**One Big Party?**

**Learning Objectives**

Students will be able to:

- Identify and describe the five functions of political parties: nominating, creating policy, informing citizens, uniting levels of government, providing opposition.
- Identify ways that political parties influence public policy.
- Describe the strengths and weaknesses of party systems including single party, two parties, and multiparty.
- Differentiate between the two major political parties in the United States.

**Time Needed:**

1-2 class periods

**Materials Needed:**

- Student Materials
- Transparencies

**Copy Instructions:**

- Two transparencies
- Reading (2 pages)
- Review worksheet (2 pages)
- Political spectrum activity (3 pages)

**STEP BY STEP**

- **ANTICIPATE**
  
  the lesson by asking your class to name the two major political parties in the United States. Then ask whether they can name any other political parties. Assuming they have trouble with this, ask why they think it is so hard to name other parties.

- **DISTRIBUTE**
  
  reading pages 1-2 to the class and read through both pages with the class, pausing to review new vocabulary and reinforce new concepts.

- **DISTRIBUTE**
  
  review pages 1-2 to the class.

- **PROJECT**
  
  the “Strengths & Weaknesses” transparency, working through completing the chart.

- **EXPLAIN**
  
  the “Party Systems Strengths and Weaknesses” activity. Tell students that you will project nine statements. The students must decide as a class if the statement is a strength or weakness of a party system. They must then decide if it applies to one-, two-, or multi-party systems. Students should then write the underlined phrase in the appropriate place on the “Party Systems” chart on their review worksheets.

- **ASSIGN**
  
  the rest of the review pages after reviewing the instructions for the rest of the activities. Allow students to complete these as a class, in small groups, or individually.

- **REVIEW**
  
  student work aloud as a check for understanding.

- **PROJECT**
  
  the “Political Spectrum” transparency. Use the Political Spectrum Activity Guide to introduce the concept to students.

- **DISTRIBUTE**
  
  the political parties packet. Read the first page as a class, pausing to review new vocabulary and reinforce new concepts.

- **ASSIGN**
  
  activity pages 1-2, allowing students to complete these as a class, in small groups, or individually.

- **CLOSE**
  
  the class by reminding students that political leanings and affiliations are very personal decisions and the views of political parties are broad and vary over time.
One Big Party?

It’s a Party...

...but not the kind with ice cream and cake (usually). Political parties are groups of people who share similar beliefs about how the government should be run and how the issues facing our country should be solved. By organizing into political parties, people have more power to make their voices heard than they would have if they acted alone. Political parties are powerful organizations that fight to get the government to act in ways the political party believes is best. Political parties are organized at every level of government, from the national level right down to your own neighborhood.

Five Roles of Political Parties

Nominate Candidates
Political parties are responsible for selecting candidates who will run for political office. The parties choose candidates who believe in the party’s platform. These candidates represent the party’s members and help to spread the party’s message during elections.

Influence Policy
Members of the Senate and the House of Representatives are also members of political parties. The senators and representatives from each party often work together as a group to create and pass laws that support their party’s platform. The laws Congress passes affect the policies of our government. People in each political party want the government’s policies to reflect their own party’s platform.

Unite Government
People in the same political party are connected because they are members of the same organization. Most members of the government on the local, state, or national level are party members. A party can link its members at different levels of government to achieve big goals for the party.

Create Balance
The most powerful political party is the one that has the most members elected to office. Being in the majority means the party can focus the government’s attention on issues that are important to the party’s platform. The party in the minority works hard to oppose the majority party and keep it in check. Usually the majority party is able to get many laws passed. Depending on the minority party’s strength, the majority may need to compromise with the minority before a law will pass. In this way the opposing party protects the interests of its own party supporters. A similar balance exists when the president and the majority in Congress are from different parties.

