

Your Vote Counts!

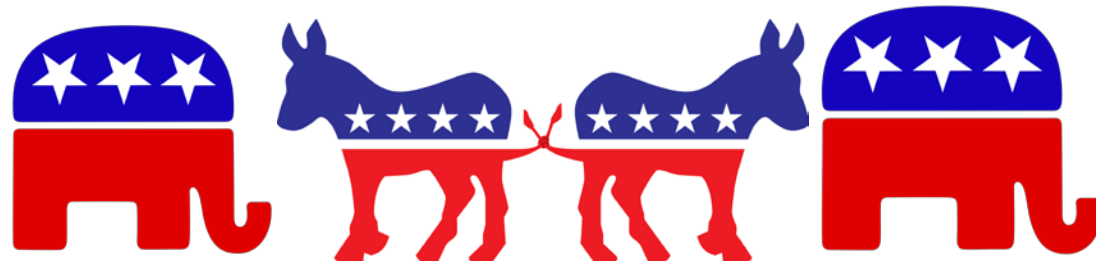


Voting is one of the most important responsibilities we have as American citizens. This lesson is intended to help you decide whether or not you feel ready to vote in the next election. We will think about Democratic and Republican views on many issues that affect our country and our world. By the end of the lesson we hope you will better understand whether you are more likely to vote as a Republican, Democrat, Independent, or if you feel that you are not yet ready to vote. As we respectfully think about each of these issues, there is no right or wrong answer. The important thing is that you listen to your brain and your heart and choose what seems right for you!

This lesson was adapted from: [Difference Between Democrat and Republican | Difference Between](http://www.differencebetween.net/miscellaneous/politics/difference-between-democrat-and-republican/#ixzz5QEOYmpzw) <http://www.differencebetween.net/miscellaneous/politics/difference-between-democrat-and-republican/#ixzz5QEOYmpzw>

American Political Parties

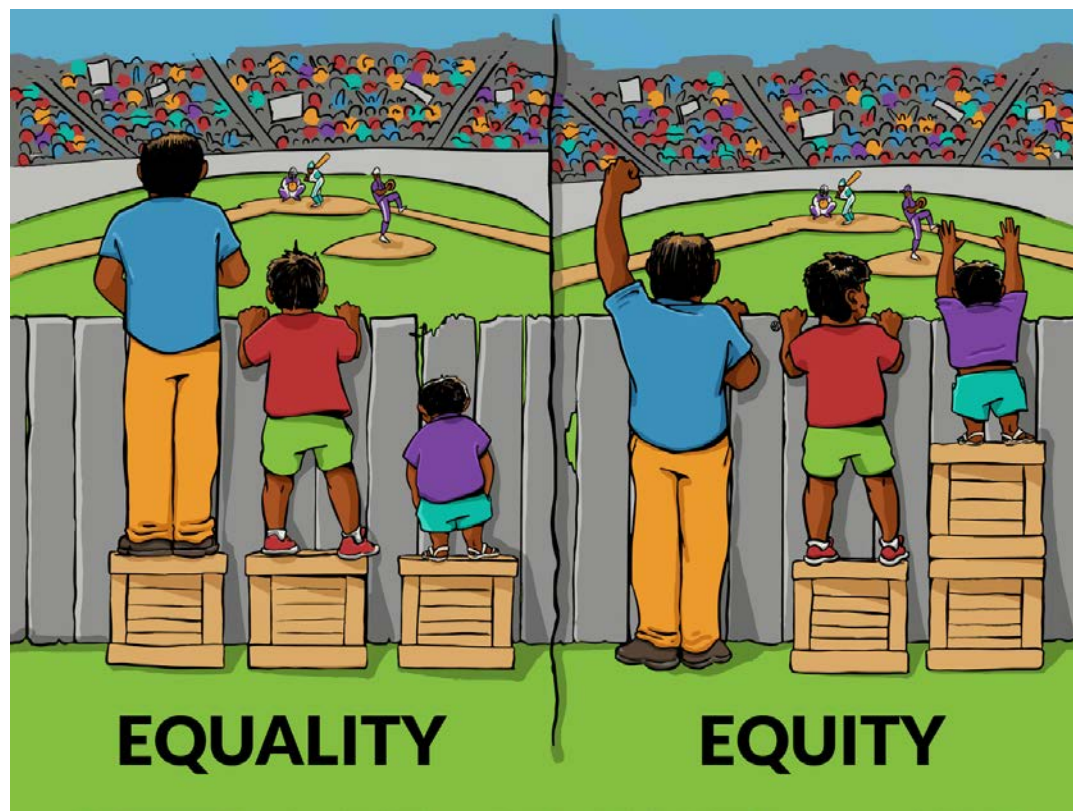
Democrats and Republicans are the two largest American political parties in the US. They hold almost all of the seats in the Senate and in the House of Representatives. Democrats and Republicans have different ideas on many important issues. Many other people are Unenrolled Independents or belong to smaller political parties like the Libertarians or Rainbow Greens. This worksheet will focus on the differences between Republicans and Democrats.



