Delaware Recommended Curriculum
Teaching Civics with Primary Sources Grant Project

This lesson has been created as an exemplary model for teachers in (re)design of course curricula. An exemplary model lesson has undergone a rigorous peer review and jurying process to ensure alignment to selected Delaware Content Standards.

**Lesson Title:** Considering the Need for Political Parties

**Designed by:** Tim Hein (William Penn High School)

**Content Area:** Social Studies – Civics

**Grade Level:** 9

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**Summary of Lesson:**
This lesson analyzes the roles and purposes of political parties in a modern democracy, specifically in the United States. The lesson begins with a look at the basic principles behind political parties and how and why they function in the United States. Students then gather information about the roles and purposes of political parties in the United States, in the frame of how they connect people with the government. After this initial acquisition of information, students extend their knowledge by engaging with a primary source from the Library of Congress (*Washington’s Farewell Address*) to consider the views of an early American leader toward the formation of parties. Finally, students complete a piece of argumentative writing to address the following question: To what extent are political parties necessary in the United States today?

**Estimated Time to Complete:** Two to Three Class Periods

**Resources Needed:**
1. Source of background information for American Political Parties Introduction.

   - Following primary source documents from the Library of Congress (www.loc.gov):
   - Access to print or electronic resources pertaining to the purposes or functions of political parties (see “possible websites and texts” under the Learning Plan section.)

   - Following attached handouts:
     - Functions/Roles of Political Parties Research Organizer
     - *Washington’s Farewell Address Analysis*
Stage 1 – Desired Results
What students will know, do, and understand.

Delaware Content Standards
Civics Standard Two 9-12a: Students will examine and analyze the extra-Constitutional role that political parties play in American politics.

Big Ideas
• The necessary roles and functions of political parties in the modern American political system, mainly as a bridge between people and government.
• The potential problems and fears associated with the formation of political parties.

Lesson Enduring Understandings
Students will understand that the political parties are designed to connect people to the government and preserve the sovereignty of citizens in a democracy.

Lesson Essential Questions
To what extent are political parties necessary in the United States today?

Knowledge and Skills
Students will know...
• The historical and ideological basis for the creation of political parties in the United States.
• The major purposes/functions of political parties in modern American civics.
• The views of George Washington toward political parties ("factions") and their reasons for such views.

Students will be able to...
• Explain the function of political parties in the U.S. government in terms of their roles and functions.
• Research secondary sources to acquire essential information.
• Analyze primary source documents (Washington’s Farewell Address) and draw inferences about why political parties may be feared and their potential problems.
• Use persuasive writing to argue the need for political parties in democracy, focusing on the roles/functions of parties.
Stage 2 – Assessment Evidence
Evidence that will be collected to determine whether or not Desired Results are achieved.

Transfer Task
Students write a persuasive piece about the need for parties in the U.S. political system.

Question: To what extent are political parties necessary in the United States today? Please provide support and textual evidence in your response.

Rubric

Argumentative Writing Rubric

CLAIM

☐ Is their claim correct?
☐ Does their claim make sense?
☐ Is it a complete thought? (did they re-state the question?)

3 – Perfect claim! (all above is checked)
2 – You’re on the right track, but it needs some work
1 – Claim is there, but needs major improvement
0 – Claim is missing/very wrong/makes no sense at all

SUPPORT

☐ Did they give some explanation or reasoning for their claim?
☐ Does the explanation make sense and fit their claim?
☐ Is it in their own words?

3 – Perfect support! (all above is checked)
2 – You’re on the right track, but it needs some work
1 – Support is there, but needs major improvement
0 – Support is missing/very wrong/makes no sense at all

EVIDENCE

☐ Did they use a source to show their support?
☐ Does the evidence actually make the claim stronger?
☐ Did they cite WHERE they got their evidence from?

3 – Perfect evidence! (all above is checked)
2 – You’re on the right track, but it needs some work
1 – Evidence is there, but needs major improvement
0 – Evidence is missing/very wrong/makes no sense at all

TIE-UP

☐ Did they explain the evidence after giving it?
☐ Does this final statement fit with their original claim and support?
☐ Does the tie-up make sense to you?

3 – Perfect tie-up! (all above is checked)
2 – You’re on the right track, but it needs some work
1 – Tie-up is there, but needs major improvement
0 – Tie-up is missing/very wrong/makes no sense at all
Lesson Title:
Considering the Need for Political Parties

Essential Question
Are political parties necessary?

Instructional Strategies

Phase I: Gathering Information

American Political Parties Introduction

1. Students read the "Party System" activity from loc.gov (http://www.loc.gov/teachers/classroommaterials/presentationsandactivities/presentations/elections/partysys.html) to learn basic information about political parties in the United States. The purpose is for students to consider the formation of parties in the United States and the basic principles behind the historical and modern two-party system. This leads students to a brief explanation of American political parties, as a starting point to the lesson.

2. After reading, ask student to "wordsplash" the important words or ideas from the passage. On a piece of paper, students list all of the words or ideas from the passage that they believe are important to explain political parties in the United States.

