**Important Terms (Chapters 6-8)**

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| **poll** | A survey of public opinion. |
| **random sample** | A sample selected in such a way that any member of the population being surveyed (e.g., all adults or voters) has an equal chance of being interviewed. |
| **sampling error** | The difference between the results of two surveys or samples. For example, if one random sample shows that 60 percent of all Americans like cats and another random sample taken at the same time shows that 65 percent do, the sampling error is 5 percent. |
| **elite (political)** | An identifiable group of persons who possess a disproportionate share of some valued resource—such as money or political power. |
| **new class** | That part of the middle class that has college and postgraduate degrees and works in occupations that involve using symbols (such as writers and teachers). It tends to have liberal views. |
| **traditional middle class** | That part of the middle class that has jobs in business or farming and tends to have conservative views. |
| **gender gap** | Differences in the political views and voting behavior of men and women. |
| **liberal** | In general, a person who favors a more active federal government for regulating business, supporting social welfare, and protecting minority rights, but who prefers less regulation of private social conduct. |
| **conservative** | In general, a person who favors more limited and local government, less government regulation of markets, more social conformity to traditional norms and values, and tougher policies toward criminals. |
| **political ideology** | A coherent and consistent set of attitudes about who ought to rule and what policies ought to be adopted. |

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| **faction** | According to James Madison, a group of people who seek to influence public policy in ways contrary to the public good. | |
| **political party** | A group that seeks to elect candidates to public office by supplying them with a label—a “party identification”—by which they are known to the electorate. | |
| national convention | A meeting of party delegates elected in state primaries, caucuses, or conventions that is held every four years. Its primary purpose is to nominate presidential and vice-presidential candidates and to ratify a campaign platform. | |
| national committee | A committee of delegates from each state and territory that runs party affairs between national conventions. | |
| congressional campaign committee | A party committee in Congress that provides funds to members who are running for reelection or to would-be members running for an open seat or challenging a candidate from the opposition party. | |
| national chairman | A paid, full-time manager of a party’s day-to-day work who is elected by the national committee. | |
| federal money | Money raised to support the campaign of a candidate for federal office. Amounts regulated by federal law. | |
| soft money | Money raised by political parties for activities other than directly supporting a federal candidate. | |
| political machine | A party organization that recruits its members by dispensing patronage—tangible incentives such as money, political jobs, an opportunity to get favors from government—and that is characterized by a high degree of leadership control over member activity. | |
| ideological party | A party that values principled stands on issues above all else, including winning. It claims to have a comprehensive view of American society and government radically different from that of the established parties. | |
| solidary | An incentive that relies on friendship or sociability. | |
| personal following | The political support provided to a candidate on the basis of personal popularity and networks. | |
| single-member districts | Legislative districts from which one representative is chosen. | |
| proportional representation | A voting system in which representatives in a legislature are chosen by the proportion of all votes each candidate (or each candidate’s party) gets. | |
| plurality system | An electoral system, used in almost all American elections, in which the winner is the person who gets the most votes, even if he or she does not receive a majority of the votes. | |
| caucus (congressional) | An association of members of Congress created to advocate a political ideology or a regional, ethnic, or economic interest. | |
| interest group | An organization of people, or a “letterhead” organization, sharing a common interest or goal that seeks to influence the making of public policy. | |
| political efficacy | A citizen’s sense that he or she can understand and influence politics. | |
| solidary incentives | The social rewards that lead people to join local or state political organizations. People who find politics fun and want to meet others who share their interests are said to respond to solidary incentives. | |
| material incentives | Benefits that have monetary value, including money, gifts, services, or discounts received as a result of one’s membership in an organization. | |
| purposive incentive | The benefit that comes from serving a cause or principle from which one does not personally benefit. | |
| public-interest lobby | A political organization, the stated goals of which will principally benefit nonmembers. | |
| pluralist theory (politics) | A theory that competition among all affected interests shapes public policy. | |