(By the way, “Republican” is often represented with a picture of an elephant, while a picture of a donkey is sometimes used to mean “Democrat!”)

Democrat vs Republican

There are many differences between the parties. The **Democratic** Party is left-leaning, liberal and usually associated with progressiveness. The **Republican** Party, is right-leaning, traditional and associated with economic freedom and with the ideal of “survival of the fittest”.



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Every four years, citizens in the United States vote in the Presidential Election. The next Presidential Election will be in 2020. For the past 165 years, the US President has been either a Republican or a Democrat.



President Donald Trump is a Republican who was elected in 2016.



President Barack Obama is a Democrat who was elected in 2008 and again in 2012.

Taxes are money citizens need to pay in order to fund the government and provide services for the people.

Republicans often believe that rich and poor should pay the same taxes (and possibly receive tax cuts). Even if large tax cuts may lead to less money collected by the government, Republicans believe that, after tax reductions, rich people and entrepreneurs would be more likely to invest and create jobs. Republicans also oppose raising minimum wages as such increase could hurt small businesses.

Democrats often believe in raising taxes for the upper class and lowering taxes for the lower and middle class to allow the government to boost spending for social programs for people who are poor.



Rich people should pay more taxes than poor people so that people without money may get more help they need to survive.

1. I strongly disagree with this.
2. I disagree with this.
3. I'm not sure if I agree with this.
4. I agree with this.
5. I strongly agree with this.

Rich people and poor people should pay the same amount in taxes even if it means that poor people may not get help they need to survive.

1. I strongly disagree with this.
2. I disagree with this.
3. I'm not sure if I agree with this.
4. I agree with this.
5. I strongly agree with this.

Gun Laws are the rules that make it either hard or easy for citizens to buy different kind of guns.

Republicans are likely to oppose gun control laws and believe that one should be able to obtain ammunitions with no registration. Republicans also strongly support the right of self-defense.

Democrats are likely to be in favor of more strict gun laws but recognize that the Second Amendment is an important part of the American tradition and that the right to use firearms should be preserved. They support an assault weapons ban and believe that the government should make the background check system stronger.



It should not be difficult for American citizens to buy military style assault weapons.

1. I strongly disagree with this.
2. I disagree with this.
3. I'm not sure if I agree with this.
4. I agree with this.
5. I strongly agree with this.