Inform Citizens
Political parties run campaigns for candidates. During campaigns, political parties run television ads, distribute pamphlets, post blogs, and help candidates give speeches. All of this media helps people understand what the political issues are and how government works. But beware: All of the information a political party distributes is biased toward its own party platform. Because of this, a political party should not be a citizen’s only source of information.
The Party Platform

People in political parties need a simple way to explain their beliefs so they can attract other people to join their party. Political parties take the complicated issues we hear about every day and create easy-to-understand statements that describe the party’s views about those issues. This set of statements is called the party’s **platform** because it is what the political party stands on. Political parties keep their platforms broad and simple to attract as many supporters as possible. The ultimate goal of political parties is to get their candidates elected to office. Once in office, the elected official can create policy that supports the party’s platform.

Influence of Political Parties on Policy

Political parties do not pass policy, but they do have a big impact on the way policy is shaped. These are just a few of the ways that political parties influence policy:

- Organize people that can put pressure on their legislators to impact public policy.
- Bring officials on the local, state, and national level together to communicate about common goals.
- Support candidates’ platforms and make sure that elected officials follow through on supporting the party’s platform.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th># Parties in Office</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Australia</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Denmark</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Germany</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Guatemala</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Iceland</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Israel</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Turkey</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>United States</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vietnam</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: CIA World Factbook 2011

How Many Parties Are There?

Countries can have different numbers of political parties. Some countries have no political parties at all. Most of these countries are either very small or are controlled by military or theocratic governments.

Countries with a **single-party system** have one major political party. These countries are not considered democracies because there is no opposition or choice in candidates. China is an example of a single-party system.

Countries with a **two-party system** have two major political parties that hold all of the power. Third parties may exist, but they hardly ever gain enough support to win elections. This is the least common system around the world. In the United States we have a **two-party system**.

Countries with **multi-party systems** have three or more political parties with members holding office in the government. (Some countries have as many as 20 or more)! Usually no party gains control of the government, so parties must work together to get things done.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th>Strength or weakness?</th>
<th>Which kind of party system?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1)</td>
<td>There are <strong>too few parties</strong> for citizens to choose from.</td>
<td>Strength</td>
<td>□ 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Weakness</td>
<td>□ 2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>□ multiple</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2)</td>
<td>The <strong>public</strong> has almost no voice.</td>
<td>Strength</td>
<td>□ 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Weakness</td>
<td>□ 2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>□ multiple</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3)</td>
<td>Party platforms must appeal to so many <strong>people</strong> that party members can’t agree on core beliefs.</td>
<td>Strength</td>
<td>□ 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Weakness</td>
<td>□ 2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>□ multiple</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4)</td>
<td>Parties have to <strong>work together</strong> to get things done.</td>
<td>Strength</td>
<td>□ 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Weakness</td>
<td>□ 2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>□ multiple</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5)</td>
<td>More parties have a say in government so everyone can join a party they believe in.</td>
<td>Strength</td>
<td>□ 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Weakness</td>
<td>□ 2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>□ multiple</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6)</td>
<td>There is <strong>no opportunity</strong> for opposing views to be represented.</td>
<td>Strength</td>
<td>□ 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Weakness</td>
<td>□ 2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>□ multiple</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7)</td>
<td>Too many parties create divisions and make it hard for the government to accomplish reform.</td>
<td>Strength</td>
<td>□ 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Weakness</td>
<td>□ 2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>□ multiple</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8)</td>
<td>The government can easily accomplish its goals because there is no opposition.</td>
<td>Strength</td>
<td>□ 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Weakness</td>
<td>□ 2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>□ multiple</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9)</td>
<td>Encourages parties to create broad platforms that include many types of voters.</td>
<td>Strength</td>
<td>□ 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Weakness</td>
<td>□ 2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>□ multiple</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**One Big Party?**

**Party Systems.** Use the strengths and weaknesses your teacher gives you to complete the chart.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th># of Political Parties</th>
<th>Strengths</th>
<th>Weaknesses</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>None or One</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Two</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Multiple</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Define.** Circle the correct phrase on each line to make a sentence that defines political parties.

