

Read-Along Teach-Along: Political Parties

The Republican Party was founded in **1854** and is often called the “Grand Old Party” or the **GOP**. The first Republican president was **Abraham Lincoln**. Republicans believe in limiting **government** to give people more **freedom**. They believe that people should **help other people** when they need help, rather than relying on the **government** to do it. The Republicans’ mascot is an **elephant**, and the color associated with Republicans is **red**.

The Democratic Party is the **oldest** political party in the United States. It was founded by **Thomas Jefferson**. Democrats believe that the government should **help poor people** and **fix injustice**, even if it means **raising taxes**. They believe in making sure workers have **fair conditions**, and making businesses **protect the environment**. The Democrat’s mascot is a **donkey**, and the color associated with Democrats is **blue**.

The Libertarian Party wants the government to be very **limited**, so that we have as much **freedom** as possible. The symbol of this party is **Lady Liberty**, and their color is **yellow**.

The Constitution Party wants the government to stick very closely to the ideas laid out in our **founding documents**: the Declaration of **Independence**, the **Constitution of the United States**, and the Bill of **Rights**. Their colors are **red, white, and blue**, and their symbol is an **American Bald Eagle**.

The Green Party believes in protecting the **environment**, being **peaceful**, and letting everyone **participate**. Their color is **green** and their symbol is a **plant**.

Challenge Questions:

1. Look up the web sites of all of these political parties.
2. Why do you think it’s called a party? What is the root in the word “party”?
3. Which party has the best name?
4. Why do you think it’s important for a party to have a color?
5. What is the worst possible name you can think of for a political party?