

PRIMARIES & CAUCUSES



Four years after the world watched Donald Trump's momentum build and build until he became the Republican nominee, America is again deciding who will run for the White House. When we think of the American Presidential election, we often think of Election Day in November, but voters begin helping to choose the candidates long before November.

Let's back up. About a year and a half before Election Day, many candidates declare that they will run for President. Most of them are Republicans or Democrats.

By Election Day, there are usually just two main candidates: one Republican and one Democrat. In the winter and spring before Election Day, voters narrow down the long list of candidates running for president. The nominees are chosen through a series of special state elections called primaries and caucuses.

In the current primary season, the first event wasn't a primary at all – it was a series of caucuses that took place in Iowa on Monday 3 February. In caucuses, voters meet in small groups around the state to choose the candidate who will run in the election. Candidates and leaders of the party have the opportunity to give speeches and share ideas. Neighbours come together to discuss the issues and the candidates. Votes are taken - perhaps via a head count or a show of hands - to choose one candidate. Caucuses used to be far more popular back in the day, but this year, Democrats are holding only four in US states - in Nevada, North Dakota, Wyoming and Iowa. If any candidate gets under 15% of the vote in any caucus, their supporters then get to pick a second choice from among the candidates who did get more than 15%, or they can just choose to sit out the second vote.

Most states hold primaries in the spring. Unlike a caucus, where voters are expected to turn up at a few limited locations at certain times and stick around for a while, primary voters can just turn up at a polling booth and vote. Then leave. Their votes are secret, and are recorded on a ballot. A ballot is a list of candidates and might be printed on paper or may be set up on a special voting machine or computer.

The more votes a candidate gets in a caucus or primary, the more "delegates" they are awarded, and all candidates will be hoping to win an unbeatable majority of delegates. That's how the results of the caucuses and primaries usually determine the two candidates—one Republican and one Democrat—who will run for election in November.

A. Comprehension

A.1 Select the correct answer.

1) When is Election Day?

Next November.

Last November.

In November 2021.

2) When do most candidates declare they want to run for presidency?

During the first caucus.

About eighteen months before Election Day

On Independence Day

3) How many candidates are there usually left when Election day comes?

2 4 6

4) When do caucuses and primaries take place?

In the spring and summer before Election Day

In the fall and summer before Election Day

In the winter and spring before Election Day

5) How are nominees chosen?

Through primaries and caucuses

Through polls and surveys

Through electronic voting

6) Where did the first caucuses take place?

In Iowa

In Nevada

In North Dakota

7) When did the first caucuses take place.

on Monday 3 February

on Monday 3 January

on Monday 3 November

A.2 True or False?

1) A caucus is a meeting held at a precise date and place.

True False

2) To count votes in a caucus you count people or hands raised.

True False

3) Votes are not secret in caucuses.

True False

4) There used to be more caucuses before.

True False

5) If candidates get less than 15% votes in a caucus, they are eliminated.

True False

6) When candidates are eliminated in a caucus, their supporters lose their second votes.

True False

7) Most primaries take place in the winter.

True False

8) In a primary election, votes aren't secret.

True False

9) In a primary election, voting is only electronic.

True False

10) Votes determine the number of delegates a candidate is granted.

True False

B. Vocabulary

B.1. Drag and drop the vocabulary to match the definitions.

a nominee momentum to run for to narrow down a polling booth

	to reduce the number of possibilities or options
	to compete as a candidate in an election for a position of authority and responsibility in a government or other organization
	a person who is nominated as a candidate for election or for an honour or award.
	a small area with walls on three sides in a polling station where you can vote in private.
	the force that keeps an object moving or keeps an event developing after it has started. Used with gain/pick up/gather/ build/increase/add.

B.2. Write the English words in the correct slot to match them with the French words.

absentee ballot		les urnes
an amendment		président/gouvernement non réélu
ballot		vote par correspondance
a bill		un amendement
bipartisan		bulletin de vote
to campaign		faire campagne

conservative		un projet de loi
a constituent		bipartite
a grass-roots candidate		électeur / électrice
incumbent		une candidat issu du peuple
lame duck		personne exerçant une charge
the polls		conservateur/ conservatrice

C. Map

Place the states on the map.

Nevada

North Dakota

Wyoming

Iowa



D. Les propositions relatives

Une proposition relative est introduite par un pronom relatif. Elle complète un nom ou un groupe nominal, appelé antécédent.

Les principaux pronoms relatifs sont that, which et who.

> antécédent humain: who (ou that à l'oral)

> antécédent non humain: that (ou which moins fréquent)

Le pronom relatif peut être omis quand il est complément d'objet.

« propositions relatives appositives ». (apportent une information secondaire, notamment après les noms propres)
seuls who (antécédent humain)

ou which (antécédent non humain)

sont possibles.

D1. Drag and drop the examples to match the rules above (red box).

Bernie Sanders, who was running for presidency, dropped out of the race.

The car that (/which) is parked outside is the President's.

The vice-president Ø she chose is Sam Cooper.

The White House, which I have visited many times, is in DC.

This is the woman who (/that) is running for presidency.

D2. Choose the correct pronouns. More than one are possible. Select the best one only.

1. I know a man	Ø	who	that	which	wants to run for presidency.
2. They have a plane can	Ø	who	that	which	they can use for the campaign.
3. The caucus	Ø	who	that	which	I went to lasted hours.
4. The candidate	Ø	who	that	which	he likes is my cousin.