GOVERNMENT POLICIES AND POLITICAL PROCESSES

SS.7.C.2.8: Identify America's current political parties, and illustrate their ideas about government.

A political party is a group of citizens or voters with similar views on public issues who work to put their ideas into government action and who work together to elect a candidate. One of the jobs of political parties is to nominate candidates to run for office. That is, to select them to represent their particular political party in an election. Parties choose a candidate who agrees with their beliefs and try to persuade voters to support their candidate running for office. Competing political parties give voters a choice among candidates and ideas. To know where a party stands on the major issues, the voters can look at the party's platform. A platform is a series of statements expressing the party's principles, beliefs, and positions on issues. Each individual part of a platform is called a plank. The platform communicates to voters what the political party plans to do if it wins. (Examples: Platform Issue = Healthcare; Plank = Agreeing/Disagreeing with universal healthcare)

The United States has had a long tradition of a two-party system. This means that two major political parties have controlled elections and have the most participation by voters. The two major political parties today are the Democrats and the Republicans.

Political Party	Year Founded (Created)	Core Beliefs
Democratic	1828	The federal government should take a more active role in people's lives, especially those in need. Democrats are not opposed to raising taxes to pay for social programs.
Republican	1854	The federal government should take a limited role in people's lives. Republicans favor lowering taxes and less government spending

Because these two major parties have the most support from the public, it has made it nearly impossible for third parties to win elections. Third parties are political parties that often form on the basis of one or a few issues. These issues might be related to a foreign or domestic concern and, because the concern is so particular, it is difficult to gain popular support. Third party candidates have never won a presidential election and rarely win election to other offices.

Below are some examples of current third parties that exist in the United States.

Political Party	Year Founded (Created)	Core Beliefs
Communist Party	1919	The federal government should control all production and supply of goods and the workers should control their own lives and destinies.
Libertarian Party	1971	The only purpose of the federal government is to protect freedom; this party believes in individual freedom.
Socialist Party	1901	People should own and control all businesses through democratically controlled public agencies (these are agencies that are created based on the people's choice/election) or other groups.

Political parties play a major role and make an important impact in American society. Political parties are important to the democratic process because they allow individuals to communicate their beliefs to the government. Because political parties are made up of large groups of people, it allows their group's voices and shared ideas to be more easily heard by the government. Political parties also educate citizens about issues and

acts as a guide during elections. Generally, people tend to vote for candidates from their own political party or for issues that their political party supports.

Political parties also impact the government at the federal, state and local levels. Political parties act as loose confederations (groups that come together for similar reasons/causes) at the state and local levels. Because there are many more elected offices at the state and local levels, political parties tend to be more active at these levels. Also, political parties raise and spend money in order to get candidates elected and they use funds to help spread the message about their beliefs and ideas to the people. Candidates representing the major political party that wins more seats in one house of the national or state legislature becomes the majority party in that house of the legislature while the major party that wins fewer seats in one house of the national or state legislature becomes the minority party in that house of the legislature. The majority party in a legislative house enjoys more control over the lawmaking process compared with the minority party in that same legislative house.

SS.7.C.2.9: Evaluate candidates for political office by analyzing their qualifications, experience, issue-based platforms, debates, and political ads.

According to the U.S. Constitution, there are certain qualifications that individuals must possess in order to run for federal political office. Examples of federal political offices are President, Vice President, Congressman/woman, and Senator. The qualifications are unique to each office and are listed in the chart below.

Federal Elected Office	Description of Qualifications
President Vice President (The qualifications to be vice president are not included in the U.S. Constitution. However, the vice president becomes president if the president leaves office due to resignation or death. This means that the vice president must be qualified to be president in order to run for vice president).	1. At least 35 years old 2. Has lived in the U.S. for 14 years 3. Is a natural born citizen (born on U.S. soil (law of soil) or to U.S. citizen parents (law of blood)) 4. May not serve for more than two 4-year terms total. If the vice president becomes president due to the resignation, death or removal of the president, the vice president, upon becoming president, may be president for no more than 10 years (the vice president completes the president's term and would have the option of running for president during the next presidential election cycle).
A member of the U.S. House of Representatives (representative)	1. 25 years old 2. 7 years as a U.S. citizen 3. Members of the U.S. House of Representatives do not need to live in the district that they represent although they must live in the state in which the district that they represent is located. 4. No term limits; can serve for an unlimited amount of 2 year terms
A member of the U.S. Senate (senator)	1. 30 years old 2. 9 years as a U.S. citizen 3. Members of the U.S. Senate must live in the state that they represent. 4. No term limits; can serve for an unlimited amount of 6 year terms

Each state has its own constitution that creates the state's plan for government. In the Florida Constitution, the qualifications are listed that people must possess in order to run for state political offices. Candidate qualifications for those running for city and county office are found in city and county charters (charters serve as a constitution for a city or county). However, no person may hold elected office in Florida unless that person is a U.S. citizen, a Florida resident, registered to vote and at least 18 years old. City and county charters may include additional requirements. For example, cities and counties may require that candidates be holder than 18 in order to hold public office in those cities and counties.

Examples of state and local political offices are governor, lieutenant governor, state representative, and state senator. The qualifications are unique to each office and are listed in the chart below.

