

Name _____

Date _____

Political Debates

Use the text to answer each question below.

1. The word “democracy” comes from Greek and means, roughly, “people power.” In a democracy, the citizens have a voice in how the government is run. Sometimes, this takes the form of direct democracy. That’s when citizens vote on actual decisions. In the US, there are some examples of direct democracy. A local election might include a measure that asks citizens if they support the city investing in a new bike path. If the majority of votes support the proposition, it passes. If not, it fails.

More often, elections in the US are examples of representative democracy. That’s when citizens don’t make decisions directly but instead vote for a candidate they believe will make decisions in accordance with their beliefs.

Which of these is the best example of representative democracy?

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| A. Dillon watched the debates to hear what the candidates had to say. | B. Ruby did not know anything about the candidates when she went to vote. |
| C. Juan voted for the state senator he believed would make laws that fit his beliefs. | D. Sal voted no on a proposition to remove the term-limits for city councilors. |

2. In the US, the presidential election occurs in two phases: a primary election and a general election. In the primary election, the two main parties—Republican and Democrat—pick one candidate each to be their nominee. States have primary elections or caucuses at different times. In the general election, the winners of the primary compete against each other. The general election is held on the first Tuesday in November.

In 2019, over 20 Democratic candidates are running in the primary to become the Democratic nominee in the 2020 presidential election. In April 2019, former Massachusetts governor Bill Weld announced that he was running as a Republican against incumbent, or current, Republican President Donald Trump.

Which of these is true of the US presidential election process?

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| A. The general election is in November. | B. The primary election happens after the general election. |
| C. The US presidential election happens in over 20 phases. | D. No one is allowed to run against the incumbent president in the primary. |

3. Voting is both a right and a responsibility. That means if you're voting, it's important to be informed. In any election, there are many issues to consider. Being an informed voter starts with knowing which issues you care most about. It involves researching the candidates and finding out what their stances are on those issues. You can learn about their platforms, read articles about them and check out their official websites. There's a lot of information out there! Remember to look out for bias and fact-check your sources.

Watching debates allows you to hear directly from candidates as they talk about their ideas and visions. Ahead of the primary election, you'll hear from candidates running to become their party's nominee. Ahead of the general election, the nominees from each party will also debate each other.

Debates happen

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| A. only once every eight years. | B. only before the general election. |
| C. only before the primary election. | D. before both the primary and general elections. |