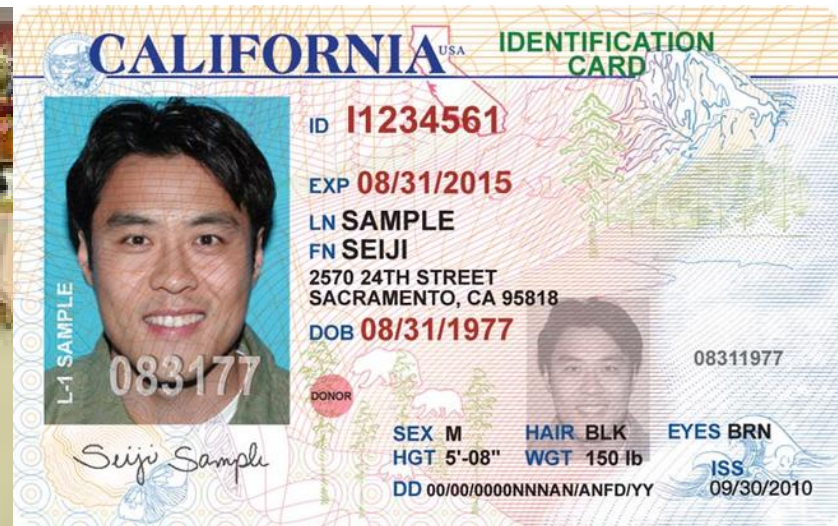
It should be very difficult for American citizens to buy military style assault weapons.

1. I strongly disagree with this.
2. I disagree with this.
3. I'm not sure if I agree with this.
4. I agree with this.
5. I strongly agree with this.

Voter ID Laws are laws that say what kind of identification is needed when a person shows up to vote on election day.

Many Republicans are requesting photo identification for voting: they believe that such measure would prevent cases of election fraud.

Many Democrats believe that everyone has the right to vote and oppose photo identification, as they believe it may be discriminatory.



Nobody should be allowed to vote without a current and valid state issued ID card or US Passport.

1. I strongly disagree with this.
2. I disagree with this.
3. I'm not sure if I agree with this.
4. I agree with this.
5. I strongly agree with this.

People should be allowed to vote even if they don't have a valid and current state issued ID card or US passport.

1. I strongly disagree with this.
2. I disagree with this.
3. I'm not sure if I agree with this.
4. I agree with this.
5. I strongly agree with this.

Abortion is when a woman who is pregnant chooses to end her pregnancy and not have the baby. Pregnant women make this choice for many different reasons such as they may not have enough money to have a baby, it may be medically dangerous to have a baby or they may have decided there are other reasons they don't want to be a mother.

Many Republicans, largely influenced by religion and tradition, believe that the government should restrict abortion. In fact, Republicans think that an unborn child has the fundamental right to live which cannot be taken away.

Many Democrats support Roe vs Wade and believe that a woman should have the right to make her own decisions regarding her pregnancy and that the government has no right to get involved with any woman's pregnancy. Instead of eliminating abortion, Democrats want to reduce the number of unintended pregnancies by enhancing the level of sex education in all schools.



Abortion should be safe and legal for all women who choose not to have a baby.

1. I strongly disagree with this.
2. I disagree with this.
3. I'm not sure if I agree with this.
4. I agree with this.
5. I strongly agree with this.

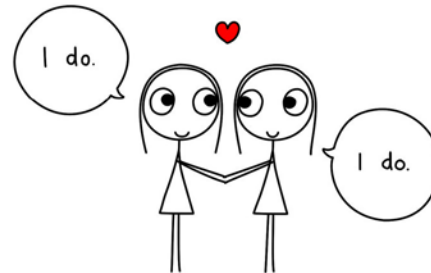
Abortion should be against the law no matter what.

1. I strongly disagree with this.
2. I disagree with this.
3. I'm not sure if I agree with this.
4. I agree with this.
5. I strongly agree with this.

Same Sex Marriages are marriages between two men or between two women. Until recently, these marriages were against the law all across the United States. Massachusetts was one of the first states where same sex marriages became legal.

Many Republicans do not agree with same-sex marriages and believe that a marriage should be between a man and woman only. Republicans may also believe that gay couples should not be able to adopt children.

Many Democrats oppose same-sex discrimination at Federal state level and believe that same sex couples should have the same rights as heterosexual couples, including the right to adopt a child.