State Elected Office	Description of Qualifications
Governor	1. U.S. citizen 2. At least 30 years old 3. Resident of the state for at least 5 years 4. May not serve more than two 4-year terms.
Lieutenant Governor	1. U.S. citizen 2. At least 30 years old 3. Resident of the state for at least 5 years 4. May not serve more than two 4-year terms. If the lieutenant governor becomes governor due to the resignation, death or removal of the governor, the lieutenant governor, upon becoming governor, may be governor for no more than 10 years (the lieutenant governor completes the governor's term and would have the option of running for governor during the next gubernatorial election cycle).
A member of the Florida House of Representatives (State Representative)	1. U.S. citizen 2. Lives in the district represented 3. State resident for at least 2 years 4. At least 21 years old
A member of the Florida Senate (State Senator)	1. U.S. citizen 2. Lives in the district represented 3. State resident for at least 2 years 4. At least 21 years old

SS.7.C.2.9 Benchmark Clarification 3: Students will be able to analyze and/or evaluate the qualifications of candidates for public office based on their experience, platforms, debates and political advertisements.

During an election, candidates who are running for public office will often create political advertisements and commercials to appeal to voters. As a voter, it is important for people to consider several things when determining who to vote for.

A voter may wish to consider a candidate's previous experiences. People who are elected to public office may have served in some other elected or appointed position before, or have a background in a field that would help them do their job. For example, many elected Congressmen/Congresswomen and Senators actively participate in their communities, have been a lawyer or a judge, are college graduates, and may have served in local government before running for state or federal office.

A voter may wish to consider a candidate's platform – the set of ideas which are often based on their political party beliefs that a candidate has on certain issues. These ideas could cover such topics as education, religion, health care, government spending, taxation and foreign policy, just to name a few.

A voter may wish to view a political debate that may take place before the election. For major national elections, these debates are usually televised. Usually, candidates who are running for President will want to take on their opponent in a debate to reveal their thoughts on issues and persuade the voters to vote for them based on the topics debated.

A voter may wish to consider the various political advertisements that run in magazines, newspapers, television, radio and on-line when trying to determine which candidate to vote for. Candidates will often use these advertisements as a way to appeal to voters and to identify themselves as the "best choice" for voters. Sometimes, candidates may even decide to put down the candidates that they are running against in order to make themselves look better to the voters.

SS.7.C.2.10: Examine the impact of media, individuals, and interest groups on monitoring and influencing government.

Interest groups use their First Amendment rights to peaceable assembly, free speech and petition to monitor and influence the government. Interest groups are groups that form because of a common interest or goal and attempt to influence people by working together in support of that goal or cause. Political Action Committees, which are often connected to interest groups, can raise money and contribute to the campaigns of candidates that they support. Interest groups can work with members of Congress or with other elected legislators to get laws passed (this is usually referred to as lobbying), and can educate members of their interest group on key issues and causes that they wish those members to support. For example, interest groups will ask their members to vote and give campaign donations to candidates that the interest group supports.

The media uses their right to freedom of the press, granted to them by the First Amendment, to monitor and influence the government. The media, which consists of print (newspaper, magazine), broadcast (television, radio) and Internet (social media) sources can produce stories about public officials, distribute information online about the government, or broadcast information and news reports through the radio or television programs. The media is a major player in both monitoring and influencing the government.

The media has a major impact on influencing and monitoring the government. In most instances, the media serves in a watchdog role, keeping their eye on the government and reporting government happenings to the public.

Interest groups have a major impact on influencing the government as well. These groups form to support a specific cause or special interest and work in large numbers to get their cause recognized by the government. Political Action Committees (PACs) is one type of interest group that works to raise money for a particular candidate that supports an issue that they favor. Additionally, interest groups may hire lobbyists whose job it is to meet with lawmakers in hopes of gaining their support of a bill that would benefit the cause/issue they support.

Finally, individual citizens impact the government. Simply by performing one of their most important civic responsibilities, individuals play a major role and impact in changing the government. Voting is one of the most important ways that American citizens can impact the government. Whether it is voting a candidate in or

out of office, or voting in favor of or against an amendment to the Florida Constitution, citizens change the government during every election. Voting is one of the most important parts of a democracy.

There are several different methods that individuals, the media and interest groups use to influence and/or monitor the government. Individuals can use their right to vote to change the government, the media can act as a watchdog to investigate and report on happenings related to the government and interest groups can hold meetings and write petitions in an attempt to make changes or influence the government. All of these groups: individual citizens, the media and interest groups are important members of a democratic society and they work together to keep the American government accountable.

The effectiveness of each method is difficult to determine. This is because individuals, the media and interest groups affect each other in their efforts to monitor and influence the government. The media may focus their attention on a specific issue or campaign, which will attract public attention and may impact how individuals vote. Interest groups may spend money on an expensive public information campaign which also may influence how individuals vote and whether they will contribute money to the interest group. Still, government tends to pay more attention to groups with a higher rate of voting compared with groups that do not vote in large numbers. Interest groups that spend more money through their political action committees also tend to have a stronger influence on who gets elected as well.