A) Political parties are groups of people / Political parties are silly people / Political parties are individuals

B) who all like to hang out together / who feel the same about key issues / who are really into politics

C) that have organized to work together / that don’t really get along / that plot against politicians

D) to throw a really big party / and fight a lot / to gain political power by electing

E) candidates to office. / donkeys and elephants into power. / their friends to power.

**Key Terms.** Match the following terms with their definitions.

1. political parties - Having the most people as supporters; means the party can set the agenda for the government
2. nominate - Selecting candidates who will run for political office and announcing their intent to run
3. policy - A set of simplified statements that explains a party’s beliefs
4. majority - Groups of people who share similar beliefs about how the government should be run
5. minority - Having fewer supporters; means the party must work hard to oppose the majority party
6. platform - Principles, rules, or laws. Parties can influence this
7. party system - Countries can have none to many political parties. The number of political parties is described as the ______________.
One Big Party?

Party Functions. Label the five functions of political parties on the lines in the example pamphlet below.

Influence. Put a ✓ next to statements that demonstrate the way political parties influence public policy.

_____ 1. Political parties inform and organize people around issues.
_____ 2. Political parties write and pass laws for our country.
_____ 3. Political parties nominate and support political candidates with certain platforms.
_____ 4. Political parties hold people responsible for the job they are doing while in power.
_____ 5. Political parties are individuals that are trying to take over the government to achieve goals.
_____ 6. Political parties actively fight to break down the government.
_____ 7. Political parties elect our governing officials and then teach them how to do their jobs.
_____ 8. Political parties ensure that politicians follow through on their campaign platforms.

Matching. In the United States we have had a two party system for most of our political history. Match the general descriptions of a two-party system to the descriptions of the way things work in the U.S.

In two party systems...
- Two party systems usually include a conservative and a liberal party that have broad platforms.
- Third parties rarely gain enough support to win elections.
- Most citizens under a two party system identify with one of the major parties.

In the United States...
- In 2010, 44% of the U.S. identified with the Democratic party and 40% with the Republicans.
- The Republican and Democratic parties try to reach as many voters as possible through multiple issues.
- Only twice between 1990 and 2010 was a Senator elected who was neither a Democrat or Republican.
Activity Guide

One Big Party?

Note to Teacher: Teaching the two major political parties in the United States can be extremely challenging. The next four pages will walk you through explaining the nuances of the political spectrum to your students. While we make every effort to explain the platforms of the Republican and Democratic parties, you will find reiterated in our materials an emphasis on the fact that political affiliation is not a clear cut issue. Please take time to review all the materials before your start your class, to best prepare for conversations that may arise.

The Political Spectrum

Teacher Activity Guide

Project the “The Political Spectrum” transparency.

Point out all the key terms on the spectrum: left, liberal, center, moderate, right, conservative.

Read each of the following bullet points to your class, omitting its place on the spectrum. Break down each statement with your students as much as necessary. For the first four items, tell your students where they fall on the political spectrum and fill in on the transparency. For the last four items, ask your students to determine where they fall on the political spectrum, providing corrective feedback as needed.

- The government should take strong action to solve society’s problems—far left
- Pay for government-run programs to help people—center left
- The government should encourage people and businesses to solve society’s problems themselves—center right
- The government should not get involved in solving society’s problems—far right
- Offer tax breaks to people and businesses who do good things or stop doing harmful or unfair things—center right
- The government should regulate people and businesses to promote the common good on all issues—far left
- The government should leave people and businesses alone to do what they want to do—far right
- Pass laws to keep people and business from doing harmful or unfair things—center left
The Political Spectrum

Every voter falls somewhere on...

(Democrats)

(Moderate)

(Republican)

Left

Center

Right

Most Government

Least Government

Some Government

Some Government

Least Government

Most Government
Donkeys to the Left, Elephants to the Right

The two major political parties in the United States are the Democrats and the Republicans. When you turn 18 and get ready to vote, you will listen to many candidates from both sides (and also some from smaller parties). But what makes someone a Republican or a Democrat? What is the difference? And how will you decide which party best fits the way you think? It’s important to remember that these platforms are written to be broad on purpose, and that people who identify strongly with one party may still disagree with the party platform on other issues. Here is a quick comparison:

**Democratic Party**
The Democratic Party is concerned with equality, cooperation, and social progress. Supporters of this party are more likely to be concerned with civil rights issues, stronger government regulation in business, and social support networks for those in need of assistance. Democrats are more likely to believe that the federal government has a responsibility to be involved solving problems.

