

# US ELECTIONS

## Warm-up

**How much do you know about politics and elections in the United States? Answer the questions.**

1. There are two main political parties and they are called
  - a. Democrats and Conservatives
  - b. Democrats and Republicans
  - c. Liberals and Republicans
2. The people who work in the US Congress to make new laws are called
  - a. Ministers and Senators
  - b. Representatives and Secretaries
  - c. Senators and Representatives
3. The US Constitution is
  - a. the supreme law of the country
  - b. the highest court of the country
  - c. what politicians say they are going to do if they win the election
4. Presidential candidates run for office every
  - a. three years
  - b. four years
  - c. five years
5. When a new president is inaugurated and takes office, they have to
  - a. move into the White House
  - b. throw a party for international leaders
  - c. promise to support the Constitution
6. A president is allowed to hold office for a total of
  - a. two terms
  - b. three terms
  - c. there is no limit

**Read these sentences about the US election process and think about what the six words/phrases in bold mean. Then match the words to the meanings, 1-5. One word does not have a matching meaning. Can you define it?**

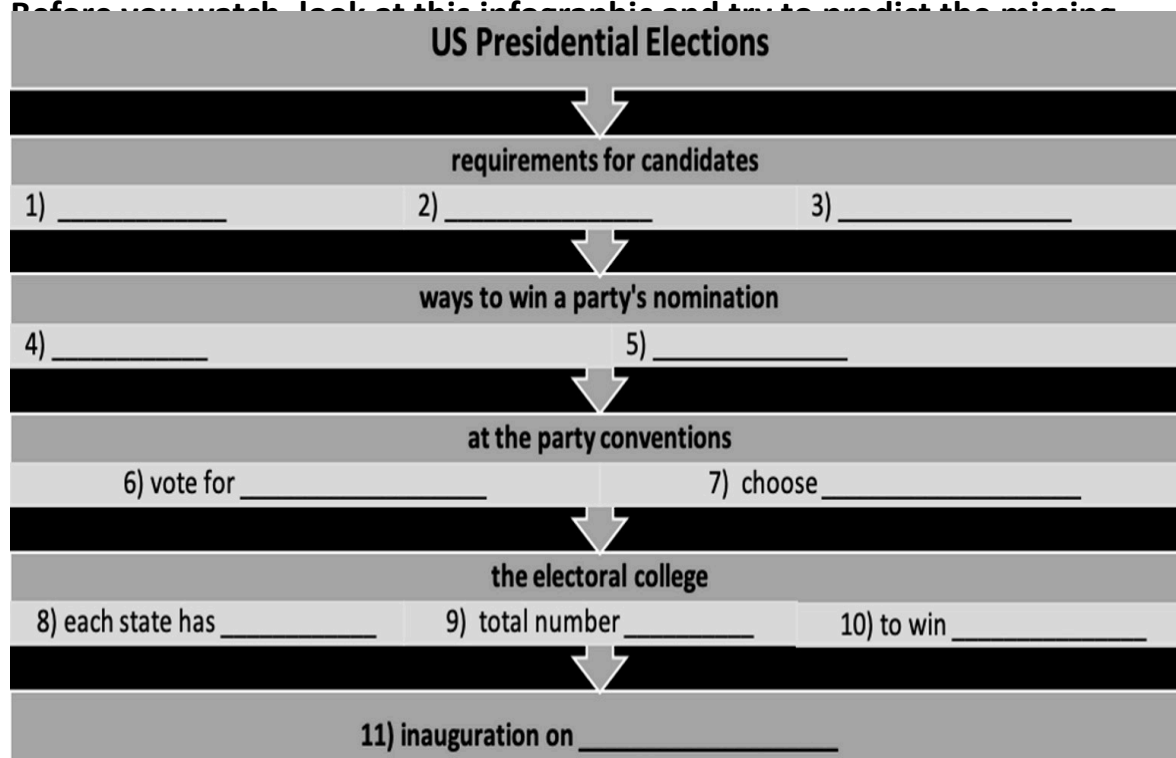
- Presidential candidates **campaign** around the country and compete to try to win their party's nomination.
- Both political parties hold a national **convention** to select a Presidential nominee.
- On election day, people in every state **cast their vote**.
- People vote for the candidate they want to **represent** them in the general election.

1. Speak publicly to explain your ideas: \_\_\_\_
2. take part in a democratic election process: \_\_\_\_
3. a meeting which many people attend: \_\_\_\_
4. the official suggestion that someone should be considered to do a job:
5. officially speak or act for a person or group of people: \_

**Which two of these words are often used in business contexts?**

**You are going to watch a short video called, "How to become president of the USA."**

**Before you watch, look at this infographic and try to predict the missing**



<https://www.linguahouse.com/ru/esl-lesson-plans/general-english/us-elections/videoplayer/us-elections-process>

**Read this short text to find out more about the electoral college and then answer questions 1-3 below.**

### **The Electoral College**

- <sup>1.</sup> On Election Day in early November, people in every state cast their votes for their preferred candidates. But American voters are not voting directly for their president. They are actually voting for a group of people called electors. In the US, only presidential elections use the electoral college system.
  - <sup>2.</sup> The electoral college works like this: each state gets a certain number of electors, chosen by their political parties and based on the state's Congressional representation. States with larger populations have more electors than those with smaller populations. The popular vote is counted state by state, rather than nationally. In mid- December, the electors from each state meet to officially select the candidate who won the most votes in that state. The candidate who has more than 270 electoral votes (out of 538) wins the national election.
  - <sup>3.</sup> In most states, it's *winner takes all*: whichever candidate has the largest share of the vote captures all the electoral votes for that state. However, in Maine and Nebraska, a proportional system is used, so in these two states, electors are able to represent the popular vote more accurately.
  - <sup>4.</sup> It is possible that a candidate can receive the most votes in the whole country, but still lose the electoral vote. This happened in 2016. The electoral college system was written into the Constitution more than 200 years ago, intended as a compromise between a popular vote and a vote in Congress. To change this system, a Constitutional amendment would be required.
- 
1. Put these three states in order from most to least number of electors: Alaska, California and Texas.
  2. Why does this system sometimes produce confusing results?
  3. Is this system likely to change?

## **Talking point**

### **Answer the questions**

1. Do you think the American system of choosing a leader is fair?
2. Given that the electoral college is unlikely to disappear, can you think of any ways that it could be modified?
3. How is this system of choosing a leader similar to what happens in other countries? How is it different?
4. The voting age in the United States is 18. Do you think this is the right age or should it be changed? Why/not?
5. Why do you think the president is limited to two terms of office?
6. Do you agree that many people in the world are interested in American elections? Why/

