Steps

1. Announcement
2. State Caucuses or Primaries
3. Conventions
4. Nomination
5. General Election
6. Electoral College Votes
7. Inauguration
Announcement

• A person decides to run for office and tells the public about it.
  – TV
  – Radio
  – Speech
  – Political Events

**Must be qualified**
  – Does anyone know the qualifications to run for the President of the United States?
Caucuses and Primaries

**Caucus—**
- Series of small meetings designed to select candidates and delegates to attend the National Convention

**Primaries—**
- Intra-party election
- Political parties hold elections in States to select a candidate for their political party
- State regulates these elections to stop fraud and manipulation

**Delegates are selected:** People selected at State Conventions to represent their States at National Conventions
Closed Primary

- On the day of the primary election, **voters can only vote for the party they are registered with**
- Only people registered with the political party can vote
- People can only vote for their declared party
- 24 States
Open Primary

• **ANY** qualified voter can vote
• The voter can determine which party they are voting for
• 26 States
Which Primary is better?

**Closed**
1. Prevents “raiding”
2. Makes candidates follow party platform
3. Makes voter more “thoughtful”, have to choose party

**Open**
1. Voters not forced to declare party to the public
2. Includes independent voters
3. Keeps “ballot secrecy”
Which States hold the first Caucus and Primary?

Primary = New Hampshire
Caucus = Iowa (January 3\textsuperscript{rd}, 2012)

Why are these races so important?

– Ton of media attention
– Candidates focus attention to these States
– If win, establish being the front runner
– Give candidates momentum in the election
Why do States want to go first?

• States used to wait as long as possible to hold primaries and caucuses
  – Why??
    • The longer you wait the greater input you have on the nomination

• In recent years States are moving their primaries and caucuses closer to Iowa and New Hampshire (Frontloading)
Super Tuesday

• Refers to the *Tuesday* in February or March of a presidential election year when the greatest number of states hold primary elections

• Traditionally candidates that do well on this day, win their parties nomination and do very well in the general election
Conventions

• Major-party presidential nominees are selected
• President and VP are chosen

Steps/Levels
1. County Convention (select delegates for State)
2. State Convention (select delegates for National)
3. National Convention (delegates vote for nominee)
Nomination

Nomination—

– Party’s official endorsement of candidate to run for office

• To win a party’s nomination a candidate must win the majority of delegates support at the National Convention

Plurality- the most votes

Majority- one more than half of the votes
General Election

• 1\textsuperscript{st} **Tuesday** following the 1\textsuperscript{st} Monday in November every fourth year
  – Voters cast their votes (**Popular Vote**)

• Federal Gov’t sets dates, time, and secret ballots

• State Gov’t decide how to administer the election
  – Electronic, mail, online, paper pencil

• Electoral College (**casts votes in December**)