Check for Understanding (Distributed Summary #1)

After discussing words/ideas as a class, ask students to circle the five to ten most important words from the class list. Using their condensed list, ask students to write a brief explanation of American political parties on an index card or Post-It note. Have students share with each other and then collect and display students’ responses.

Purposes/Functions of Political Parties

1. Student Research – Explain to students that they will be doing further research on the actual jobs of political parties and the purposes they serve in the United States today. Students should work in small groups to complete research.

2. Instruct students to complete Resource #1: Functions/Roles of Political Parties Research Organizer as a way to take notes about the functions and roles of political parties. This matrix helps students to guide and organize their research. It also serves to help students identify supporting details, find textual evidence, and learn how make connections to sources of information. These literacy skills are necessary in the summative transfer task and relate to the Common Core State Standards.

Development of this lesson is sponsored in part by the Library of Congress Teaching with Primary Sources Eastern Regional Program, coordinated by Waynesburg University.
Teachers must use their knowledge of their students to gauge the amount of support/scaffolding students will need in researching the topic.

List of Possible Websites and Text Sources for Students:
- [http://www.ushistory.org/gov/5a.asp](http://www.ushistory.org/gov/5a.asp)
- [https://www.icivics.org/teachers/lesson-plans/one-big-party-updated](https://www.icivics.org/teachers/lesson-plans/one-big-party-updated)

3. Debrief – After completing research, split up the student groups and ask students to share their information with members of each of the other groups. Tell students to pay specific attention to common ideas among their groups as well as different ideas. Ask the class to share the major ideas and facts that were found among the groups and list these as a reference.

The table below shows the target main ideas that students should be taking away from this activity. It is important that teachers guide the discussion in this direction during the debrief:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Main Ideas</th>
<th>Associated Details/Explanations</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Parties connect people to the</td>
<td>Parties allow like-minded citizens to work as a more effective unified group to impact the</td>
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<td>government.</td>
<td>government.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Registering citizens to vote: To gain support, parties encourage citizens to register as a</td>
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<td></td>
<td>member of their party, thus increasing citizen participation in the election process.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Campaigning for candidates for public office: Gets citizens involved directly in an election</td>
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<td>campaign run by political parties or learn more about the candidates and issues by campaign</td>
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<td>advertisements, debates, speeches, etc. held by political parties.</td>
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<td>Parties preserve the sovereignty</td>
<td>Partisanship: Having multiple parties (two major parties in the United States) compete for</td>
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<tr>
<td>of citizens in a democracy.</td>
<td>public office positions maintains a relative balance and ensures that one set of political</td>
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<td></td>
<td>ideologies does not consistently dominate politics, thus maintaining citizens’ rights and</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>power.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Acting as a watchdog: Parties watch each other and keep each other in check to ensure that the</td>
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<td></td>
<td>other party is acting within Constitutional limits and ethics during campaigns and while in</td>
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<td></td>
<td>power. This in turn protects the rights of citizens.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Winner-takes-all: The Constitutional principle of majority rule in maintained through a two-party</td>
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<td>system.</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Check for Understanding (Distributed Summary #2)

Info tag – Teacher leads discussion by calling on students to share something they learned about how political parties are designed to connect people to the government and preserve the sovereignty of citizens in a democracy. Students should keep their responses short and concise. As students share, they can build upon each other’s ideas or begin a new thought, but are not allowed to repeat what has already been said.

Phase II: Extending and Refining

Primary Source Analysis

1. Provide students with selection of Washington’s Farewell Address. Individually, with partners, or in small groups, have students engage in a close read of the artifact using the Washington’s Farewell Address Analysis activity. Use attached directions found in Resource #2.

2. Debrief – “Pass the Buck” Activity: Students work in groups of three. Each student starts with one of the three questions. They should have one to two minutes to begin responding to their assigned prompt. After time is up, students pass the papers. They are again given time to respond, but this time to the new question. Students may add to their group member’s response or move the response into a different direction. Complete the cycle by passing the papers again. At the end, students should receive their original prompt and summarize the final responses.

The main objective of this activity is for students to consider how the extra-Constitutional functions/roles of political parties discussed earlier in the lesson may justify the need for parties despite Washington’s fears. Specifically, teachers should ask discuss the following questions to debrief the primary source analysis:

- **Why did Washington believe that political parties were dangerous?**
  
  Target Responses: Creating parties would lead to conflict within the government and within society. Parties would create disunity and this would inhibit the government from functioning properly.

- **How do the functions/roles of political parties that we discussed earlier address Washington’s beliefs or argue against his points?**
  
  Target Responses: Political parties work to get their members elected to different offices and criticize each other. These back-and-forth shifts in power and debates do create a type of conflict, as Washington had warned, but also allow for a check on the government. Government power is diffused between the two parties, thus safeguarding the people.

  Party members, who are elected to office, are supposed to represent the needs/desires of their constituents. Parties work to make sure this happens, again protecting the power of the people.

  Washington feared that political parties might pull the nation apart, but it can be argued that parties unify citizens along common political ideologies. Washington may not have considered the important role that political parties would play in getting citizens involved in politics and keeping them informed about...
government, which is essential for democracy to function appropriately.