Men should be allowed to marry men and women should be allowed to marry women, just like women and men are allowed to legally marry.

1. I strongly disagree with this.
2. I disagree with this.
3. I'm not sure if I agree with this.
4. I agree with this.
5. I strongly agree with this.

It should be against the law for men to marry men and for women to marry women.

1. I strongly disagree with this.
2. I disagree with this.
3. I'm not sure if I agree with this.
4. I agree with this.
5. I strongly agree with this.

Immigration is the question of how difficult should it be for people from other countries to move to the US to start a new life as Americans.

Many Republicans believe in strong border controls that will limit immigration, especially from certain countries. They believe this will be good for American workers and will help fight terrorism.

Many Democrats believe in more open immigration policies. They believe that the process to request asylum should be quicker and that mass deportation is not the solution to all problems related to terrorism and unemployment.



Immigration needs to be controlled as much as possible. If people try to move to America without the government's permission, they need to quickly be sent back to their home countries.

1. I strongly disagree with this.
2. I disagree with this.
3. I'm not sure if I agree with this.
4. I agree with this.
5. I strongly agree with this.

Immigration is important to our country. If people try to move here without permission, we should find out if they will be in danger in their home country before we send them back where they came from.

1. I strongly disagree with this.
2. I disagree with this.
3. I'm not sure if I agree with this.
4. I agree with this.
5. I strongly agree with this.

Death Penalty is the government killing a person who has been found guilty of a very serious crime. It is also called Capital Punishment or Execution.

Many Republicans are in favor of the death penalty and believe it is a just punishment for certain crimes.

Many Democrats are against death penalty and believe that capital punishment should be commuted into life sentences.



The government should never kill people, even if they were found guilty of a very terrible crime.

1. I strongly disagree with this.
 2. I disagree with this.
 3. I'm not sure if I agree with this.
 4. I agree with this.
 5. I strongly agree with this.
-
-

Some crimes are so terrible, the government may need to kill the person who was found guilty.

1. I strongly disagree with this.
2. I disagree with this.
3. I'm not sure if I agree with this.
4. I agree with this.
5. I strongly agree with this.

Health Care is how people get medical help from a doctor or hospital when they are sick or injured. Americans disagree on whether or not the government should pay to help poor people who need medical help.

Many Republicans support private health care systems and believe that the regulation of the national health care system should not be entirely in the hands of the government.

Many Democrats support public universal health care and believe that the government should intervene to assist Americans who struggle to cover their health care expenses.



Every American has a right to the health care they need, even if they don't have money to pay for it.

1. I strongly disagree with this.
2. I disagree with this.
3. I'm not sure if I agree with this.
4. I agree with this.
5. I strongly agree with this.

The government should not help pay for people's health care, even if they can't afford it.

1. I strongly disagree with this.
2. I disagree with this.
3. I'm not sure if I agree with this.
4. I agree with this.
5. I strongly agree with this.

Limits of Government is the question of how much or how little the government should be involved in different areas of American life.

Many Republicans believe that a smaller government is better. According to the Republican view, the government should have less responsibilities and should not interfere in the economic sphere.

Many Democrats believe that the government should have a strong role in helping and supporting Americans. The intervention of the government in the public sphere includes the creation of regulation for businesses and for the health care system.