SS.7.C.2.11: Analyze media and political communications (bias, symbolism, propaganda).

The poster below was created in 1917.
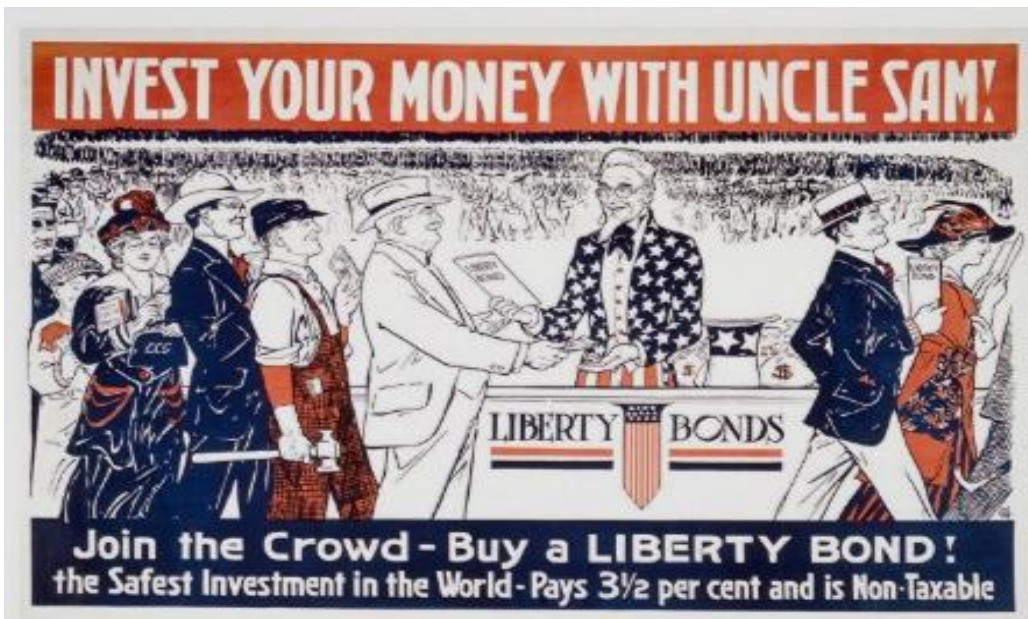
This poster was created in 1917, during World War I. This is an example of the government using symbolism and propaganda to influence citizens. Pictured above one can see "Uncle Sam" selling "liberty bonds" – which is a war bond (money that the government borrows from the citizens to fund a war effort) that was used to fund and support the military during World War I. Because the cartoonist used Uncle Sam (the first two letters in Uncle Sam are "U" and "S"; U.S. is also used to represent "United States"), the readers saw it as their "patriotic duty" to buy these bonds to support the war effort. The symbolism (Uncle Sam) and propaganda ("Invest Your Money") used in this cartoon is an effective way to persuade citizens into thinking or behaving in a certain way.
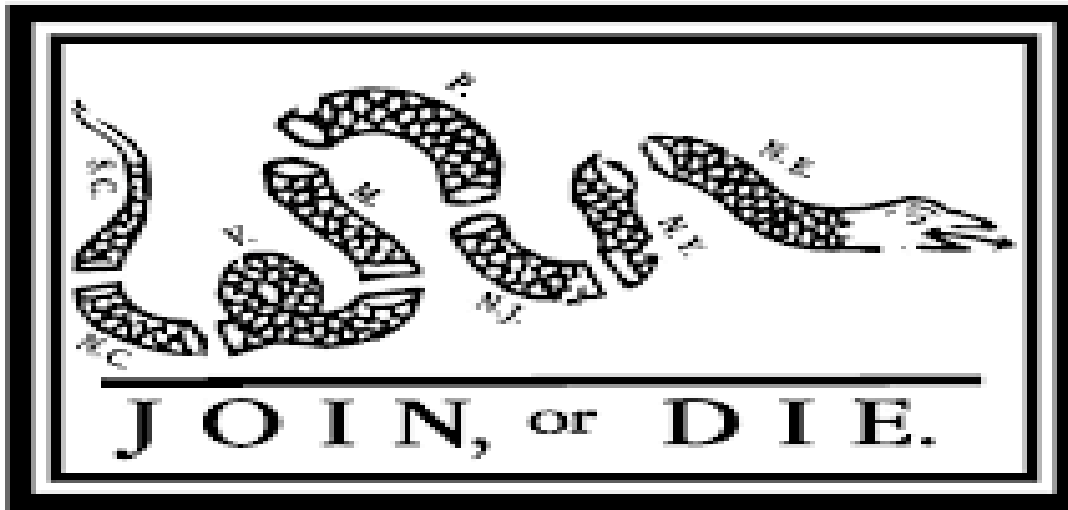
Figure 1 This political cartoon was created in 1774

Each of the eight segments of the snake represents a region or colony. For example, "N.E." stands for "New England" which represents four colonies while "P." represents Pennsylvania, which included Delaware at the time (Georgia was not included). Together, the snake represents all 13 colonies. The phrase "Join, or Die" was intended to reflect the author's point of view that colonial unity was important to the colonists' survival. The colonies needed to come together ("join") with Great Britain against the French and Indians during the French and Indian War or else they would not survive ("die"). The "Join, or Die" symbol was later used to encourage the colonists to seek their freedom during the American Revolutionary War.

