

Bipartisan Dialogue

Bell-Ringer



Bipartisan Dialogue



Background Information

American politics in the 1970s was categorized by a notable level of collaboration between Democrats and Republicans, especially on foreign policy and national security, due to the ongoing Cold War with the Soviet Union, the political atmosphere was also influenced significantly by the political realignments followed the social movements of the 1950s, 60s, and early 70s, such as the Civil Rights Movement and Anti-Vietnam War protests. However, the era is also notable for increasing partisan divides on domestic issues, particularly regarding the rise of New Conservatism and debates over social programs initiated during President Johnson's War on Poverty. Additionally, the Watergate Scandal that ended the presidency of Richard Nixon led to a temporary surge in bipartisan efforts to restore public trust through increased governmental accountability.

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Did you know that after winning the 1860 election, one of the most contentious in American history, new president Abraham Lincoln appointed three of his biggest rivals to his cabinet?

Standards

GC.06, 12

US.88

APGov LO 1.6.A, 5.3.B

APUSH Unit 8 LO-J, KC

8.2.III.F

Objective

Students will be able to define bipartisanship and identify its significance in American politics. Students will debate the importance of bipartisan dialogue.

Key Terms and People

Bipartisanship
Civility
Midterm Election
Jimmy Carter
Howard H. Baker, Jr.

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Handout A



Inscription reads, “To my good friend Howard Baker – Jimmy Carter 5-78”

Skill Sheet | Bipartisan Dialogue

Directions | In the space provided, write 2-3 sentences answering the following question: What is the relationship between the men in the photo above?

- Consider and include in your response:
 - Who are the two men in the photo? (Note: Pay close attention to the writing on the photo.) What political parties do you think they belong to? Why?
 - What political positions do you think they hold? (It is okay if you aren't certain.)
 - When was this photo taken/given? Why is this important?
 - What is bipartisanship?

Activity | For each of the following statements, you are going to be asked to either agree or disagree. **Be ready to defend your answer.**

- Bipartisanship is a necessary part of a successful democracy.
- Politicians can disagree and still be civil. (Disagree without being disagreeable).
- In politics, it is important to listen more than you talk.
- When a politician changes their position to advance legislation or policy they are compromising their beliefs.
- Politicians should always act according to public opinion polls.

KEY TERMS & PEOPLE*

Bipartisan Consensus – Agreement between the two major political parties about the basic outline of American . . . policy [and values].

Civility – Conducting governmental business with respect towards constituents, elected officials, and staff.

Midterm Election- A congressional election that occurs at the midpoint between presidential elections.

President Jimmy Carter- 39th president of the United States of America, 1976-1980.

Senator Howard H. Baker, Jr. – U.S. Senate Minority Leader (R-Tennessee) 1967-1985.

RESOURCES

Bipartisan Policy Center. "History of Bipartisanship." Bipartisanpolicy.org. Accessed June 11, 2024. <https://bipartisanpolicy.org>.

Howard Baker with Jimmy Carter. Inscribed Photograph. 1978. Photograph.

Photographs from the Life and Career of Howard Baker. University of Tennessee, Knoxville. Special Collections.

*Lyons, William, and John M. Scheb, II. *American Government: Politics and Political Culture*. 3rd ed. Cincinnati, OH: Atomic Dog Publishing, 2003.

Teacher Notes | Bipartisan Dialogue

- Begin by asking students to write down in 2-3 sentences what they notice about the picture above.

This lesson is intended to help students think through the roles of government officials through analysis of primary sources they may not be familiar with. Students may not know who is in the photo or much about them. This lesson encourages students to deduce from available information the relationship between Baker and Carter. Encourage students to use context clues and their knowledge of American government and history to determine what relationship the two might have.

You may choose to tell students more about the photo. Seated on the left is Republican Senate Minority Leader Howard H. Baker, Jr., of Tennessee. On the right is President Jimmy Carter, a Democrat. Note the date that the photo was signed: 1978, a midterm election year. Baker was up for reelection in Tennessee and faced a primary that August. This meeting in May would have fallen in the middle of the election after Baker had changed his position on the Panama Canal to support Carter's efforts – going against the majority opinion of his party and constituents.

Give students 3-5 minutes to complete this task. Finally, ask students to define bipartisanship.

- Explain to students that they will be asked to either agree or disagree with each of the following statements and be ready to defend their answer. Have all students stand up and go to a side of the room based on their answer (tell them which side is which or label the room ahead of time). As time allows, discuss each by asking a student in each section to explain their reasoning and allow other students the opportunity to respond.
 - Bipartisanship is a necessary part of a successful democracy.
 - Politicians can disagree and still be civil. (Disagree without being disagreeable).
 - In politics, it is important to listen more than you talk.
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Standards Alignment		
Tennessee State Standards		
U.S. Government and Civics	GC.06	Describe limited government within the Constitution, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Checks and balances • Civilian control of the military • Federalism • Judicial review • Popular sovereignty • Rule of law • Separation of powers
	GC.12	Identify leadership positions of the legislative branch, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Majority and minority leaders • President pro tempore • Role of the vice president • Speaker of the House
United States History and Geography	US.88	Identify and explain the significant events of President Jimmy Carter’s administration, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Poor economy • Panama Canal Treaty • Camp David Accords • Energy crisis • Iran Hostage Crisis
Collegeboard AP Course Topics		
A.P. United States Government and Politics	LO 1.6.A	Explain the constitutional principles of separation of powers and checks and balances.
	LO 5.3.B	Explain the function and impact of political parties on the electorate and Government.
A.P. United States History	Unit 8: Learning Objective J	Explain the causes and effects of continuing policy debates about the role of the federal government over time.
	KC-8.2.III.F	The 1970s saw growing clashes between conservatives and liberals over social and cultural issues, the power of the federal government, race, and movements for greater individual rights.
IAC Guidelines		
Topic 4: Citizens in a Democratic Society	IAC.T4.6	Discussing the meaning of leadership and the qualities of good leaders.
	IAC.T4.7	Identifying methods for individuals to work cooperatively with their elected officials.
	IAC.T4.9	Evaluating the role of elected representatives by discussing those who have demonstrated political courage.



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