

Lesson 2

Voter Registration

When a person goes to the polls to vote in an election, voting officials need to make sure that the person is eligible to vote. They also need to make sure that the person only votes one time. One way to do this is to require that voters register with the local government.

The first state to require its citizens to register was Massachusetts in 1800. After the Civil War, many states began to register voters. The main reason for the change was to make elections more honest. Many city governments were corrupt. Some people voted more than once. Sometimes votes were even cast in the names of people who had died! Registration is an attempt to keep these abuses from happening.

Even today, some states only require voters to register if they live in a large city. In most places, a voter registers just one time and does not have to do so again unless he or she has changed names (as when a woman gets married) or changed addresses. However, some places, especially cities, require voters to reregister periodically so that their list of voters stays accurate and up to date.

Registration policies vary from state to state and from city to city. Many places try to make voter registration easy by putting applications in libraries, county election offices, and post offices. Some states require voters to register as many as 30 days before an election, but in Minnesota voters can register and vote on election day.



The caption of this illustration from Frank Leslie's Illustrated Newspaper, Volume 55, 1882 reads: "New York City -- President Arthur Registering as a Voter at the Registration Office, No. 402 Third Avenue."

Lesson 25

Receiving Election News

When George Washington became the first President in 1789, newspapers reported it, but the fastest way to transport the newspapers over land was by horse. Therefore, it took weeks before some citizens were able to learn the news.

As new technologies were invented, election news traveled faster. When the first commercial radio station, KDKA, began in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania in 1920, its first broadcast announced that Warren G. Harding and his running mate Calvin Coolidge had defeated their opponents, Democrats James Cox and Franklin Roosevelt. Today a voter can receive election results on the Internet, on television, or on radio. Satellites beam the news across the world in seconds. When Barak Obama chose Joe Biden as his running mate in 2008, he sent out the news by text messaging to cell phones.



Dwight and Mamie Eisenhower Watching Television During the Republican National Convention in Chicago in July 1952



In the 1892 presidential election, the New York Herald used a searchlight at Madison Square Garden to tell the news to New Yorkers that Cleveland had won.



*This New York City crowd has just received results of the presidential election by telegram. Buchanan won. Notice the telegraph office in the center of the picture.
Frank Leslie's Illustrated Newspaper, November 15, 1856.*



Table in the home of President Warren G. Harding where he heard election results.



When William McKinley was elected in 1900, residents of large cities could learn election results on the streets. News organizations projected slides onto buildings. In Chicago, residents learned the results by color-coded fireworks!

Lesson 37

Political Conventions



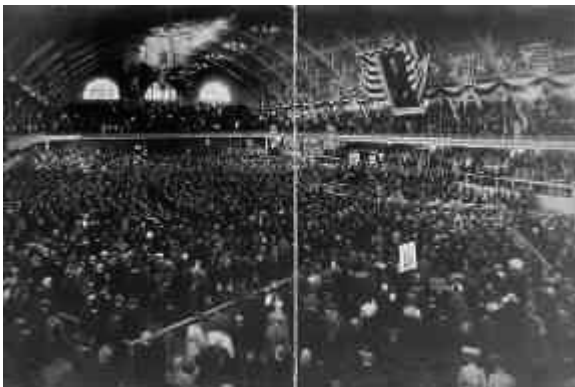
Delegates Arriving at the Republican Convention in Chicago, 1868, Harper's Weekly, Illustration by W.B. Baird



Democratic National Convention in Session in Tammany Hall in New York, 1868, Harper's Weekly, Illustration by Theodore R. Davis

A political convention is a gathering of members of a political party. At the national conventions, party members listen to speeches, finalize their party platform, and officially nominate their candidates for President and Vice President.