Bias, symbolism and propaganda can influence public opinion – which is the way that citizens view or feel about candidates or issues. The media plays a major role in influencing public opinion.

Oftentimes, the information that the media provides to the public is not balanced, or biased. Bias occurs when one side is favored over another in the presentation of information. Media bias can occur when news stations or news outlets decide what to report on and how much information to reveal to the public. This is a problem for the public because they are only getting the side of the story that the news media want them to hear.

Symbolism is the use of symbols to convey a message. The media may use symbolism as a sort of "shortcut" or as a way to target a certain group of people. This can be a problem because many symbols are associated with certain groups, or may even have a negative reputation attached to them.

Both bias and symbolism can be viewed as forms of propaganda, which is any attempt to sway the public, including voters, to think or believe something. Propaganda could be the use of symbols, a poster, or a commercial – there is not one specific kind of propaganda that exists. Oftentimes, the behavior or thoughts of voters are changed and influenced when the media introduces propaganda.

Here are some famous examples of propaganda:

Example #1: Uncle Sam

This propaganda poster is one of the most famous pieces of propaganda in American history. This poster was originally intended to appear on a magazine cover during World War I to encourage American citizens to be prepared for the beginning of war. Because this poster was so popular, President Roosevelt decided to use the image of Uncle Sam again in this propaganda poster to encourage young men to join the U.S. Army in World War II. The patriotic colors and the slogan "We Want You!" is a great example of how the government used symbolism and propaganda to get the American public to feel a certain way. It is no surprise that Uncle Sam encouraged hundreds of thousands of men to join the Army and do their

"American duty" during World War II.

Example #2: Rosie the Riveter

During World War II, women in the United States entered into the workforce and took on jobs they had not previously needed to do. This was in large part because hundreds of thousands of American men had joined the military to fight enemy forces. "Rosie the Riveter" pictured above was the face of the propaganda campaign that was aimed at getting the help of female workers in the munitions industry (guns, ammunition and weapons). "Rosie" became a symbol of women's role in supporting the country during World War II and a historic women's figure**.**

SS.7.C.2.12: Develop a plan to resolve a state or local problem by researching public policy alternatives, identifying appropriate government agencies to address the issue, and determining a course of action.

Government at all levels (local, state or federal) is responsible for protecting and providing for its citizens. When a problem or issue comes up, the citizens can get the help of the government to help them solve these problems. Many of these government solutions come in the form of public policy – which is a policy (rule or law) that is made in response to some sort of issue or problem that requires attention.

U.S. citizens have the right to say what they think government should do about problems in their communities. Citizens have the right to say what they think about problems in their state and nation, and about international concerns. Citizens also have the right to try to influence the decisions government officials make about all of those problems.

To be able to participate effectively, however, citizens need to know which levels of government and which governmental agencies are responsible for changing, carrying out, or developing specific public policies. For example, state legislatures may direct agencies to put policies into place that came from federal legislation. Or, local governments may create policies in order to carry out responsibilities assigned to them through laws passed at the state or federal level. Additionally, as part of the process of developing and implementing policy, governmental agencies must determine if the new policy conflicts with existing legislation or policy.

Below are a few additional examples of problems or concerns that could be addressed by the various levels of government:

- **Problem:** There have been a number of minor car accidents at the same intersection.
- **Solution:** Involve the local government to place a traffic light or stop signs at the intersection to prevent future accidents
- **Problem:** The State of Florida has seen a drastic increase in the number of high school dropouts.
- **Solution:** Contact the state representative or state senator who chairs the appropriate legislative committee to introduce a bill that will fund a statewide dropout prevention program to be implemented in public high schools.
- **Problem:** Elderly citizens cannot afford to pay their health care expenses.
- **Solution:** Contact the Congressman/woman who chairs the appropriate health-related committee to introduce a bill that assists the elderly with these types of expenses

In the United States, the federal, state and local governments agree that creating public policy helps them fulfill their responsibilities, such as protecting the rights of individuals and promoting the well-being of all the people. Some public policies are written into laws by legislatures. Other policies are contained in rules and regulations created by executive branches of government, the branches responsible for carrying out and enforcing laws.

State and local governments are closer to the people than is the federal government. And, citizens are more affected in their daily lives by local public policies than they are by federal policies.