**Where Democrats stand on...**
- **Environment**: The environment is important and it should be protected and kept clean
- **Health Care**: The government should help make health care available to people who can’t afford it
- **Energy**: The U.S. should focus on renewable energy sources to achieve independence
- **Education**: The government should support teachers and public school funds to make existing public schools better
- **Economy**: During hard times, the government should help create jobs

**Republican Party**
The Republican Party and its supporters want the government to spend less money and have less of a say in business and society. Most Republicans believe people and businesses should have the liberty to do what they want without much government interference. This party also tends to believe the government should protect traditional social values.

**Where Republicans stand on...**
- **Defense**: Keep peace by having a strong military
- **Health Care**: The government should not pay for peoples’ health care
- **Energy**: The U.S. should rely on oil as well as renewable sources to be independent
- **Education**: Schools must have high standards, and students should be able to use public education funds to attend private schools if those schools are better than public schools
- **Economy**: Businesses will create jobs and opportunities for people to prosper

Source: 2008 Democratic National Platform

Source: 2008 Republican Party Platform
One Big Party?

Going to extremes. One of the easiest ways to see the difference between the right and the left is to look at extreme viewpoints. Read each statement and decide whether it expresses a belief on the right or the left. Remember: These beliefs are not held by everyone who identifies as a liberal or a conservative, a Democrat or a Republican.

1. The government should not pay for any schools. All schools should be private.
   - Extreme Right
   - Extreme Left

2. The government should guarantee that everyone will have a job and receive an annual income.
   - Extreme Right
   - Extreme Left

3. People should pay for their own retirement. Social Security should be abolished.
   - Extreme Right
   - Extreme Left

4. The government should not provide services that a person or business could provide.
   - Extreme Right
   - Extreme Left

5. The government should own all of the forests to make sure timber is managed properly.
   - Extreme Right
   - Extreme Left

6. The government should ban the use of pesticides on food crops.
   - Extreme Right
   - Extreme Left

Left or Right? Read each proposed government action. Would it be supported by people on the left or the right? How far to the left or the right? Or is it a moderate plan? Place an X where you think the proposed government action lies on the political spectrum.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>If the government decided to...</th>
<th>Where is that on the political spectrum?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Support community programs that encourage parents to get involved in lowering the high school dropout rate.</td>
<td>![Political Spectrum](Political Spectrum Activity p.2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pass a law raising the minimum wage, helping workers earn more by making businesses pay more.</td>
<td>![Political Spectrum](Political Spectrum Activity p.2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Repeal a law requiring businesses to install pollution filters in factory smokestacks.</td>
<td>![Political Spectrum](Political Spectrum Activity p.2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Start a government program that lets kids eat dinner free every night at school if their parents won’t be home.</td>
<td>![Political Spectrum](Political Spectrum Activity p.2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Create public charter schools that students can choose to attend instead of their regular public school.</td>
<td>![Political Spectrum](Political Spectrum Activity p.2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Encourage everyone to get health insurance by letting people deduct the cost of health insurance from their taxes.</td>
<td>![Political Spectrum](Political Spectrum Activity p.2)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
What About You? First, check the statement that you most closely agree with for each issue. Then look at all the choices you made and analyze the results!

