<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ESSENTIAL QUESTION:</th>
<th>What is the role of modern political parties in influencing elections, public policy, and public opinion?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| PROCEDURES:         | **Day One** - Please read the article titled “Political Parties Explained”. Then answer the 7 questions that follow in the box labeled “Assignment #1”.  
|                     | **Day Two** - Please respond to the written response question on the role of political parties in American Government today.  
|                     | **Day Three** - Please read the article titled “Political Ideology”. Then answer the 5 questions that follow in the box labeled “Assignment #3” |
| WORK TO BE RETURNED:| **Assignment #1** - Responses to 7 questions.  
|                     | **Assignment #2** - Written Response question  
|                     | **Assignment #3** - Responses to 5 questions |
| RESOURCES:          | Assignment #1 - iCivics adapted reading  
|                     | Assignment #3 - Adapted from [https://resources.saylor.org/wwwresources/archived/site/wp-content/uploads/2012/08/POLSC2312.1.4.pdf](https://resources.saylor.org/wwwresources/archived/site/wp-content/uploads/2012/08/POLSC2312.1.4.pdf) |
| TIME ALLOCATED:     | Assignment #1 - 15 minutes  
|                     | Assignment #2 - 25 minutes  
|                     | Assignment #3 - 20 minutes |

Reading #1- Political Parties Explained
A political party is an organized group of people who share similar political views and work to influence the government in support of those views. Political views are a person’s ideas about how the government should run and how the issues facing our country should be solved. Political parties fight to gain political power by having candidates elected to office. They exist at every level of government, from the national level to your very own neighborhood. By organizing into political parties, people have more power to influence government than if they acted alone.

In the United States, the Republican Party and the Democratic Party are the two main political parties. The U.S. technically has a multi-party system. But these two parties have gained so much power that almost every person elected to government office belongs to one of them. Most Americans identify with one of these two parties, but about 40% of Americans identify as politically independent, meaning they don’t want to identify with any party.

Independents are more open to supporting candidates from either party, and some independents are elected to office. Many political parties exist in the United States. Candidates for political office can represent any party, but that doesn’t mean you’ll see everyone’s name on the ballot. Each state has rules about ballot access—allowing a political party to put a candidate on the ballot. Usually the rules involve getting a certain number of signatures from registered voters. These rules keep most third parties from even offering a candidate for voters to choose from. The Democratic and Republican parties have ballot access in all the states. The Libertarian Party is the largest third party, with ballot access for the presidential election in more than 30 states. As of 2015, the Green Party had ballot access in over 20 states, and the Constitution Party had access in over 10 states.

One thing political parties have in common is that they stand for something. If you want to know what a party believes, its platform is a document that describes the party’s views on all the major issues facing the nation. This set of statements is called a “platform” because it is the set of beliefs the political party stands on. The Democratic Party and the Republican Party keep their platforms broad and simple to attract as many supporters as possible. You can find a political party’s platform by going to the party’s website.

In the U.S., you’ll be most aware of political parties during an election season. Candidates who are running for political office almost always declare themselves a member of a political party. By doing this, a candidate gains support from the political party and makes it easier for voters to figure out what the candidate believes in and where they stand on the issues. At the same time, political parties fight hard to get candidates from their party elected. Party committees at the local, state, and national level work to support their candidates by raising money, campaigning, educating voters, and urging people to vote on election day.

Candidates who are elected to office work to pass laws and solve problems. In the U.S. Congress and in state legislatures, the balance of power between Republicans and Democrats can determine which laws get passed. The majority party—the one with the most elected members—can most easily influence laws by getting all its members to vote the same way on a bill. This isn’t always easy, because members of one political party don’t necessarily agree on all the issues. But in American politics, it’s common for most lawmakers from one party to vote the same way. Meanwhile, the minority party works to promote the views of its supporters by forcing compromise with the majority party. If the minority party is successful, this can create laws that are balanced between the two parties’ viewpoints.

In the executive branch, the president and state governors almost always belong to a political party. Like lawmakers, their views usually align with their political party’s platform. A president or governor works for the people, not a party, but he or she may be very committed to advancing the party’s goals. He or she does not make laws, but is key in developing public policy—the stand the government takes about how issues should be handled. A president or governor’s policies are usually in line with their political party’s platform. A president or governor who belongs to the same party as the minority in the legislature may also disagree with many laws passed by the majority and may veto those laws.

Assignment #1
Directions: Use reading #1 to help you complete the questions below.