Democrats and Republicans hold their national conventions in the summer before a November presidential election. Democrats held their first national convention in 1832, and Republicans held their first in 1856. Both major parties receive money from the Federal government to help pay for their conventions. In 2004, the



Opening Prayer at Republican National Convention, 1904



Democratic Nominee Jimmy Carter with Daughter Amy and Wife Rosalyn at Democratic National Convention, New York City, 1976



Balloon Drop at Republican National Convention, Kansas City, 1976.



Delegates at the Republican National Convention, Kansas City, 1976



Gerald and Betty Ford celebrate his nomination as the Republican presidential candidate at the Republican Convention in Kansas City, 1976.

amount for each party was \$14,924,000. To people watching on television, conventions look like big parties, with lots of celebrating with flags, balloons, and speeches. In addition to the public activities, party leaders gather in private meetings to plan ways to win the upcoming election.

The main purpose of the convention is to choose the official candidates for President and Vice President. This is done by having roll call votes. States are called alphabetically and their chairpersons announce the vote for their state. After the presidential candidate is officially chosen, the vice presidential candidate is nominated. Today the presidential candidate's choice of a running mate is announced before the convention is held. The presidential candidate chooses his own Vice President, but he is greatly influenced by party leaders who want him to choose someone who will help win votes. During the convention, the presidential candidate gives an acceptance speech. The first candidate to give an acceptance speech at a convention was Franklin Roosevelt in 1932. Today it is a highlight of the

convention. In 1924, radio stations began broadcasting the Democratic and Republican conventions. Now they are covered extensively on television and the Internet.

Lesson 51

Advertising on Paper

Though William Henry Harrison was born into wealth, his campaign organizers invented the idea of his having a humble beginning. Editor Horace Greeley printed a newspaper in support of Harrison. It was called *The Log Cabin*.

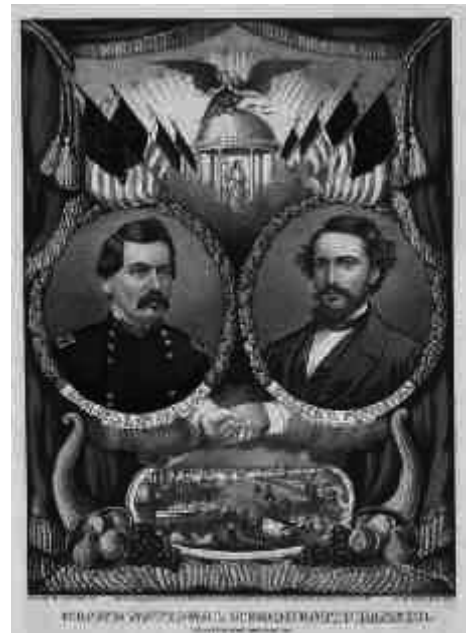
People have found many ways to advertise on paper. They have made posters, brochures, letters, postcards, and booklets. Modern candidates often write a book about themselves or hire an author to do so for them.

Early candidates had elaborate campaign posters. Advertising agencies today would find them too “busy,” since ads are expected to be clear and simple. Reflecting the more modern style, Democrat Walter Mondale’s solid blue brochure from 1984 proclaimed in white letters: “Walter Mondale: The experience to know what needs to change. The strength to make it happen.”

A look back at print advertisements reveals what Americans were concerned about at the time

of a particular election. Dwight Eisenhower’s campaign had a brochure entitled, “Ike Says This About Communism.”

John F. Kennedy and Richard Nixon both used brochures to reach out to special interest groups. Kennedy brochures included these: “Worried About Old Age? Kennedy for President” and “For the West, For America, Kennedy for President.” The Nixon campaign had brochures entitled: “Foreign Policy,” “Economic Leadership,” “Health Care,” “The Record,” “Vietnam,” “Education,” “Environment,” “Black Americans,” and “Young Voters.”



This “Grand National Democratic Banner” promises “Peace! Union! And Victory!” It promoted General George B. McClellan, who ran against Abraham Lincoln.



The tag on Taft’s lapel says, “Good Times.”