**TAXES**

- **LEFT**: Tax everyone at a high rate. Use the money to provide free government services for everyone, not just for poor people.
- **CENTER**: Keep taxes low for poor and middle class people and higher for the wealthy. Taxes should fund programs to help people in need.
- **RIGHT**: Keep taxes low for everyone. Save money by cutting government programs that help people.
- **Eliminate taxes. The government should not be providing services, so it doesn’t need much money.**

**DEFENSE**

- **LEFT**: Withdraw troops from around the world and cut the military’s budget. Use the money to provide services to people.
- **CENTER**: Having strong relationships with other countries will keep peace. We need a strong military too, but the best way to protect ourselves is to work with others.
- **RIGHT**: Having a strong military will keep peace. We need good relationships with other countries, but protecting our country is most important.
- **Our military should aggressively defend our nation against all threats. This should be our highest priority when making the federal budget.**

**IMMIGRATION**

- **LEFT**: International borders should be open. People should be free to go wherever they want.
- **CENTER**: Secure the borders against illegal immigrants, but allow people already here illegally to become citizens.
- **RIGHT**: Secure the border and enforce existing laws. Do not reward people here illegally by giving them citizenship.
- **The United States border should be closed. No new immigrants should be allowed in.**

**ENERGY**

- **LEFT**: The government should take over all energy production and use only renewable resources.
- **CENTER**: The U.S. should focus on finding renewable sources of energy. Laws should limit exploration for oil. Nuclear energy should not be expanded.
- **RIGHT**: The U.S. should develop all sources of energy, including oil. New nuclear energy plants should be built.
- **Economic growth is the most important thing. If people can make money off our natural resources they should be able to.**

**You!**

- Do all your answers fall on the same place along the spectrum?  
  - □ YES  or  □ NO
- Were most of your answers on the same side of the spectrum?  
  - □ YES  or  □ NO
- Do people’s responses usually fall in the same place along the spectrum?  
  - □ YES  or  □ NO

Why or why not? ____________________________________________________________
### Party System Strengths & Weaknesses

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Strength or weakness?</th>
<th>Which kind of party system?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>There are <strong>too few parties</strong> for citizens to choose from.</td>
<td>□ 1 □ 2 □ multiple</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>The <strong>public has almost no voice.</strong></td>
<td>□ 1 □ 2 □ multiple</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Party platforms must appeal to so many people that party members can’t agree on core beliefs.</td>
<td>□ 1 □ 2 □ multiple</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Parties have to work <strong>together</strong> to get things done.</td>
<td>□ 1 □ 2 □ multiple</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>More parties have a say in government so everyone can join a party they believe in.</td>
<td>□ 1 □ 2 □ multiple</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>There is <strong>no opportunity</strong> for opposing views to be represented.</td>
<td>□ 1 □ 2 □ multiple</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Too many parties create divisions and make it hard for the government to accomplish reform.</td>
<td>□ 1 □ 2 □ multiple</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>The government can easily accomplish its goals because there is no opposition.</td>
<td>□ 1 □ 2 □ multiple</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Encourages parties to create broad platforms that include many types of voters.</td>
<td>□ 1 □ 2 □ multiple</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Define. Circle the correct phrase on each line to make a sentence that defines political parties.

A) Political parties are groups of people / Political parties are silly people / Political parties are individuals
B) who all like to hang out together / who feel the same about key issues / who are really into politics
C) that have organized to work together / that don’t really get along / that plot against politicians
D) to throw a really big party / and fight a lot / to gain political power by electing
E) candidates to office / donkeys and elephants into power / their friends to power.

Key Terms. Match the following terms with their definitions.

_**E**_ 1. political parties
_**G**_ 2. nominate
_**D**_ 3. policy
_**A**_ 4. majority
_**F**_ 5. minority
_**C**_ 6. platform
_**B**_ 7. party system

A. Having the most people as supporters; means the party can set the agenda for the government
B. Countries can have none to many political parties. The number of political parties is described as the _____________.
C. A set of simplified statements that explains a party’s beliefs.
D. Principles, rules, or laws. Parties can influence this.
E. Groups of people who share similar beliefs about how the government should be run.
F. Having fewer supporters; means the party must work hard to oppose the majority party.
G. Selecting candidates who will run for political office and announcing their intent to run.

