The Party System and getting nominated as a candidate:

1) the formal way.

- The primary process/campaigns (all levels)

- how nominees get on the ballot/nominated (all levels)

- the conventions and how those work. (national)

**Presidential Nomination/Election Process:**

1) Candidates declare their intent to run.

2) Win delegate support - Candidates are competing against other nominees to get the parties support in the presidential race. Delegates are representatives who pledge to support a parties nomination at the national party convention and to persuade voters in general.

3) Caucuses and Primaries - Caucus is a debate amongst party members over who they will support. These are not used much anymore and have largely been replaced by primary elections. Primary elections are like state by state general elections whereby party members (though in some states non-party members are allowed to vote) vote on which candidate they would like the delegates from their state to support.

4) Party Convention Announcement - This is a rather dull affair now that primary elections have become so commonplace and really simply serves to unify the party behind their presidential candidate. Previously the candidate had not been determined prior to this night and they were often filled with debate.

5) Citizens cast their votes. - Voters are not actually voting for their candidate they are selecting groups of electors in the electoral college.

6) Electoral College casts votes. - Each state has a number of electors equal to the number of congresspeople it has, thus at the last presidential election there were 538. All electoral votes from a state go to the winner of the popular vote...what this leads to is the opportunity for the winning candidate to be someone who was not the popular vote winner. This happened in 1876, 1880, and, of course, in 2000.

7) The president is inaugurated.

In conclusion.....what this all means is that in order to get a guy in the big race you actually need a very substantial network of state party affiliations.

**Other National Ballot Restrictions:**

In addition to the nomination process candidates may also have to pay a fee to be on a ballot. FILL IN DETAILS

**Local Elections logistics:**

As you go down from the presidential election things get a little more straightforward. For national level seats in congress candidates still need the support of their party to be on the ballot. In addition they typically will need a certain number of signatures to get on the ballot. As you get down the the municipality level generally races will be non-partisan meaning an individual does not need the support of a party to be a candidate. However there will typically always been some degree of ballot access restrictions usually in the form of signature requirements. For example in order to get on the ballot for the 2013 Detroit Mayoral race a candidate needs 580 signatures. This is a number determined based on the voting populous of the city.

**Parties in Politics: Basically a better recap of all the above information.**

National:

Parties play a role at this level both for the executive branch and the legislative branch. In both cases candidates must be endorsed by a party that is recognized nationally or within their state to be put on the ballot. The endorsement process is typically choose based on a primary election in which candidates from the same districts compete to win the most votes in a primary election. These elections take place either within parties or with all registered voters depending on the states.

State:

In all cases state governments are structured similar to the federal government with executive, legislative, and judicial branches. Though states are simply required to have a “republic” form of government most have structured things around the established format of the fed. All states aside from Nebraska have to houses in their legislature. The upper and lower houses. The upper is usually called the Senate and the lower is called the house or assembly. All races at this level are partisan meaning state recognized parties must select a candidate. Candidates from the same party run against one another in a primary and the candidate with the most votes is given the party’s nomination.

Local:

Local government gets a little more interesting. Counties were established as essential administrative governments for the states. Their governance varies based on county, but typically they fall into one of two categories. 1) Commission based or 2) Executive based. Counties also vary as to whether or not their governance is partisan or non-partisan. In the commission style a county is simply presided over by a board of commissioners who have the power to affect county governance. In the executive form there is a county executive or administrator who upholds the governance of the county. In some cases this executive is elected by the board of commissioners. In others they are elected by the people. Again whether or not this position is partisan varies by county.

Also with in local politics is the governance of municipalities, cities, townships, etc. all of which are different terms for essentially the same thing. At this level virtually all elections are non-partisan.

Ballot Acces:

I have gotten into is a little bit in the above section, but essentially this is a broad term used to describe the laws that pertains to the limitations around who may get on the ballot and who may not. Some controversy that is relative to the Information Party exists. Essentially these laws are created the democrats and republicans in our two party system. The result is that in many cases it is harder for third or alternative parties to get on a ballot for they must first go through an extensive signature gathering process. <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ballot_access> - provides a good overview. Unfortunately since rules vary based on every single municipality there is not much point in trying to list out the results.

2) The informal/behind the scenes stuff

- what gets certain people nominated (all levels)

- Why are they chosen (all levels)

- who chooses them? (all levels)

- where does the power lie (all levels)

- why does it lie there? (all levels)

## Factors to Consider

Modern presidential candidates take into account a combination of factors when narrowing down the list of potential running mates:

Regional balance. Having separate regions of the country represented on the presidential ticket is a frequent consideration. In 1988, Massachusetts governor Michael Dukakis selected Texas senator Lloyd Bentsen as his running mate. Bentsen was well known and regarded in the South, while Dukakis's base of support was in the Northeast. Two decades earlier, fellow New Englander John F. Kennedy also looked to a Texan, Lyndon Johnson, to balance his ticket.

