

American Politics Vocabulary

Word	Definition
Federal government	<i>The national government that shares power with the states</i>
National government	<i>The government of the whole country</i>
State government	<i>The government of an individual U.S. state</i>
U.S. Constitution	<i>The document defining the government and citizens' rights</i>
Branch of government	<i>Part of government</i>
President (POTUS)	<i>The elected leader of the U.S.</i>
White House	<i>The President's official residence and office</i>
Oval Office	<i>The President's main office inside the White House</i>
Vice President	<i>The second-highest official, replaces the President if needed</i>
Secretary	<i>Head of a government department</i>
Department of State	<i>Government department handling foreign affairs</i>
Lame duck president	<i>A President nearing the end of their term with less influence</i>
Incumbent	<i>The current officeholder running for re-election</i>
Front-runner	<i>The leading candidate in an election</i>
Congress	<i>The U.S. law-making body</i>
Senate	<i>The upper chamber of Congress with two members from each state</i>
House of Representatives	<i>The lower chamber of Congress based on population</i>
Bicameral legislature	<i>A legislature with two chambers (Senate and House)</i>

Word	Definition
Representatives	<i>Elected members of the House of Representatives</i>
Congressmen / Congresswomen	<i>Member of Congress</i>
Senator	<i>Member of the Senate</i>
Supreme Court	<i>The highest court in the U.S.</i>
Federal Court	<i>A court under the federal government</i>
Justice	<i>A judge of the Supreme Court</i>
Unconstitutional	<i>Against the rules of the Constitution</i>
Democratic Party	<i>One of the two main U.S. parties, liberal/left-wing</i>
Republican Party	<i>One of the two main U.S. parties, conservative/right-wing</i>
Democrat	<i>Member of the Democratic Party</i>
Republican	<i>Member of the Republican Party</i>
Partisan	<i>Strong supporter of one political party</i>
Bipartisan	<i>Supported by both major parties</i>
Third party	<i>Smaller political party outside the main two</i>
Think tank	<i>Organisation that researches political issues</i>
Electoral College	<i>System that officially elects the President</i>
Elector	<i>Person who casts a vote in the Electoral College</i>
Electoral vote	<i>A vote cast by an elector in the Electoral College</i>
Winner-takes-all system	<i>The candidate with most votes in a state gets all its electoral votes</i>
Safe state	<i>A state that usually votes for the same party</i>

Word	Definition
Swing state	<i>A state where either major party could win</i>
Purple state	<i>A swing state with mixed political support</i>
Air war	<i>TV, radio, and online campaigning during elections</i>
Spin	<i>Presenting information to make a candidate look good</i>
Robocall	<i>Automated political phone call to voters</i>
Mail-in ballot	<i>Voting by post instead of in person</i>
Early voting	<i>Voting before the official election day</i>
Voter ID	<i>Identification required to vote</i>
Inauguration	<i>Ceremony where the new President takes office</i>
Voter turnout	<i>Percentage of eligible voters who vote</i>
Primary	<i>Party election to choose a candidate</i>
Caucus	<i>Meeting where party members select candidates</i>
Super Tuesday	<i>Day when many states hold primaries at once</i>
Delegate	<i>Person representing others at a political meeting</i>
Midterm election	<i>Elections held halfway through a President's term</i>
State election	<i>Election for state-level positions</i>
Governor	<i>Elected leader of a state</i>
Mayor	<i>Elected leader of a city or town</i>
Special election	<i>Election held when an office becomes vacant early</i>
Checks and balances	<i>System preventing any branch from becoming too powerful</i>

Word	Definition
To impeach	<i>To formally charge a government official with misconduct</i>
To veto	<i>President's power to reject a law</i>