• **Considering how involved political parties are in politics today, how justified was Washington?**

  Target Responses: This is an opinion question to a degree, but students should be getting to the point that no matter how correct Washington was about the dangers of parties, parties are important in connecting people with the government and maintaining the ultimate sovereignty of the people.

3. **Check for Understanding (Distributed Summary #3):** 3-2-1 – Students give three important ideas they learned from *Washington’s Farewell Address*, two reasons why Washington warned against political parties, and one reason why they think Washington’s argument was persuasive or not.

**Phase III: Application**

Argumentative writing (CSET) format. Students will respond to the following prompt using the “Writing Assessment (Political Parties CSET)” handout: **To what extent are political parties necessary in the United States today? Please provide support and textual evidence in your response.**

**Common Core State Standards**

**Key Ideas and Details:**

- **CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RH.9-10.1**
  Cite specific textual evidence to support analysis of primary and secondary sources, attending to such features as the date and origin of the information.

- **CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RH.9-10.2**
  Determine the central ideas or information of a primary or secondary source; provide an accurate summary of how key events or ideas develop over the course of the text.

**Craft and Structure:**

- **CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RH.9-10.4**
  Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in a text, including vocabulary describing political, social, or economic aspects of history/social science.

**Integration of Knowledge and Ideas:**

- **CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RH.9-10.9**
  Compare and contrast treatments of the same topic in several primary and secondary sources.

**Text Types and Purposes:**

- **CCSS.ELA-Literacy.WHST.9-10.1**
  Write arguments focused on *discipline-specific content*.
**Resource #1: Functions/Roles of Political Parties Research Organizer**

Please complete the matrix below as your notes. Remember that you are looking for specific and different things that political parties do for us (the people), the government, or both.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Specific Function/Role of Parties</th>
<th>What might this function/role suggest why political parties might be necessary in the United States?</th>
<th>Include 2-3 notes of supporting detail or important points.</th>
<th>Direct or Text-Based Evidence</th>
<th>Source of Information</th>
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Additional Information from classmates:

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Resource #2: Washington’s Farewell Address Analysis
Link to document: https://archive.org/details/washingtonsfarew02wash

I. Pre-Reading Discussion
   A. Discuss with students what they have already learned about the purposes and functions of political parties in the modern United States.
   B. Discuss with students the possible problems that political parties cause for American politics and society. This is a good point to allow students to share ideas or even misconceptions that they have heard in the media or within their own communities. Teachers are encouraged to use multimodal discussion techniques, such a news clip or other visuals.

II. Close Reading of Excerpt
   A. Give students Washington’s Farewell Address from https://archive.org/details/washingtonsfarew02wash
   B. It is recommended to use the introduction pages of the address to have a contextualizing discussion, then to focus specifically on pages 16–18 of the address. Teachers may choose to use more, if appropriate for students.
   C. Contextualize Washington’s Farewell Address by asking students the following questions:
      1. Who is the author of this primary source? What is his importance?
      2. When was this source published?
      3. Who was the intended audience?
      4. Why was this document created?
      5. Why are these questions important to consider? What do your responses tell us about the text before we read it, and how might your responses to these questions impact how we should read it?
   D. Reading Guide – Present the following questions to students as they read the passage. Students should respond to these questions on paper.
      1. Begin on page 16 of Washington’s Farewell Address. Read the first paragraph. Washington is discussing “parties in the state.” What is this?
      2. After reading this paragraph, what do you believe “baneful effects” means?
      3. In the second paragraph, what do you think Washington is saying in the first sentence?
      4. In the last paragraph of page 16, Washington switches from using “parties” to “factions.” What may be the reason for this?
      5. Based on what you have already read and the line, “…sooner or later the chief of some prevailing faction, more able or more fortunate than his competitors, turns his disposition to the purposes of his own elevation, on the ruins of Public Liberty,” what do you think “despotism” means?
      6. Move to page 17 and read the first full paragraph. What is Washington trying to do here?
      7. In the next paragraph, what do you terms like “agitator,” “ill founded jealousies,” “false alarms,” and “animosity” say about Washington’s attitude toward the dangers of political parties?
      8. In addition to these ideas, what else is Washington warning against in this paragraph?
9. How does Washington’s tone change in the last paragraph on page 17?
10. Why does Washington think some people argue that parties are positive? How does he then argue against that?

III. Magnet Card Summaries
   A. After completing the individual questions of the reading guide, students work in pairs or small groups to summarize each of the paragraphs of the excerpt.
   B. Use the following procedure:
      1. Use index cards or any other box-shaped medium.
      2. For each paragraph, come up with the most important term and place it in the middle of your card.
      3. Find the next four most important terms in the paragraph and write them in the corners on the card.
      4. On the back of the card, you must use all of the terms to write a summary of what you read in that paragraph.
      5. Students work together to do this for all of the paragraphs, using their reading guides to help them.
   C. Use the individual summaries to generate one overall summary of the excerpt from Washington’s address.