Ideological balance. Like regional balance, ideological balance also helps a presidential ticket appeal to a wider audience. In 1980, Ronald Reagan selected George H. W. Bush primarily because Bush's moderate views helped lessen concerns among some voters that Regan was too conservative.

Carrying a state. In some instances, the need to carry an important state is the key factor in choosing a running mate. In 1952, Dwight Eisenhower chose to run with California senator Richard Nixon, whom he did not like, though he liked California's electoral votes more than he disliked Nixon.

Buzz factor. Candidates far behind in the polls will sometimes select a running mate who can possibly change the dynamics of the election — in other words, introduce the “buzz factor.” Facing long odds of unseating popular incumbent Ronald Reagan, Walter Mondale made two-term Representative Geraldine Ferraro the first woman to run on a major party's national ticket, in the hope of shaking up the election. It failed to ignite the electorate, however; Reagan carried every state except Mondale's home state of Minnesota.

Who would be the best president. Once in a while, a presidential candidate will select a running mate solely on the basis of his belief that the nominee would make a good president

**Who runs for Congress? The kind of candidate has changed significantly over time. When political parties were strong institutions, they chose candidates based on party loyalty. Local party bosses and political “machines” in the larger cities determined all local and congressional candidates. For instance, in 1934 the Democratic machine in** [**Kansas City**](http://www.answers.com/topic/kansas-city-kansas)**, Missouri, picked Harry S.** [**Truman**](http://www.answers.com/topic/harry-s-truman)**for the Senate. A political machine is a tightly run political organization based on patronage. Many machine politicians who became candidates were far less talented and honest than Truman. Party endorsements were particularly important to senatorial candidates when senators were chosen by state legislatures rather than by popular vote. Since Senate candidates had to have strong support within the state legislature, most 19th-century senators served first in a state legislature or as governor of their state. Because they identified strongly with their party, they tended to vote with other members of their party in Congress.**

**After the 17th Amendment established direct election of senators in 1913, and after many states provided for primaries where voters could choose party candidates, the influence of party organizations declined and reform candidates often successfully challenged the machines.**

**Self-selected candidates**

**Congressional candidates became increasingly self-selected rather than party-selected. Fewer candidates for federal office had any experience in local or state government. Many congressional candidates had never run for public office before but had gained their experience in law,** [**business**](http://www.answers.com/topic/recruitment-into-congress#)**, or universities. Some gained public attention as astronauts, athletes, or actors: Senator John Glenn (Democrat-Ohio) won fame as the first American astronaut to orbit the earth. Senator Bill Bradley (Democrat-New Jersey) played professional basketball for the** [**New York Knicks**](http://www.answers.com/topic/new-york-knicks)**. And Representative Fred Grandy (Republican-Iowa) had a featured role in a television series called “The Love Boat.”**

**Instead of state legislators and governors running for the Senate, many members of the House became Senate candidates. Congressional staff members also began to run for office themselves. In the 102nd Congress, both Speaker of the House Thomas Foley and Senate majority leader George Mitchell were former members of the congressional staff.**

**The chances of self-selected candidates winning election improved with the growth of broadcast news. In the 19th century, newspapers identified strongly with one political party or the other and strongly endorsed that party's candidates. Candidates could address only limited audiences during a campaign, and they had to rely on party organizations to organize rallies, put up posters, and get party members out to vote. But the development of radio, and more important, of television, allowed candidates to talk directly to the voters. With enough** [**money**](http://www.answers.com/topic/recruitment-into-congress#)**, and with effective advertisements, an individual unknown to 99 percent of the voters at the beginning of a race can become known well enough to upset the incumbent, the person currently serving in the office.**

**The value of a family name**

**Having a prominent family name has always been an asset in winning party nomination and election to Congress. At age 30, Russell Long (Democrat-Louisiana) followed his famous father, Huey P. Long, to the Senate. Also at age 30, Edward M. Kennedy (Democrat-Massachusetts) won the Senate seat once held by his brother John F. Kennedy. His Republican opponent, George Cabot Lodge, was the son of another former Massachusetts senator, Henry Cabot Lodge, Jr. Similarly, in 1990 Representative Susan Molinari (Republican-New York) took the House seat that her father,** [**Guy Molinari**](http://www.answers.com/topic/guy-molinari)**, had held for a decade.**

**Read more:** [**http://www.answers.com/topic/recruitment-into-congress#ixzz2R4mJueIH**](http://www.answers.com/topic/recruitment-into-congress#ixzz2R4mJueIH)