The following are examples of the appropriate government agencies to address state or local problems:

Florida Government

Problem	Citizen Policy Request	Responsible Agency
A voter tries to vote in an election after the election polls have closed. The polls close at 7pm and the voter arrived at the poll two hours late.	The voter writes to the state legislature asking that Election Day polling be extended by two hours on Election Day.	Florida Department of State Division of Elections
Two boats run into each other on the St. Johns River.	The sister of one of the boat operators writes to the state legislature asking that boaters be required to take a class on boat safety.	Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission
An orange grower is concerned that citrus sales are dropping every year.	The orange grower appears at a public meeting of the Florida Citrus Commission requesting that it fund a public information campaign about the health benefits of orange juice.	Florida Citrus Commission

Local Government

Problem	Citizen Policy Request	Responsible Agency
A homeowner is concerned that the neighbor's dog is barking at night.	The homeowner writes to the county commission asking that the commission pass an ordinance against dogs barking between 7pm and 7am.	County animal services office
A high school student is concerned that her fellow high school students are not doing well on the U.S. History End of Course Exam.	The student makes a formal request at the next local School Board meeting to fund an after-school tutoring program to help students prepare for the U.S. History End of Course Exam.	Local school board; the local school board may direct the high school to implement the program on its behalf.
An apartment dweller is concerned that mice, rats and cockroaches are getting into the trash bins and creating a health problem.	The apartment dweller makes a formal request at the next city council meeting to add one more trash pickup per week at apartment complexes (group of buildings).	Local waste and sanitation department

There are several different alternatives that should be considered when writing new public policy. Lawmakers will often examine several possible solutions before choosing the one, or creating one, that will solve the local or state issue. Some lawmakers might even get in contact with other local or state governments that have enacted a public policy that is similar to the one they are interested in passing to determine which solution they used.

Here is an example of how this might look:

Tobacco use is on the rise in local middle schools. The school board wants to create a policy that will get rid of tobacco usage in schools. The superintendent, school board, principals, teachers, parents and students are all concerned citizens that have an interest in solving this problem. The superintendent, acting as the "government" for the schools in the county, decides to hold a meeting and invite interested citizens to pose solutions.

Several solutions are presented:

1. Create a "zero-tolerance" policy in the student code of conduct
2. Educate the students about the effects of using tobacco
3. Hire security guards to patrol the campus and bathrooms, where smokers have been found
4. Test the students for drugs, alcohol and tobacco usage

All of the solutions that are presented might work. The superintendent will have to determine which solution is best and most economical in order to solve the problem efficiently.

No doubt, there are many problems in communities that need to be solved. Some problems may be readily dealt with by actions taken in the private sphere (individuals) or by the civil society (social, economic, or political associations or organizations). And others may be best solved by the government, through public policy.

Some examples of private service solutions might be organizing a food drive to feed the homeless in local communities, creating a neighborhood watch group to look after neighborhood children, or educating family members about the effects of drug and alcohol use.

Some examples of civil society solutions might include creating a Big Brothers/Big Sisters program to mentor community youth or hosting a fundraising event to raise money for the local chapter of the American Cancer Society.

And still, some problems are best addressed by the government. Some examples of public policy solutions might include building a sidewalk in a neighborhood where people have been struck by vehicles while exercising or constructing a traffic light at an intersection where accidents frequently occur.

SS.7.C.2.13: Examine multiple perspectives on public and current issues.

Individuals, interest groups, and political parties each present different perspectives on the direction that government should take. Students should be familiar with the rights, powers and responsibilities of each group types. Students do not need to know the perspectives of any individual or group type because the public perspectives will be presented in the questions.

Below are some scenarios that help to understand the reaction or perspective of different groups:

a) A local army base is closing and the city council has not decided how to use the land that will become available. City residents representing different interest groups hand out flyers to persons attending the city council meeting expressing multiple perspectives on the best use of the land.

b) The Democratic and Republican parties both address health care issues in their party's platform.

c) Two interest groups place advertisements in a local newspaper taking opposing sides on whether the Florida Constitution should be amended to change the size of the state Supreme Court.

Questions focusing on multiple perspectives may ask that a common perspective among two or more perspectives be identified. Finding similarities and differences among the perspectives represented in multiple perspectives focused questions is the best strategy for identifying the correct response.

The focus of the benchmark is "public and current" issues. Historical issues, such as the multiple perspectives expressed by the Federalists and Anti-Federalists over the ratification of the U.S. Constitution, will not be part of multiple perspectives focused questions because the Federalist/Anti-Federalist debate was "public" but is not "current". By contrast, a family discussing how to experience their First Amendment right to the "free exercise of religion" by choosing which house of worship to attend is considering multiple perspectives on a "current" issue, but not a "public" issue.

Citizen participation in the political process is shaped by multiple perspectives. Citizens will work independently, join interest groups or join political parties, in order to present their perspectives on the direction that government officials and political institutions should take.

Individuals influence multiple perspectives to shape participation in the political process when they exercise their First Amendment rights and their right to vote. First Amendment rights give individuals the right to express their political views through speech, press, peaceable assembly and petitioning the government. Voting rights give individuals the chance to express public perspectives by choosing one candidate or policy question over others.

Interest groups influence multiple perspectives to shape participation in the political process when they use their First Amendment rights to peaceable assembly, free speech and petitioning the government. Interest groups form because of a common interest or goal and attempt to influence people by working together in support of that goal or cause. Interest groups can work with members of Congress or with other elected legislators to get laws passed (this is usually referred to as lobbying), and can educate members of their interest group on key issues and causes that they wish those members to support. Through lobbying, directing campaign contributions (money raised for candidates, political parties or issues during the time of an election) and shaping public opinion, interest groups present multiple perspectives in their participation in the political process.

Political parties also influence multiple perspectives to shape participation in the political process. A political party is a group of citizens or voters with similar views on public issues who work to put their ideas into government action and who band together to elect a candidate. Competing political parties give voters a choice among candidates and ideas.

