

US POLITICS

Absentee voting: *vote par correspondance*

Air war: The battle between candidates to get as much advertising on television and radio as possible.

To assume office: *prendre poste*

Attack ads: Political advertisements that attack a candidate's opponent, often trying to destroy the opponent's character.

Ballot: *scrutin*

Ballot box: *urne*

Ballot booth: *isoloire*

Battleground state: A large state with an electorate split relatively evenly between Democrats and Republicans, so named because candidates spend a disproportionate amount of time and money campaigning there.

Bellwether state: A state which, historically, tends to vote for the winning candidate, perhaps because it is - demographically - a microcosm of the country as a whole.

Blue state: A state where people tend to vote for the Democratic Party.

To call the election: *Annoncer le vainqueur*

Campaign trail: A [series](#) of [planned](#) events in different [places](#) taken [part](#) in or given by a [politician](#) who is [trying](#) to be [elected](#).

To cast a vote/ballot: *voter*

Caucus: an informal meeting at which potential voters and candidates (or their representatives) talk about the issues and their preferred candidate, and then decide which candidate they support and which delegates to send to their political party's convention. Not every US state has caucuses.

Census: *recensement*

Challenger: A challenger is a candidate who runs for political office against a person who currently holds that office (the incumbent).

Concession speech/call: Speech given by the one who loses the election, acknowledging the other one's victory.

Constituency: The people a government official represents make up his or her constituency.
(*électeurs*)

To contest election: to officially question the result of an election

Contender: *concurrent/candidat*

Convention: A meeting of a political party, typically to select party candidates.

Dark horse = outsider/someone you don't see coming

Dark money: Comes from groups that are not required to disclose their donors

Delegate: A representative to a convention. The party members whose votes at the National Convention officially determine the two parties' presidential candidates are known as delegates.

Designated survivor/successor: An individual in the [presidential line of succession](#), usually a member of the [United States Cabinet](#), who is arranged to be at a physically distant, secure, and undisclosed location when the President and the country's top leaders (e.g., Vice President and Cabinet members) are gathered at a single location to guarantee continuity of government.

Election Day: For the US Presidential election, it is the day set by law for the selection of the President by popular ballot. It is the Tuesday following the first Monday of November of the election year. For 2008, Election Day falls on November 4.

Electoral college: The collective term for the 538 electors who officially elect the president and vice-president of the United States. Presidential candidates require a majority of 270 college votes to win the presidency. The number of electors each state is allocated is equal to the combined total of its senators and representatives in Congress.

Electorate

Endorsement: A formal and explicit approval, support.

Enfranchisement: *affranchissement*

Exit poll: An informal poll taken as people leave the voting booth. Exit polls are used to predict the outcome of the election before the polls are closed.

Faithless elector: A member of the United States Electoral College who does not vote for the presidential or vice presidential candidate for whom they had pledged to vote.

First Past The Post (FPTP) – The simplest form of plurality/majority electoral system, using single-member districts and candidate-centred voting. The winning candidate is the one who gains more votes than any other candidate, even if this is not an absolute majority of valid votes.

Flip-flopper: person who suddenly changes opinion

Front-runner: One that is in a leading position in a race or other competition.

General election: An election that is being held throughout the country on the same day.

Gerrymandering: A process in which a voting district is broken up or the physical boundaries of a voting district are changed in order to make it easier for one political party to win future elections.

GOP: *Grand Old Party* (Republican Party)

Hard money: Money contributed by an individual directly to a particular campaign.

Incumbent: *président sortant*

Impeachment: *procès en destitution*

Inaugural address: *discours d'investiture*

Lame duck: The term lame duck refers to an elected official during the time period between the election that chose the official's successor and the date the successor assumes office. Such an individual is in a weakened position politically due to the impending expiration of his or her term.

Landslide: A victory in which one candidate's votes far surpass those of other candidates is called a landslide.

Lobbyist: People who are associated with groups (like labor unions, corporations, etc.) and who try to persuade members of the government (like members of Congress) to enact legislation that would benefit their group.

Mainstream: *courant dominant / opinion majoritaire*

Media bias: Occurs when a media outlet reports a news story in a partial or prejudiced manner.

Moderator: Person who hosts and moderate a debate.

