Learning Objectives:

After studying Chapter 8, you should be able to:

1. Discuss the meaning and functions of a political party.
2. Discuss the nature of the party-in-the-electorate, party organizations, and the party-in-government.
3. Describe the party eras in American history and how parties realign and realign.
4. Evaluate the two-party system, its consequences, and the place of the third parties in the system.
5. Identify the challenges facing the American political parties and explain their relationship to American democracy, individualism, and the scope of government.

The following exercises will help you meet these objectives:

Objective 1: Discuss the meaning and functions of a political party.

1. Define the term “political party.”
2. Explain the three heads of the political party as a “three-headed political giant.”
3. What are the five tasks political parties should perform if they are to serve as effective linkage institutions?
4. Draw a graph or diagram depicting Anthony Downs’ rationale-choice model of political parties.

Objective 2: Discuss the nature of the party-in-the-electorate, party organizations, and the party-in-government.

1. What has been the most prominent trend in party identification in recent years?
2. What is meant by ticket splitting?
3. Draw an organizational chart of an American political party and then mark where most of the power actually exists.
4. What is meant by a “party machine”?
5. What is the difference between the following types of party primaries?
   a. Closed primaries
   b. Open primaries
   c. Blanket primaries
6. What is the function of each of the following national party organizations?
   a. National Convention
   b. National Committee
   c. National Chairperson
7. What is the relationship between party promises and party performance?
Objective 3: Describe the party eras in American history and how parties realign and dealign.

1. List the four elections which might be considered “critical” or “realigning” and explain why.
2. Complete the following table on party eras.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Party Era</th>
<th>Major Party</th>
<th>Major Party Coalition</th>
<th>Minor Party</th>
<th>Minor Party Coalition</th>
<th>Prominent President(s)</th>
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<tbody>
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<td>1796 - 1824</td>
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<td>1896 - 1928</td>
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<td>1932 - 1964</td>
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</table>
3. List the eight presidents since 1968 and complete the following table on divided government.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>President and Party Affiliation</th>
<th>Number of Years with Republican Congress</th>
<th>Number of Years with Democratic Congress</th>
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Objective 4: Evaluate the two-party system, its consequences, and the place of the third parties in the system.

1. What are the three basic varieties of third parties?
2. What are two ways in which third parties can have an impact on American politics?
3. What is the most important consequence of two-party governance in the United States?

Objective 5: Identify the challenges facing the American political parties and explain their relationship to American democracy, individualism, and the scope of government.

1. List the four conditions that advocates of the responsible party model believe parties should meet
2. What is the major consequence of the prominence of individualism within American political parties?
3. How does the American party system affect the scope of government?
4. What is the key problem of the American political parties today?

MAKE SURE YOU ALSO KNOW THE KEY TERMS FROM THE CHAPTER SUMMARY!