SS.7.C.4.1: Differentiate concepts related to United States domestic and foreign policy.

The U.S. Constitution lists several powers for Congress that deal specifically with foreign and domestic policy. Foreign policy is the nation's overall plan for dealing with other nations. Domestic policy is the nation's plan for making laws and policies that impact citizen and non-citizen behavior in the United States.

There are several different areas that the U.S. government focuses on when it comes to developing domestic policy. The U.S. government focuses on social programs, health care, and education when developing its domestic policy.

The U.S. government also has to think about several areas when developing its **foreign policy plan**. The government has to create a plan for **diplomacy**, which is ways to maintain relationships with other nations. The government needs to consider which countries to join in an **alliance** with, which is making military or defensive union with other nations. Finally, the government also considers **making treaties**, or formal agreements, with other nations for the purposes of trade, defense, and other reasons.

There are many different areas that the U.S. government focuses on when it comes to developing **domestic policy**. Some examples of domestic policy issues are **social welfare, health care and education**.

The U.S. government creates laws and policies related to social welfare, which is when the government provides economic assistance to those in need. The government has designed economic programs for mothers with children, people who are unemployed and people who are disabled. The Social Security program, for example, was enacted in 1936 to help the elderly by providing them with a monthly income during retirement.

As well, the government is concerned with providing needed medical care. Medicare was enacted to help pay for the medical care and medicines that elderly people need and often cannot afford. Medicaid was enacted to help pay for medical care and medicines that poor people need and often cannot afford.

Finally, the federal government focuses on improving education as part of its domestic policy plan. The government provides teaching and learning resources to students from nursery school age through high school and college. One example of a policy related to education was the addition of the No Child Left Behind Act, which changed education standards and created new tests to measure student achievement.

On the other hand, the federal government is also concerned about foreign affairs, or dealings with other nations. The federal government's **foreign policy** plan addresses how the government plans to interact with nations around the world. The president and the Secretary of State are the nation's primary foreign policy agents. There are general goals that the president and the Secretary of State keep in mind when developing the nation's foreign policy plan. **These goals include**: (1) national security (keeping the United States safe especially at its borders), (2) promoting peace (creating diplomatic relationships and allies (friendships/protection) with other nations), (3) spreading democracy (teaching other nations about the benefits of democratic governments), (4) promoting international trade (expanding the number of goods sold to other countries and good purchased from other countries) and (5) providing foreign aid (providing military, economic health and other types of assistance to other countries that are in need). One example of foreign aid was the aid offered after the United States signed the Marshall Plan, which was a plan to rebuild war-torn Europe after World War II.

The U.S. government has to think about several areas when creating its foreign policy plan. The government has to create a plan for diplomacy, which is ways to establish and maintain relationships with other nations. Ambassadors and diplomats, including the Secretary of State, establish good working relationships with other nations.

As well, the government needs to consider which countries with which to join in an alliance. The North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) is one example of a military alliance between several countries, and the United States is a member. By joining with another nation in a military or economic agreement, the United States considers that nation to be an allied nation.

The government also considers making treaties, or formal agreements, with the leaders of other nations for the purposes of trade, defense, security and other goals. All of these international relations (dealings with other countries) create better working relationships with nations around the world.

It is often the case that what is going on in other places in the world affects domestic policy in the United States. The U.S. government may increase its military spending, and spend less on domestic programs, if there are conflicts happening between nations or threats of attack against the United States that may threaten the safety of Americans or U.S. allies. For example, in the 1990s many communist nations fell (except Cuba and China) which allowed for less military spending and more domestic spending in the United States. This is one example of how global events changed policies and actions inside the United States.

There are very clear goals that the United States has when it comes to developing domestic and foreign policy plans. Domestic policy is any set of laws or actions that are related to government programs that impact the citizens and people within the borders of the United States. Domestic policy covers a wide range of areas, from education, to the economy, taxes, social welfare and health care. The main goal of any domestic policy plan is to make laws and rules that benefit and protect the citizens and people within U.S. borders. Foreign policy is a nation's overall plan for dealing with other nations.

As part of the president's Cabinet, the U.S. State Department has an important role in guiding and carrying out of the nation's foreign policy plan. The Secretary of State is responsible for meeting with and offering suggestions to the president, visiting other nations, holding meetings with foreign leaders and government officials, and keeping the United States safe.

By visiting and meeting with leaders of other nations, the Secretary of State learns more about these countries and reports back to the president with important information that will help the president and Congress create a foreign policy plan based on safety and the creation of good relationships.

SS.7.C.4.2: Recognize government and citizen participation in international organizations.

The end of World War II, and more specifically the Holocaust, brought international attention to issues and problems of worldwide concern. People all over the world began to pay closer attention to human rights (rights that people have because they exist) and different organizations were created to support these concerns. Governments all over the world created and participated in a number of international organizations that protected human rights and focused on economic and trade related concerns.

Several international organizations exist that protect human rights (the rights of all people) and focus on economic and trade related concerns. While these organizations have members from countries around the world, some of these organizations are located in the United States.

