay as you go" program in which working Americans pay taxes to support today's retirees, with a promise that when today's workers retire, their benefits will be paid by the next generation.

soft money Contributions that can be used for voter mobilization or to promote a policy proposal or point of view as long as these efforts are not tied to supporting or opposing a particular candidate.

soft news Media coverage that aims to entertain or shock, often through sensationalized reporting or by focusing on a candidate or politician's personality.

solicitor general A presidential appointee in the Department of Justice who represents the federal government when it is a party to a case.

solidary benefits Satisfaction derived from the experience of working with like-minded people, even if the group's efforts do not achieve the desired impact.

Speaker of the House The elected leader of the House of Representatives.

specialization The expertise of a member of Congress on a specific issue or area of policy. Specialization is more common in the House than the Senate, where members tend to be policy generalists.

split ticket A ballot on which a voter selects candidates from more than one political party.

spoils system The practice of rewarding party supporters with benefits like federal government positions.

standard of proof The amount of evidence needed to determine the outcome of a case. The standard is higher in a criminal case than in a civil one.

standard operating procedures Rules that lower-level bureaucrats must follow when implementing policies.

standing Legitimate justification for bringing a civil case to court.

standing committees Committees that are a permanent part of the House or Senate structure, holding more importance and authority than other committees.

state capacity The knowledge, personnel, and institutions that the government requires to effectively implement policies.

State of the Union An annual speech in which the president addresses Congress to report on the condition of the country and recommend policies.

states' rights The idea that states are entitled to a certain amount of self-government, free of federal government intervention. This became a central issue in the lead up to the Civil War.

states' sovereign immunity Described in the 11th Amendment, this means that state governments cannot be sued in federal court.

statutory authority (presidential) Powers derived from laws enacted by Congress that add to the powers given to the president in the Constitution.

statutory interpretation The various methods and tests used by the courts for determining the meaning of a law and applying it to specific situations.

straight tickets A ballot on which a voter selects candidates from only one political party.

street-level bureaucrats Agency employees who directly provide services to the public, such as police officers or those who provide job training services.

strict construction A way of interpreting the Constitution based on its language alone.

strict scrutiny standard The highest level of scrutiny the courts use when determining whether unequal treatment is justified by the effect of a law. It is applied in all cases involving race. Laws rarely pass the strict scrutiny standard; a law that discriminates based on race must be shown to serve some "compelling state interest" in order to be upheld.

substantive due process doctrine One interpretation of the due process clause of the 14th Amendment; in this view the Supreme Court has the power to overturn laws that infringe on individual liberties.

substantive representation When a member of Congress represents constituents' interests and policy concerns.

superdelegates Democratic members of Congress and party officials selected by their colleagues to be delegates at the party's presidential nominating convention. (Republicans do not have superdelegates.) Unlike delegates selected in primaries or caucuses, superdelegates are not committed to a particular candidate and can exercise their judgment when deciding how to vote at the convention.

supply-side economics The theory that lower tax rates will stimulate the economy by encouraging people to save, invest, and produce more goods and services.

suspension of the rules One way of moving a piece of legislation to the top of the agenda in the House: debate on the bill is limited to forty minutes, amendments are not allowed, and the bill must pass by a two-thirds vote.

swing states In a presidential race, highly competitive states in which both major party candidates stand a good chance of winning the state's electoral votes.

symbolic speech Nonverbal expression, such as the use of signs or symbols. It benefits from many of the same constitutional protections of verbal speech.

taking the late train An interest group strategy for gaining access to future officeholders that involves donating money to the winning

candidate after an election in hopes of securing a meeting with that person when she takes office.

talent primary Candidates' attempts to recruit well-respected consultants and campaign staff prior to the first primaries and caucuses. A candidate's ability to recruit a prestigious campaign team is often considered indicative of his or her electoral prospects.

tariff A tax levied on imported and exported goods.

Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) The welfare program that replaced Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC) in 1996, eliminating the entitlement status of welfare, shifting implementation of the policy to the states, and introducing several new restrictions on receiving aid. These changes led to a significant decrease in the number of welfare recipients.