1. Define the following terms found throughout reading #1:
   a. Political Party-
   b. Independent (politically independent)-
   c. Party Platform-
   d. Public Policy-

2. What is the overall goal of a political party?

3. How does the process of getting on a particular state’s ballot create a disadvantage for the lesser known, third party candidates?

4. Where can you find a political party’s platform?

5. Name all the ways political party committees try and ensure their candidate will get elected to office.

6. How do political parties play a role in making laws?

7. How do political parties play a role in the President’s decision making process?

Assignment #2
Directions: Complete the following writing prompt using what you learned in Reading #1 as well as your own knowledge and critical thinking skills. In at least 2 paragraphs respond to the bulleted questions using specific details.
Writing Prompt: In his Farewell Address the first President of the United States, George Washington, warned against political parties and the role they should play in government.

- What purpose do political parties serve in our modern government?
- In your opinion, do you think George Washington was right to worry about the future role and influence of political parties?
- Use specific details and examples that highlight both the positive and negative roles political party’s play in American Government.

Remember your response should be at least 2 paragraphs and include specific details and examples from the article and/or your own knowledge and understanding of political parties.

Reading for Assignment #3-Political Ideology

What does it mean to be a Liberal or Conservative? These terms, or labels, refer to a belief in the way government should run within a society—also known as a political ideology. Political ideologies are belief systems that provide people with a perspective on the proper role of elected officials, which types of public policies should be prioritized,
and how the various elements of society should be arranged. Whether or not they realize it, most people possess a
definitive political ideology. In the United States, most citizens consider themselves liberal, moderate, or conservative.
Most ideologies are identified by their position on a political spectrum—a way of comparing or visualizing different
political ideologies. The political spectrum is usually described along a left-middle-right line. An example of one is
provided at the bottom of the page.

**Liberalism (Left)**
Liberalism is a political ideology that, at its core, denounces economic and social inequality. Equality of opportunity
is viewed by liberals as essential, and to achieve that end, they believe that discriminatory practices must be eliminated
and that the impact of great equalities of wealth needs to be lessened. Liberals usually advocate vigorous public
policies to reduce or eliminate these inequalities. They see government as the means to make this possible, while also
preserving civil liberties/rights, and progressive values. Liberals believe that public policy should be egalitarian and
that it is the government’s responsibility to ensure ALL citizens have access to affordable health care, quality
education, a clean environment, and social safety net programs. They also generally believe in affirmative action
programs, workers’ health and safety protections, progressive taxation, and unions’ rights to organize and strike.

**Conservative (Right)**
Conservatives have a general preference for the existing order of society and an opposition to most efforts to bring
about rapid or fundamental change. In contrast to liberals, conservatives want to enhance individual liberty by keeping
government small, except in the area of national defense. Conservatives maintain that people need strong leadership
institutions, firm laws, and strict moral codes. Conservative ideologies most often base their claims on the teachings of
religion and traditional morality and tend to downplay rational social theories propounded by secular philosophers,
economists, and other intellectuals. They also prefer eliminating abortion, affirmative action programs, and labor
unions.

**Moderates (Middle)**
Moderates usually represent a mix of both liberal and conservative ideologies. The majority of Americans classify
themselves as more moderate than liberal or conservative.

---

**Assignment #3**
**Directions:** Use the reading above titled “Political Ideology” to assist you in answering the questions listed below.

1. Define Political Ideology.
2. What role does having a “political ideology” play in American Government?

3. What is the difference between a political party and a political ideology?

4. Look at the following 3 examples of people describing their political ideology. Then decide whether you think they are liberal, conservative or moderate by writing your answer on the line provided.
   
a. “The government is doing entirely too much. Why can’t Uncle Sam just leave me alone? I thought they created the Bill of Rights to protect our freedoms yet here the government is taking control of everything.”
   Liberal, Conservative, or Moderate? _______________________________

   b. “The government should really do more to help the economy and influence trying to bring down our national debt. However, when it comes to social issues and people feeling unequal I don’t think that is really the government's job to figure that out.”
   Liberal, Conservative, or Moderate? _______________________________

   c. “Inequalities that exist racially, socially, and economically are the result of previous government officials actions. Therefore, it is 100% the government’s job to try and fix the inequalities our country is experiencing.”
   Liberal, Conservative, or Moderate? _______________________________

5. **Paragraph Response:** In at least a 6 sentence paragraph describe your political ideology using the reading for support. Think about the following questions: Do your beliefs fit most closely with the liberal, conservative, or moderate ideology? What issues are important to you? Do you think our current government is doing a good job of meeting the goals you think are important?