| cue (political) | A signal telling a congressional representative what values (e.g., liberal or conservative) are at stake in a vote—who is for, who against a proposal—and how that issue fits into his or her own set of political beliefs or party agenda. | |
| **activist** | | An individual, usually outside government, who actively promotes a political party, philosophy, or issue he or she cares about. | |
| **Australian ballot** | | A government-printed ballot of uniform size and shape to be cast in secret that was adopted by many states around 1890 in order to reduce the voting fraud associated with party-printed ballots cast in public. | |
| **voting-age population (VAP)** | | The citizens who are eligible to vote after reaching a minimum age requirement. In the United States, a citizen must be at least eighteen years old in order to vote. | |
| **voting-eligible population (VEP)** | | The VAP minus aliens and felons. | |
| **registered voters** | | People who are registered to vote. While almost all adult American citizens are theoretically eligible to vote, only those who have completed a registration form by the required date may do so. | |
| **motor-voter law** | | A law passed by Congress in 1993 to make it easier for Americans to register to vote. The law, which went into effect in 1995, requires states to allow voter registration by mail, when one applies for a driver’s license, and at state offices that serve the disabled or poor. | |
| **general election** | | An election used to fill an elective office. | |
| **primary election** | | An election prior to the general election in which voters select the candidates who will run on each party’s ticket. | |
| **closed primary** | | A primary election limited to registered party members. Prevents members of other parties from crossing over to influence the nomination of an opposing party’s candidate. | |
| **open primary** | | A primary election that permits voters to choose on election day the party primary in which they wish to vote. They may vote for candidates of only one party. | |
| **blanket primary** | | A primary election that permits all voters, regardless of party, to choose candidates. A Democratic voter, for example, can vote in a blanket primary for both Democratic and Republican candidates for nomination. | |
| **runoff primary** | | A second primary election held in some states when no candidate receives a majority of the votes in the first primary; the runoff is between the two candidates with the most votes. Runoff primaries are common in the South. | |
| **presidential primary** | | A special kind of primary used to pick delegates to the presidential nominating conventions of the major parties. | |
| **spots (campaign)** | | Short television advertisements used to promote a candidate for government office. | |
| **visual (campaign)** | | A campaign activity that appears on a television news broadcast. | |
| **retrospective voters** | | Voters who vote for or against the candidate or party in office because they like or dislike how things have gone in the recent past. (Retrospective means “backward-looking.”) | |
| **prospective voters** | | Voters who vote for a candidate because they favor his or her ideas for addressing issues after the election. (Prospective means “forward-looking.”) | |
| **Critical,** or **realigning, periods** | | Periods during which a sharp, lasting shift occurs in the popular coalition supporting one or both parties. The issues that separate the two parties change, and so the kinds of voters supporting each party change. | |
| **New Deal coalition** | | The different, sometimes opposed voters—southern whites, urban blacks, union workers, and intellectuals—whom Franklin D. Roosevelt made part of the Democratic party in the 1930s and 1940s. | |
| **split-ticket voting** | | Voting for candidates of different parties for various offices in the same election. For example, voting for a Republican for senator and a Democrat for president. | |
| **party-column ballot** | | A ballot listing all candidates of a given party together under the name of that party; also called an “Indiana” ballot. | |
| **office-bloc ballot** | | A ballot listing all candidates for a given office under the name of that office; also called a “Massachusetts” ballot. | |
| **straight-ticket voting** | | Voting for candidates who are all of the same party. For example, voting for Republican candidates for senator, representative, and president. | |
| **selective attention** | | Paying attention only to those parts of a newspaper or broadcast story with which one agrees. Studies suggest that this is how people view political ads on television. | |
| **political action committee (PAC)** | | A committee set up by and representing a corporation, labor union, or special-interest group that raises and spends campaign contributions on behalf of one or more candidates or causes. | |
| **independent expenditures** | | Political money raised and spent by an organization on behalf of a candidate done without direction of or coordination with the candidate. | |
| **soft money** | | Money raised by political parties for activities other than directly supporting a federal candidate. | |
| **matching funds** | | In presidential elections, money given by the national government to match, under certain conditions, money raised by each candidate. | |
| **527s** | | Organizations that raise money for political campaigns that are not (yet) regulated by campaign-finance laws. | |