



LOC TPS AP Gov Nominating a Candidate for President and National Conventions

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This activity is sponsored in part by the Library of Congress Teaching with Primary Sources Eastern Region Program, coordinated by Waynesburg University.

Campaigns and Elections

3- 4 class sessions of 45 – 60 minutes

Description of activity: Students should examine each source carefully by taking the link and noting the information provided by the Library of Congress.

Focus Question: How has the nomination process become more open to the people or more “democratic”? How has the nomination process at national party conventions changed over time? What is the process by which each major party selects its nominee different?

Context: This investigation belongs in a unit on campaigns and elections or political parties.

Objectives: Students will be able to explain how political parties select their nominees for president. They will also trace the changes over time in this process and evaluate the merits of the systems used by both major parties.

Virginia SOLs



STANDARD GOVT.1 a, b, c, d, e, f, g

The student will demonstrate mastery of the social studies skills responsible citizenship requires, including the ability to

- a) analyze primary and secondary source documents;**
- c) analyze political cartoons, political advertisements, pictures, and other graphic media;**
- d) distinguish between relevant and irrelevant information;**
- f) identify a problem, weigh the expected costs and benefits and possible consequences of proposed solutions, and recommend solutions, using a decision-making model;**
- g) select and defend positions in writing, discussion, and debate.**

STANDARD GOVT.6a

The student will demonstrate knowledge of local, state, and national elections by

- a) describing the organization, role, and constituencies of political parties.**

STANDARD GOVT.6b

The student will demonstrate knowledge of local, state, and national elections by

- b) describing the nomination and election process.**

Assessment: Class discussion, written analysis

Activity Details and Primary Sources: provided below

Procedure: Students should work independently or confer with one classmate but answer the questions themselves. Once students have completed 1-3 discuss the sources and main ideas with the class. Students then move on to complete 4-5. Discuss with the class. Debrief and review after students have completed the formative assessments, then conclude with the summative assessment.

What you will need before implementing: Ideally, each student would have a device of their own and internet access. If that is not possible, the teacher should make the necessary number of copies of the sources and relevant information provided by the Library of Congress, as well as the op-ed piece from the *New York Times* and a few copies of the reference materials listed below.

Additional resources you may want to use for reference:

https://www.loc.gov/rr/main/democratic_conventions.pdf
Democratic National Political Conventions, 1832-2008

https://www.loc.gov/rr/main/republican_conventions.pdf
Republican National Political Conventions, 1856-2008



1. Go to:

<https://www.loc.gov/teachers/classroommaterials/presentationsandactivities/presentations/elections/partysys2.html>

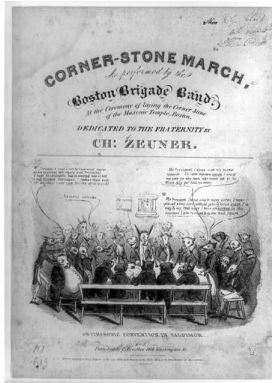
Read “For and Against”

Answer the following:

When did political party conventions become a part of presidential elections in the US?

How did early party conventions run differently? How was the process of selecting a nominee different?

2.



AntiMasonic Convention in Valdimor [on the] corner-stone march

Charles Bradlee

1832

<https://www.loc.gov/item/2008661749/>

What is the subject of this illustration? What was the significance of that event?

What seems to be the message of this political cartoon?

Provide your evidence.

If you have time you may want to read the words to the song:

Notated Music

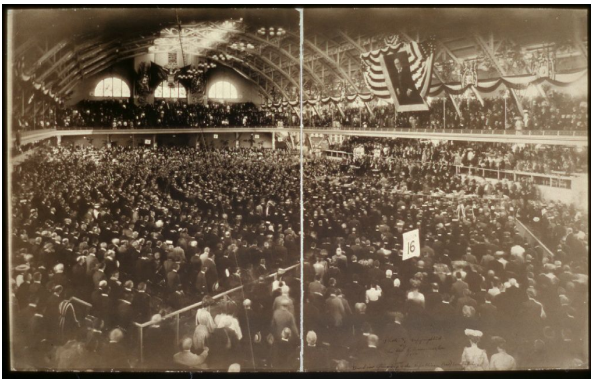
Corner-stone march



3. Examine these photos of party conventions



National Prohibition Convention
Barnum & Cumback
1892
<http://www.loc.gov/item/2004677547/>



