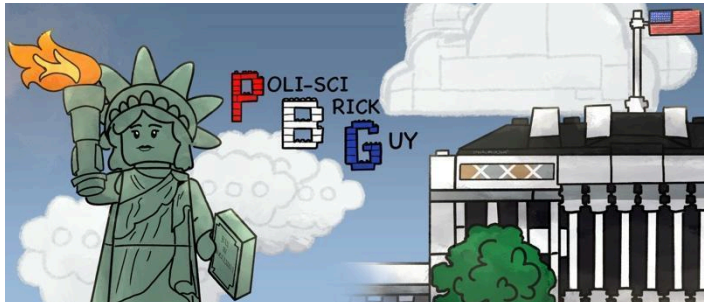




Lesson Plan: How Presidential Primaries Work

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Overview	In this lesson, students examine the constitutional process used to elect the president and vice president through the Electoral College. They will learn how electoral votes are distributed, how candidates secure the required majority of electoral votes, and how state-based voting systems influence campaign strategies. By the end of the lesson, students will be able to explain the presidential election process.
Essential Questions	• How does the Electoral College determine the outcome of presidential elections? • How do presidential campaigns adapt their strategies to the Electoral College system?
Lesson Objectives	• Describe the constitutional process for electing the president, including primaries, caucuses, party conventions, and the Electoral College. • Explain the incumbency advantage.
Suggested Unit in A.P. Government	Unit 5.8
Core Skills Used	Concept Application

Activity Duration	20-45 minutes
Materials	• <i>LEGO Video:</i> How Presidential Primaries Work • Campaign Memo Handout
Procedure	Whole Class Discussion (15-20 min): 1. Ask the students about Donald Trump versus people being discussed for the 2028 presidential nomination. Here's a place to find the list of plausible candidates as of teaching the lesson: https://polymarket.com/event/republican-presidential-nominee-2028. 2. Ask them how many know "Donald Trump" and the others on the list. Trump cannot run again, but the point is that the incumbent has better name recognition. You could also add in the names of celebrities to compare the knowledge rate of the students. These slides could be used. 3. Define the incumbency advantage. Ask them what goes into the advantage and get them to list name, fundraising, constituent services, and institutional perks. 4. Show the LEGO video "How Presidential Primaries Work" 5. Have a discussion about the type of primaries that are used in different states: open, closed, and caucuses. Be sure to explain what is used in the state where you live. 6. Create a short generic timeline of the election cycle, including primary elections, conventions, debates, general election, Electoral College counting, and inauguration day. An example can be found on this slide.
	Predict (10-15 min): Utilize the website 270towin.com to showcase the Electoral College. After working with it as a whole class, have students work in pairs on their own mock election. Each student should pick a party to represent as they each try to "win" the electoral count by accumulating the most votes.
	Optional Extensions (15-20 min): 1. Have students write a campaign memo for what a presidential candidate should do to win the primary in their state versus to win the general. Utilize the Campaign Memo Handout. 2. Have students play the iCivics game Win the White House to explore these objectives.

