

What is a Primary Election?

Learn about why states are voting before Election Day.



Americans are voting in primary elections.

Election Day is on the way! The big day will happen on November 8. But Americans are already heading to the polls. For the next few months, voters will cast their ballots in primary elections. Let's get into the details!

Primary elections are early rounds of voting. During the primaries, Americans narrow down the possible candidates. They choose who will run in the main election.

Americans won't vote for a new president this year. However, they will choose lawmakers for both parts of Congress. That includes all 435 members of the House of Representatives and 34 seats in the Senate. Americans will fill other government jobs too. In 36 states, residents will vote for governors!

There are two main parties — Democrats and Republicans. In the primaries, members of each party vote. Republicans choose their favorite Republican candidate. Democrats do the same with their top choices. Then, the winners go head-to-head on Election Day. Right now, the Democrats control Congress. But Republicans hope to pull ahead in November.

The primaries started with Texas on March 1. The state's current governor is Greg Abbott. He won for the Republican party. Abbott will run against the Democratic winner, Beto O'Rourke, in November.

On May 3, Indiana and Ohio held their primary elections. In Ohio, Republican J.D. Vance is running for a seat in the Senate against Democrat Tim Ryan. Vance had won the support of former President Donald Trump. Experts say that pushed Vance to win. Ohio's current governor, Mike DeWine, won his race for the Republican Party. Meanwhile, Nan Whaley won for the Democrats. She is hoping to become the first woman to be elected governor in the state.

West Virginia and Nebraska held their primary elections on Tuesday. Another Trump-endorsed candidate won in West Virginia. Representative Alex Mooney defeated Representative David McKinley. They are both current members of the House. West Virginia will lose one of its House seats. So, the lawmakers had to run against each other.

Winners celebrated after the primaries. Now, they have to get to work. They'll need a lot of support to win on Election Day. Who will come out on top?

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"What is a Primary Election?"

Elementary

Objective: Students will learn about the primary election process through a simple voting simulation.

Activity:

1. Read the article "What is a Primary Election?" together as a class.
2. Discuss the purpose and process of primary elections.
3. Set up a simple voting simulation where students can nominate candidates and vote.

Assessment:

Students will write a short paragraph about what they learned from the voting simulation.

Middle School

Objective: Students will learn about the primary election process through a detailed simulation.

Activity:

1. Read the article "What is a Primary Election?" as a class.
2. Discuss the purpose and process of primary elections.
3. Set up a detailed simulation where students participate in all aspects of a primary election, including campaigning, debating, and voting.

Assessment:

Students will write a detailed reflection on their experience in the simulation and what they learned about the primary election process.