Party Systems. Use the strengths and weaknesses your teacher gives you to complete the chart.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th># of Political Parties</th>
<th>Strengths</th>
<th>Weaknesses</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>None or One</td>
<td>- The government can easily accomplish its goals</td>
<td>- Public has almost no voice - No opportunity for opposing views</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Two</td>
<td>- Platforms that include many types of voters</td>
<td>- Too few parties for citizens to choose from - Platforms must appeal to so many people</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Multiple</td>
<td>- Parties have to work together - Everyone can join a party they believe in</td>
<td>- Hard for the government to accomplish reform</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
One Big Party?

Influence. Put a ✓ next to statements that demonstrate the way political parties influence public policy.

✓ 1. Political parties inform and organize people around issues.
✓ 2. Political parties write and pass laws for our country.
✓ 3. Political parties nominate and support political candidates with certain platforms.
✓ 4. Political parties hold people responsible for the job they are doing while in power.
✓ 5. Political parties are individuals that are trying to take over the government to achieve goals.
✓ 6. Political parties actively fight to break down the government.
✓ 7. Political parties elect our governing officials and then teach them how to do their jobs.
× 8. Political parties ensure that politicians follow through on their campaign platforms.

Matching. In the United States we have had a two party system for most of our political history. Match the general descriptions of a two-party system to the descriptions of the way things work in the U.S.

In two party systems...
- Two party systems usually include a conservative and a liberal party that have broad platforms.
- Third parties rarely gain enough support to win elections.
- Most citizens under a two party system identify with one of the major parties.

In the United States...
- In 2010, 44% of the U.S. identified with the Democratic party and 40% with the Republicans.
- The Republican and Democratic parties try to reach as many voters as possible through multiple issues.
- Only twice between 1990 and 2010 was a Senator elected who was neither a Democrat or Republican.
Going to Extremes. One of the easiest ways to see the difference between the right and the left is to look at extreme viewpoints. Read each statement and decide whether it expresses a belief on the right or the left. Remember: These beliefs are not held by everyone who identifies as a liberal or a conservative, a Democrat or a Republican.

1. The government should not pay for any schools. All schools should be private.  
   - **✓** Extreme Right  
   - **☐** Extreme Left

2. The government should guarantee that everyone will have a job and receive an annual income.  
   - **☐** Extreme Right  
   - **✓** Extreme Left

3. People should pay for their own retirement. Social Security should be abolished.  
   - **✓** Extreme Right  
   - **☐** Extreme Left

4. The government should not provide services that a person or business could provide.  
   - **✓** Extreme Right  
   - **☐** Extreme Left

5. The government should own all of the forests to make sure timber is managed properly.  
   - **☐** Extreme Right  
   - **✓** Extreme Left

6. The government should ban the use of pesticides on food crops.  
   - **☐** Extreme Right  
   - **✓** Extreme Left

Left or Right? Read each proposed government action. Would it be supported by people on the left or the right? How far to the left or the right? Or is it a moderate plan? Place an X where you think the proposed government action lies on the political spectrum. **We have given you a range for the key.**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>If the government decided to...</th>
<th>Where is that on the political spectrum?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Support community programs that encourage parents to get involved in lowering the high school dropout rate.</td>
<td><img src="image" alt="Political Spectrum Diagram" /></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pass a law raising the minimum wage, helping workers earn more by making businesses pay more.</td>
<td><img src="image" alt="Political Spectrum Diagram" /></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Repeal a law requiring businesses to install pollution filters in factory smokestacks.</td>
<td><img src="image" alt="Political Spectrum Diagram" /></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Start a government program that lets kids eat dinner free every night at school if their parents won't be home.</td>
<td><img src="image" alt="Political Spectrum Diagram" /></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Create public charter schools that students can choose to attend instead of their regular public school.</td>
<td><img src="image" alt="Political Spectrum Diagram" /></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Encourage everyone to get health insurance by letting people deduct the cost of health insurance from their taxes.</td>
<td><img src="image" alt="Political Spectrum Diagram" /></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>