The United Nations is headquartered in New York City. The UN was founded after World War II and is an organization that keeps peace and helps to develop friendly relationships between and among countries. 193 nations (governments) are members of the United Nations and meet in New York City at different times throughout the year.

Below are some examples of major international organizations in which governments participate.

Name of Organization	Short Form Name	Symbol	Purpose
North American Free Trade Agreement	NAFTA		Allows free trade among the United States, Canada and Mexico and has opened new markets, created jobs, and encouraged growth in the economies of its members. The governments of the United States, Mexico and Canada encourage the purchase and sale of each other's goods.
North Atlantic Treaty Organization	NATO		A group of 28 countries that have agreed to protect each other in case of attack; specifically started to protect themselves against aggression by the Soviet Union and its communist allies. It is a military and defense agreement among the governments of member nations.
United Nations	UN		Created to keep peace worldwide and develop friendly relationship among nations. 193 nations (governments) are members of the United Nations. Countries may join the General Assembly.

World Trade Organization	WTO	WORLD TRADE ORGANIZATION	The WTO was created to promote trade and economic growth by lowering taxes and other trade limitations. Countries may join and make agreements related to trade and taxes.
International Court of Justice (World Court)	No short form name.		The World Court offers legal advice to the UN and handles international legal concerns such as boundary issues and debt payments. Countries may become members by meeting the requirements of the UN. Individuals may work or intern with the World Court.

Both individuals and nations governments can participate in international organizations. Below are some examples of how people and governments can get involved.

Name of Organization	Short Form Name	Symbol	Purpose
International Red Cross/ Red Crescent	No short form name		The International Red Cross is an international humanitarian organization with approximately 97 million volunteers, members and staff. It was founded to protect human life and health, to guarantee respect for all human beings, and to prevent and relieve human suffering. Individuals and governments can support this international organization by donating money, raising awareness, and volunteering.
Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) International Non-Governmental Organizations (INGOs)	NGO/INGO	care Defending dignity. Fighting poverty.	NGOs/INGOs are types of organizations that work independent of any government. They are private organizations that work to relieve suffering, promote the interests of the poor, protect the environment, provide basic social services, or assist with community development. These NGOs/INGOs operate independently from any government and maintain their non-governmental (no government is involved) position by not allowing government representatives to join their organizations.
United Nations	UN		An organization that was created to keep peace worldwide and develop friendly relationship among nations. 193 nations (government) are members of the United Nations. Countries can join the General Assembly. Individuals can donate money to the UN, apply for internships with the UN or work for them directly.
United Nations Children's Fund	UNICEF	unicef	A United Nations program headquartered in New York City, which provides long-term help and care to mothers and children in developing nations. They work to benefit a variety of issues related to children such as education, vaccinations, nutrition, and other issues. Individuals can contribute to UNICEF by donating money, raising awareness, purchasing gifts, or signing up for social media alerts.
International Court of Justice	Also known as the World Court		The World Court offers legal advice to the UN and handles international legal concerns such as boundary issues and debt payments. Countries can become members by meeting the requirements of the UN. Individuals can work or intern with the World Court.

Both individuals and nations governments can support international organizations. Below are some examples of how people and governments can help.

The United States Constitution grants specific powers to Congress and the president when it comes to dealing with other nations, especially during conflicts.

Congress has used its power to declare war five times in United States history. Two of these wars took place during the 20th century (1900-1999).

1. World War I – declared war on Germany after German U-Boats sunk British submarines and merchant ships carrying U.S. citizens.

2. World War II – declared war on Japan after Japan bombed a naval base in Pearl Harbor, Hawaii. Hawaii was a U.S. territory at the time.

Article II of the Constitution discusses the powers of the executive branch (president) and grants the president the title of Commander in Chief. This means that the president is in charge of the military and has the power to send troops overseas.

Presidents throughout history have been known to interpret their power as Commander in Chief to mean that they can send U.S. military troops into conflict or "war-like" situations without a formal declaration of war from Congress. Examples of this include U.S. involvement in the Korean War (1950-1953), the Vietnam War (1964-1975), Gulf War I (1990-1991) and Gulf War II (2003 – present).

There are several reasons that can lead a nation into international conflicts. These reasons might include military conflicts, trade issues, or violated agreements. The United States has been involved in several international conflicts throughout history.

International Conflict	Reasons for Involvement
Bays of Pigs Invasion (Cuba, 1961)	The Bay of Pigs is a small bay off the coast of Cuba in the Caribbean Sea. This location was the site of an attempted invasion of Cuba by a group of people who were against the dictator, Fidel Castro. This became known as the Bay of Pigs Invasion. The United States led this attempted invasion in hopes of putting an end to the threat of communism so close to the U.S. (Cuba is only 90 miles away from the Florida Keys
Cuban Missile Crisis (Cuba, 1962)	In 1962, tensions were high between communist and non-communist nations during the Cuban Missile Crisis. The USSR (Soviet Russia) decided to put missiles in Cuba to threaten the U.S. President Kennedy threatened military action and after a 13-day political and military standoff, the tense situation ended and further conflict, including war, was avoided.
Iran Hostage Crisis (Iran, 1979-1980)	In 1979, a group of Iranian students supporting the Iranian Revolution took over the U.S. embassy in Tehran, Iran and held 66 U.S. citizen diplomats hostage for 444 days. During the Iranian Hostage Crisis President Carter said that the U.S. would "not yield to blackmail", which meant that the U.S. was not willing to use diplomacy to secure the release of the hostages. After Ronald Reagan was elected president in 1980, diplomacy