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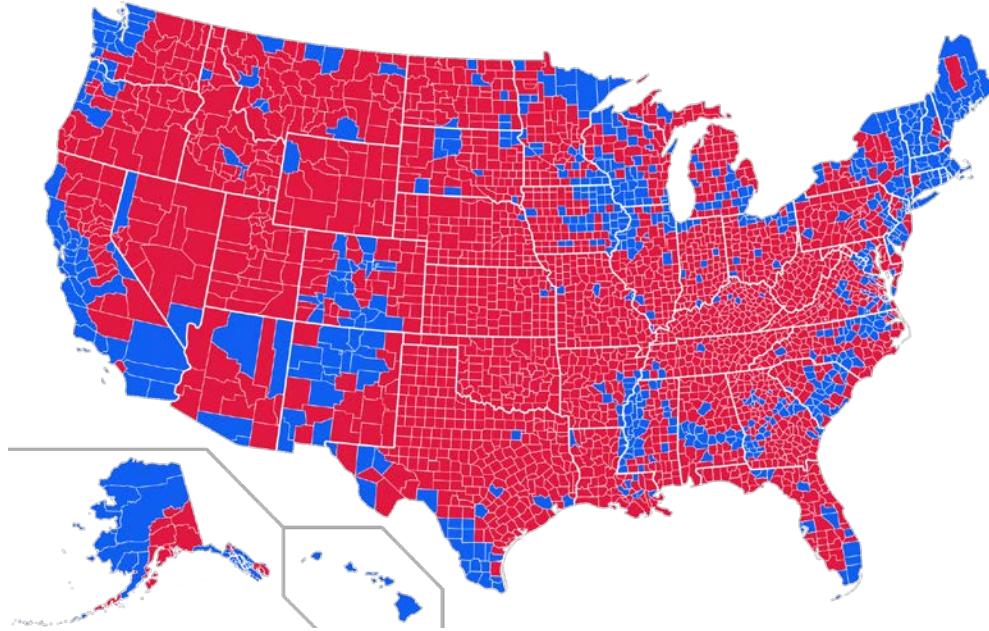
Our government should be very small and not involved in things like the economy, the environment or health care.

1. I strongly disagree with this.
2. I disagree with this.
3. I'm not sure if I agree with this.
4. I agree with this.
5. I strongly agree with this.

Our government needs to be big enough to manage big problems like the environment, the economy and health care.

1. I strongly disagree with this.
2. I disagree with this.
3. I'm not sure if I agree with this.
4. I agree with this.
5. I strongly agree with this.

Midterm Elections 2018



Who: American Citizens, like you, who are over eighteen years old and who have already registered to vote in this election.





What: Electing a state Governor, Senator, Representatives and other government officials. Midterm elections happen on years that take place in the middle of the President's 4 year term, so the President is not on the ballot. There are also 3 ballot questions that were proposed by citizens who want to change laws in Massachusetts.



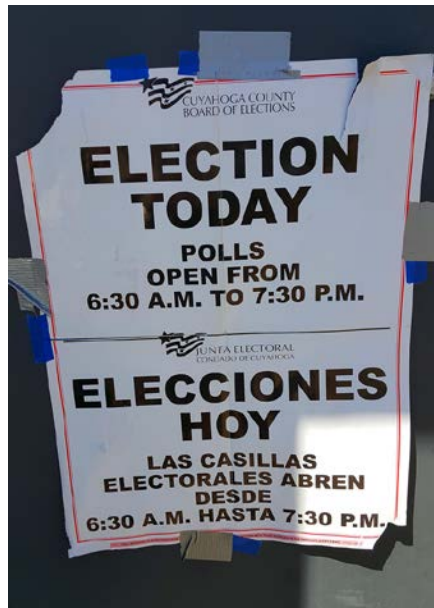


Where: Midterm elections are taking place in every state in America. Most voters will go to a polling place in the city or town where they live, but some voters will mail in absentee ballots they requested and have already received in the mail.





When: Election Day is **Tuesday, November 6 2018**, but many cities like Somerville have polling places that are already open for early voting.





Why: Voting is a crucial part of living in a Democracy. If we don't vote, then we are giving away our voice to say what kind of country we want to live in. Midterm elections are very important because the Senators and Representatives we elect will have a huge impact on what sort of laws and policies the President will be able to pass. Since President Trump is a Republican, Republican politicians are likely to support his positions and turn his ideas for America into laws. If more Democrats are elected, it will be much harder for President Trump to turn his ideas into laws.