Republican Nat'l Convention
Geo. R. Lawrence Co., photographer
1904
<http://lccn.loc.gov/2007663952>

General view, opening prayer of the



California delegates cheering on stagecoach at the 1912 Republican National Convention held at the Chicago Coliseum, Chicago, Illinois
Bain News Service
1912
<https://www.loc.gov/item/ggb2004010546/>



Delegates on the floor at the 1964 Democratic National Convention, Atlantic City, New Jersey
Warren K. Leffler or Thomas J. O'Halloran
1964 August 26
<https://www.loc.gov/item/2014645522/>



Republican National Convention
Carol M. Highsmith
September 3, 2008
<https://www.loc.gov/item/2010719288/>

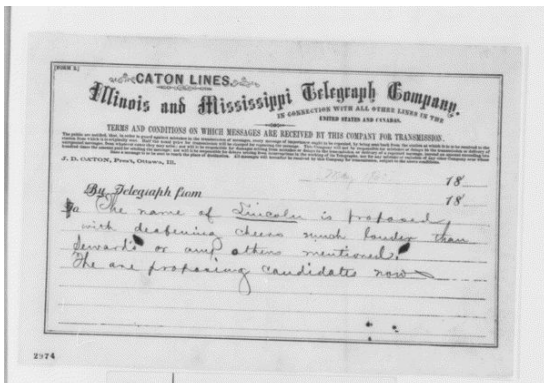
Answer the following:

What similarities can you detect about early conventions and more recent conventions?

What has changed? What has stayed the same?

What is accomplished (what important things happen) at these conventions?

4. Examine this message:



The Abraham Lincoln Papers at the Library of Congress

Series 1. General Correspondence. 1833-1916.

Republican National Convention, May 1860 (Lincoln's name proposed at convention)

<http://memory.loc.gov/cgi-bin/ampage?collId=mal&fileName=mal1/029/0297400/malpage.db&recNum=0>



Answer the following:

What can you infer about the process of nominating the party candidate at this convention?

How was this process different from what is customary today?

What additional inferences can you make about this particular convention?

5. Go to

<https://www.loc.gov/teachers/classroommaterials/presentationsandactivities/presentations/elections/elecprocess2.html>

Read “Primaries Then” and “Primaries Now”

Answer the following:

When and why did primaries emerge? In what ways did they benefit the common people?

What are the Democratic Party’s rules for the allocation of delegates from each state?

What are the Republican Party’s rules for the allocation of delegates from each state?

6. Formative Assessment Task #1

Write an article in which you explain how the nominating process for the office of the president has changed over the past two hundred years. Focus on major changes in the system parties use to determine their nominee for president.

7. Read this op-ed piece in the NYTimes:

http://www.nytimes.com/2016/04/12/opinion/campaign-stops/the-not-so-super-delegates.html?_r=0

Answer the following:

What are super delegates? What are plausible reasons for the existence of super delegates

Which party is best known for using them?

Do you approve of their existence in the party nomination process? Explain why or why not.



8. Formative Assessment Task #2

Which system do you prefer - the Democratic one or the Republic one? Why? Explain your reasoning.

9. Formative Assessment Task #3

Do you think the Framers of the Constitution were right to fear the will of the common people in the 1780s? Why or why not? Do you think that the use of party nominating conventions and primary elections is an improvement over the previous systems parties used to select their nominees?

10. Summative Assessment Task:

Write an op-ed piece of your own. Take a stand on the overall process of how parties in the US nominate candidates for the presidency. What works well? What in your view does not work well? Propose a reasonable alternative to what you see as a flaw in the system.

(You might consider the recent primary of 2016 in which neither major party chose a nominee with a favorable opinion rating by the general public.)