	was used with Iran and the hostages were released on January 20, 1981, the day of President Reagan's inauguration.
Terrorism September 11th, 2001	On September 11, 2001, terrorists hijacked (took by force) four airplanes in the U.S. and flew them into the World Trade Center in New York City, NY and the Pentagon in Virginia, near Washington, DC. Another plane crashed into a field in Pennsylvania. Over 3,000 Americans lost their lives as a result of this attack. The World Trade Center was a business center that included two 110 story buildings. The Pentagon is the headquarters of the U.S. military leadership. Terrorists are individuals who use violence to achieve political goals such as a change of government leadership or independence. This attack killed several thousand innocent Americans. The terrorist group who did this was Al Qaeda (which was led by Osama bin Laden). Another group, the Taliban, who ruled most of the country of Afghanistan, allowed Al Qaeda to live in Afghanistan and train for the terrorist attack on September 11, 2001. The U.S. military and its NATO allies responded by invading the country with the help of the Northern Alliance. Together, they took the Taliban out of power in Afghanistan (The Northern Alliance is an Afghan group that fought against the Taliban.) The battle to keep Afghanistan's new government stable was still going on as of 2014.

Primary source documents are original materials. Original materials may include speeches by elected officials such as presidents, appointed officials such as Cabinet members, U.S. Supreme Court opinions, legislation, party platforms, campaign posters and other documents.

Below are short passages from primary source documents pertaining to international incidents that influenced the course of action taken by the United States.

International Incident	World War I (1914-1918; the United States declared war on Germany in 1917)
Primary Source and Date	President Woodrow Wilson, speech to a joint session of Congress, April 2, 1917.
Passage	Gentlemen of the Congress: I have called the Congress into extraordinary session because there are serious, very serious, choices of policy to be made, and made immediately, which it was neither right nor constitutionally permissible that I should assume the responsibility of making.
Meaning of Passage	Congress has the sole power to declare war. President Wilson is asking Congress to declare war on Germany immediately. President Wilson is stating that the U.S. Constitution does not give him the power to declare war.

International Incident	World War II (1939-1945; the United States declared war on Japan in 1941)
Primary Source and Date	President Franklin Roosevelt, speech to a joint session of Congress, December 8, 1941.
Passages	Yesterday, December 7, 1941 — a date which will live in infamy — the United States of America was suddenly and deliberately attacked by naval and air forces of the Empire of Japan. …..I ask that the Congress declare that since the unprovoked and dastardly attack by Japan on Sunday, December 7, 1941, a state of war has existed between the United States and the Japanese Empire.
Meaning of Passage	Congress has the sole power to declare war. President Roosevelt is asking Congress to declare war on Japan because of Japan's naval and air attack on the U.S. military base in Pearl Harbor, Hawaii. Hawaii was a U.S. territory at the time of the attack.

International Incident	Korean War (1950-1953)
Primary Source and Date	President Harry Truman, "Statement by the President on the Situation in Korea", June 27, 1950
Passage	In Korea the Government forces…were attacked by invading forces from North Korea…I have ordered United States air and sea forces to give the Korean Government troops cover and support.
Meaning of Passage	North Korea invaded South Korea (called "Korea" in this passage). The U.S. government supported South Korea because it was a democratic country while it opposed North Korea because it was a **communist** country. President Truman, in his **Commander in Chief** role, is ordering that the United States military support South Korea in its efforts to resist further invasion by North Korea.

International Incident	Vietnam War (1956-1975)
Primary Source and Date	Joint Resolution adopted by the U.S. Congress, August 24, 1964, "Tonkin Gulf Resolution"
Passage	To promote the maintenance of international peace and security in Southeast Asia. Whereas naval units of the communist regime in Vietnam, in violation of the principles of the Charter of the United Nations and of international law, have deliberately and repeatedly attacked United States naval vessels lawfully present in international waters, and have thereby created a serious threat to international peace;… *Resolved by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled*, That the Congress approves and supports the determination of the President, as Commander in Chief, to take all necessary measures to repel any armed attack against the forces of the United States and to prevent further aggression.
Meaning of Passage	North Vietnamese navy units attacked U.S. navy ships. The U.S. Congress stated that it supported President Lyndon Johnson as Commander in Chief to defend the U.S. military's presence in international waters near South Vietnam and to prevent future attacks.

There are several different methods that have been used by the United States in order to deal with international conflicts. These methods include:

- declaring war
- diplomacy
- military invasions
- developing alliances with other nations
- joining international organizations such as NATO or the UN
- increasing tariffs (taxes levied on imported or exported goods) and
- trade barriers (limitations on trading certain goods or with certain nations)
- isolation (not getting involved in other nations' conflicts) or
- treaties.

Each nation's government has to be dealt with differently and the United States has demonstrated throughout history that it will do just that to protect U.S. borders and American citizens.