



Presidential Nomination Process

Next week, Americans will begin the process of selecting the Democratic and Republican nominees for president. Iowaans will go to the polls first on February 1, quickly followed by New Hampshire citizens on February 9. Over the course of the following five months, voters in each state, district and territory of the United States will select their ideal nominee for the general election in November. This initial round of voting is just the first in a very long and complicated route to the national Democratic and Republican conventions, which will be held in July, 2016, where the candidates and platforms will be officially selected. In this initial round of voting, each state and each major political party in each state has its own set of structures, rules, and guidelines that govern voting. The two common forms of first-round voting are caucuses and primaries. Read the information below to explore the similarities and differences in voting and to consider the question: “Which form of voting do you think is more democratic? Why?”

Caucus

Primary

What is it?

Meetings where voters openly discuss, seek to persuade each other, and vote for candidates. The results determine the number of delegates pledged or bound to vote for a given candidate at the party's state convention.

An election in which voters cast ballots for a candidate of their choosing from a political party. The results determine the number of delegates pledged or bound to vote for a given candidate at the party's state convention.

Who can vote?

Registered voters and registered party members (if a closed caucus). Sixteen states allow 17 years olds to vote, under [varying conditions](#).

Registered voters. Varies based on whether it's an open or a closed primary.

Is the ballot secret?

No

Yes

How do people vote?

Voters gather at a meeting place; it could be a house, school, library, etc. They raise hands to show an initial support of candidates. Each person may discuss why they support their chosen candidate in to order to convince other voters. Voters eventually vote on a nominee by moving into groups or casting a vote with paper. Number of people supporting each nominee is recorded.

In a **closed primary**, voters choose one candidate from the party that they are registered with (e.g. Republican voters can only vote for Republican candidates and likewise for Democrats).

In an **open primary**, voters can cast a ballot for a candidate without being a registered member of that candidate's party. They can vote in only one party's primary.

How long does it take?

Potentially hours as voters take informal public polls, make speeches, break into groups, hold discussions, deliberate on candidates, and re-group.

Minutes to cast a ballot at a polling location.

National Conventions

Once votes have been cast at the state level, delegates, or representatives, from each state’s party will travel to the party’s national convention. Republicans will meet in Cleveland, and Democrats will convene their convention in Philadelphia a week later. The purpose of the party convention is for delegates to come together and officially nominate the presidential candidate for their party and to decide on their party’s platform, their goals and policies.

	Democratic National Convention	Republican National Convention
What are delegates?	<p>‘Pledged’ delegates are bound to vote for a particular candidate at the state and national party conventions.</p> <p>‘Unpledged’ delegates can choose who they vote for.</p> <p>There is no legal enforcement mechanism to guarantee how a delegate votes at the convention.</p> <p>Delegates from California = 546 (11.98% of all national convention delegates)</p> <p>Total delegates at national convention = 4,764</p> <p>The candidate who wins the vote of at least 2,383 delegates at the national convention will be the Democratic Presidential Candidate in the general election on November 8, 2016.</p>	<p>‘Bound’ delegates are bound to vote for a particular candidate at the state and national party conventions.</p> <p>‘Unbound’ delegates can choose who they vote for.</p> <p>There is no legal enforcement mechanism to guarantee how a delegate votes at the convention.</p> <p>Delegates from California = 172 (6.96% of all national convention delegates)</p> <p>Total delegates at national convention = 2,472</p> <p>The candidate who wins the vote of at least 1,237 delegates at the national convention will be the Republican Presidential Candidate in the general election on November 8, 2016.</p>
How are delegates selected?	<p>The Democratic National Committee instructs states to award delegates to candidates in proportion to the percentage of votes the candidate received (threshold of 15% of votes to be eligible for a delegate).</p> <p>For example, if Clinton wins 49% of the California Democratic Primary vote, Sanders wins 37%, and O’Malley wins 14%, then at the Democratic National Convention, two-thirds of the pledged delegates from California will be expected to vote for Clinton; one-third for Sanders; and O’Malley will have no pledged delegates voting for him.</p>	<p>The Republican National Committee allows states to choose proportional representation (to award delegates to candidates in proportion to the percentage of votes the candidate received (thresholds vary by state)), or all bound delegates are allocated to the winner of the most votes (aka winner take all), or a mix of these.</p>

2016 Primary Schedule

<http://www.uspresidentialelectionnews.com/2016-presidential-primary-schedule-calendar/>

Iowa Democratic Party Caucuses

<http://iowademocrats.org/caucus/>

Republican Party of Iowa Caucuses

<https://www.iowagop.org/caucus/>

Republican Delegate Allocation 2016

https://ballotpedia.org/Republican_National_Convention,_2016

Democratic Delegate Allocation 2016

https://ballotpedia.org/Democratic_National_Convention,_2016

Teach the Election

About *Teach the Election*


Teach the Election puts the 2016 Election in its historical context with classroom-ready explanations of the electoral process, relevant issues, and suggestions to incorporate the election cycle into the regular curriculum. *Teach the Election* also helps students engage with informational text and primary sources to help them make the evidence-based arguments required by California's Standards.

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Contact


The California History-Social Science Project

University of California, Davis 
162 Kerr Hall
One Shields Avenue
Davis, CA 95616


<http://chssp.ucdavis.edu> 

chssp@ucdavis.edu 

530.752.0572 

fax: 530.752.8202 

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