

Politics in the US

Roles of political parties :

- *Running candidates for office* : to make it easier for voters to choose between candidates, parties enable to gather candidates who share the same political ideas.
- *Checking the other party* : holding the majority in Congress enables a party to keep a part of power, so that the party in power does not control all. Therefore, this first party is allowed to publicly criticize the President in power. However, it's now qualified of being « partisanship » by some Americans.
- *Informing the public* : parties relay their discussions so that people can be informed of issues and solutions found by the parties to deal with these problems.
- *Organizing the government* : when it comes to discussing a law or a policy, legislative representatives support their party's position – candidates are « defined » by their party

Why a two-party system ?

→ A third party system has existed in America's history, but it didn't last ; the two-party system seems to be the most efficient system

- *Consensus of values* : both parties, Democrats and Republicans, share the same basic values : liberty, equality, individualism. They agree to the Constitution and respect the election process. The two parties may often wrangle but it's different from deep disagreements between parties in a multi-party system (in Russia, one party advocates communism while another supports socialism and another one is for ultra-nationalism)
- *Historical influence* : initially, there were two parties : the Federalists and the Democratic-Republicans. Politicians were trying to identify themselves to one party, especially throughout important discussions, like the debate about the Constitution, or discrepancies between two cabinet members of [George Washington](#) : [Thomas Jefferson](#) and [Alexander Hamilton](#).
- *The winner-take-all system* : the winner of electoral elections is the one who gets the higher number of votes. Therefore, if a third party exists and gets 15 percent of votes, for each Senate seats, it finally does not win any seat : a third party would be totally non influent.

Politic scheme :

- *Federal government* : state, federal and local government are separated and imposed with taxes
- *Legislature* : two chambers : House of representatives and Senate
- *Executive* : Executive Office of the President of the USA (EOP) : group of agencies, such as the White House Office, National Security Council or Office of Management and Budget, that support the work of the President//Cabinet : advisory body to the President
- *Judiciary* : Supreme court of the US
- *Elections* : Presidential elections : every 4 years, renewable 1 time//Midterm elections : in November, every 4 years//Off-year elections : when neither a presidential election nor a midterm election takes place

Democrats & Republicans :

- Both promote a compromise between conservatism and liberalism
- Democratic Party : active federal intervention in public life ([Franklin D. Roosevelt](#), [J. F. Kennedy](#), [Barack Obama](#)) « la gauche »
- Republican Party (GOP): autonomy and limited central control ([Abraham Lincoln](#), [Ronald Reagan](#), [George Bush](#)) « la droite »