Mudslinging: *médiance / calomnie*

Nominee: A person selected by others to run for office is the nominee.

Oath of office: *serment d'investiture*

Opinion poll: *sondage d'opinion*

To override: *outrepasser, forcer*

To oversee: *superviser*

Party platform: A formal declaration of the principles on which a political party makes its appeal to the public.

Pledged delegate: A delegate who is elected or chosen on the state and local level with the understanding that he or she will support a particular candidate at the convention.

Policy: *(une) politique*

Polls: *sondages*

Popular vote: The result of the votes of all eligible voters. The candidate who wins the popular vote in a state wins all the pledged votes of the state's electors. The winner of the overall popular vote usually wins the election.

Precinct: The smallest geographic area in US voting subdivisions. (*circonscription*)

Primary: A state-level election held before a general election to nominate a party's candidate for office. In some states voters are restricted to choosing candidates only from the party for which they have registered support (**closed primary**). However 29 states permit "**open primaries**" in which a voter may opt to back a candidate regardless of their nominal affiliation.

Protest vote: A vote for a third party candidate (who is not likely to win) that is meant to show displeasure with the mainstream candidates or parties.

Proxy vote: *vote par procuration*

Public office = position in government:

Purple state: Another term for swing state. A state which could vote Democratic (blue) or Republican (red).

Push polling: The controversial practice where voters are contacted over the telephone by campaign workers, who talk up their own candidate and rubbish opponents.

Red state: A state where people tend to vote for the Republican Party.

Register: liste

Representative: member of The House of Representatives

Riding coattails: In American politics, it refers to the ability of a popular officeholder or candidate for office, on the strength of his or her own popularity, to increase the chances for victory of other candidates of the same political party.

To rig/fix an election: *truquer une élection*

To run for president: *être candidat à / présenter sa candidature à*

Running mate: Once a party has selected its presidential nominee, the chosen candidate picks a political colleague, known as a "running mate", to run with him or her in the presidential election and who - if elected - will become vice-president.

Soft money: Contributions given to political parties for purposes other than supporting candidates for federal office.

Sound bites: A sound bite is a brief, very quotable remark by a candidate for office that is repeated on radio and television news programs.

Spin doctor: A media adviser or political consultant employed by a campaign to ensure that a candidate receives the best possible publicity in any given situation is called a spin doctor.

Stump speech: On the campaign trail, candidates often deliver a generic speech, known as their "stump speech", outlining their core campaign messages.

Super pacs: An independent PAC that can raise unlimited sums of money. They are forbidden from being officially associated with a campaign, but this rule is easy to get around. Super PACs back specific candidates and are frequently run by their allies.

Straw vote: An unofficial vote used to predict how an election might turn out.

Super Tuesday: Super Tuesday refers to a critical date in the campaign calendar - usually in early March - when a large number of states hold primary elections.

Supporter base: Base voters are a group of voters who almost always support a single party's candidates for elected office.

State of the Union (Address): The Constitution requires that the president report to Congress on the State of the Union "from time to time". The president's State of the Union Speech defines his view of national priorities and needed legislation. Since 1913, presidents have chosen to deliver the speeches in person once a year, usually in January.

To sway public opinion = to influence

Swing state (= battleground state): A state in which no candidate has overwhelming support, meaning that any of the major candidates have a reasonable chance of winning the state's electoral college votes.

To take office = to assume office

To take the oath: *prêter serment*

Term: *mandat*

Third party candidate: A candidate who does not belong to one of the two main US political parties, the Republicans or the Democrats.

Ticket: pair made by the presidential candidate and their running mate

Too close to call: Phrase used to express that the outcome of the election can't be predicted.

Turnout: *taux de participation*

Two-party system: System that consists in two official political parties.

Voter suppression: Strategy to influence the outcome of an election by discouraging or preventing people from exercising the right to vote.

Underdog = outsider/expected loser: *personne donnée perdante*

Wedge issue: An issue that a politician might raise in order to drive a wedge between different groups within his opponent's supporter base.

Winner take all Primary/Caucus: A primary and/or caucus system in which a party's candidate who wins the most votes from a state's caucus or primary wins all of that state's delegates for the party at the national convention.

To win support: *conquérir (des voix)*

Zinger: *pique*