Three-fifths Compromise The states' decision during the Constitutional Convention to count each slave as three-fifths of a person for the purposes of determining the number of House districts per state based on population.

trade agreement A contract between nations that specifies tariff levels and sets terms on which goods can be imported and exported.

trade association An interest group composed of companies in the same business or industry (the same "trade") that lobbies for policies that will benefit members of the group.

trade deficit A measure of how much more a nation imports than it exports.

Treasury Department A cabinet agency that is responsible for managing the federal government's revenue. It prints currency, collects taxes, and sells government bonds.

treaty A formal written agreement between nations involving security, trade or economic development, human rights, or other important policies.

trustee A member of Congress who represents constituents' interests while also taking into account national, collective, and moral concerns that sometimes cause the member to vote against the preference of a majority of constituents.

turkey farms Agencies where campaign workers and donors are often appointed to reward them for their service because it is unlikely that their lack of qualifications will lead to bad policy.

turnout The percent of registered voters who cast a ballot in a given election.

undervote Casting a ballot that is either incomplete or cannot be counted.

unfunded mandates Federal laws that require the states to do certain things but do not provide state governments with funding to implement these policies.

unified government A situation in which one party holds a majority of seats in the House and Senate and the president is a member of that same party.

unilateral action (national) Independent acts of foreign policy undertaken by a nation without the assistance or coordination of other nations.

unilateral action (presidential) Any policy decision made and acted upon by the president and his staff without the explicit approval or consent of Congress.

unitary executive theory The idea that the vesting clause of the Constitution gives the president the authority to issue orders and policy directives that cannot be undone by Congress.

unitary government A system in which the national, centralized government holds ultimate authority. It is the most common form of government in the world.

United Nations (UN) An international organization made up of representatives from nearly every nation, with a mission to promote peace and cooperation, uphold international law, and provide humanitarian aid.

United States Trade Representative (USTR) An agency founded in 1962 to negotiate with foreign governments to create trade agreements, resolve disputes, and participate in global trade policy organizations. Treaties negotiated by the USTR must be ratified by the Senate.

universalism The informal congressional norm of distributing the benefits of legislation in a way that serves the interests of as many states and districts as possible.

verdict The final decision in a court case.

vesting clause Article II, Section 1, of the Constitution, which states that "executive Power shall be vested in a President of the United States of America," making the president both the head of government and the head of state.

veto The president's rejection of a bill that has been passed by Congress. A veto can be overridden by a two-thirds vote in both the House and Senate.

Virginia Plan A plan proposed by the larger states during the Constitutional Convention in which representation in the national legislature was based on population. The plan also included a variety of other proposals to strengthen the national government.

voting cues Pieces of information about a candidate that are readily available, easy to interpret, and lead a citizen to decide to vote for a particular candidate.

weapons of mass destruction (WMDs) Weapons that have the potential to cause large-scale loss of life, such as nuclear bombs and chemical or biological weapons.

welfare Financial or other assistance provided to individuals by the government, usually based on need.

whip system An organization of House leaders who work to disseminate information and promote party unity in voting on legislation.

wholesale politics A mode of campaigning that involves indirect contact with citizens, such as running campaign ads.

winner-take-all During the presidential primaries, the practice of assigning all of a given state's delegates to the candidate who receives the most popular votes. Some states' Republican primaries and caucuses use this system.

wire service An organization that gathers news and sells it to other media outlets. The invention of the telegraph in the early 1800s made this type of service possible.

World Bank A nongovernmental organization established in 1944 that provides financial support for economic development projects in developing nations.

World Trade Organization (WTO) An international organization created in 1995 to oversee trade agreements between nations by facilitating negotiations and handling disputes.

writ of certification An uncommon way in which a case is brought before the Supreme Court, whereby an appeals court asks the Court to clarify federal law in regards to a particular case.

writ of certiorari The most common way for a case to reach the Supreme Court, in which at least four of the nine justices agree to hear a case that has reached them via an appeal from the losing party in a lower court's ruling.

writs of mandamus Orders issued by a higher court to a lower court, government official, or government agency to perform acts required by law.

yellow journalism A style of newspaper popular in the late 1800s, featuring sensationalized stories, bold headlines, and illustrations in order to increase readership.

