



One Big Party?

Name: _____

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	 REPUBLICAN PARTY
<p>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.</p>	<p>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.</p>
Where Democrats stand on...	Where Republicans stand on...
<u>Environment:</u> The environment is important and it should be protected and kept clean	<u>Defense:</u> Keep peace by having a strong military
<u>Health Care:</u> The government should help make health care available to people who can't afford it	<u>Health Care:</u> The government should not pay for peoples' health care
<u>Energy:</u> The U.S. should focus on renewable energy sources to achieve independence	<u>Energy:</u> The U.S. should rely on oil as well as renewable sources to be independent
<u>Education:</u> The government should support teachers and public school funds to make existing public schools better	<u>Education:</u> 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
<u>Economy:</u> During hard times, the government should help create jobs	<u>Economy:</u> Businesses will create jobs and opportunities for people to prosper
<small>Source: 2008 Democratic National Platform</small>	<small>Source: 2008 Republican Party Platform</small>

The Political Spectrum

Example Issue: Healthy Choices for Kids

