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| [Democrat vs. Republican Philosophy](http://americanpresident2012.com/1/our-current-system/64-the-two-party-system.html) |

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| With all of the hullabaloo and the media circus of the last election still fresh in our minds, many people are asking, "What are the differences between Democrats and Republicans?" Surprisingly, in today’s political climate it is ever more difficult to separate the philosophies of either party from the issues.  More and more Americans find themselves voting for a candidate based on how they view a single issue or a group of issues rather than on the ideologies of a particular party. Sadly, the candidates, in an effort to market themselves to as many potential voters as possible further blur the party lines as a means to an end. In recent years, candidates, as much as they are able, distance themselves from the philosophical extremes of their own party and desperately try to portray themselves as moderate or middle of the road. As a result, voters become confused about generalities and are fearful of issues rather than being concerned about the style of government.  The Republican Party is the second oldest existing political party in the United States. When the Republican Party was created in 1854, it was considered a third party group by the Democrats and the Whig Party who were the major political parties of the time.  **The Republican Party** was formed to oppose the Kansas-Nebraska Act that would have allowed the expansion of slavery into Kansas. The party name “Republican” was chosen over suggested “Jeffersonian” and “Nationalist” because the term republic denounced rule by the powerful economic or monarchical families and it represented the belief of civic virtue. At the time, the Republican Party represented opposition to aristocracy and corruption while encouraging progressive thoughts emphasizing higher education, banking, business and industry. Republicans vehemently defended their theory that the “Free Market Labor” was superior to slavery and was the very foundation of civic virtue and was at the cores of true American values.  **The Democratic Party** is the oldest existing political party in the United States and it could be argued the oldest existing political party in the world. The Democratic Party came into existence in the early 1790’s and evolved from several different political factions that opposed the fiscal policies of Alexander Hamilton. The Democratic Party was founded on the principles that citizens have a civic duty to aid the state and resist corruption of monarchy and aristocracy. They believed that the farmer best exemplified the virtue and independence from the corrupting influences of cities and government policies. They felt that state rights should not be violated by a centralized federal government. These early Democrats felt that a standing army and navy were dangerous to individual liberty, and should be avoided in favor of economic coercion such as embargoes and sanctions.  It is important to note that especially in the most recent election, Independent voters, those who are not affiliated with either party were a much sought after commodity by both candidates. Independent voters traditionally don’t want to vote for either of the major party candidates because they feel that both parties are defined by their most extreme factions and that that the core philosophies are basically the same for both parties.  As for the Democrats, Independents view them as the far left liberals whose every maneuver is bent on political correctness, careful to never offend anyone, and the perception of failed socialist policies.  The Republicans on the other hand are viewed as dominated by far-right conservatives who are determined to maintain and preserve, at any cost, the existing antiquated institutions under the guise of protecting traditional values.  With the exception of certain issues, neither of the existing Parties presents an effective alternative choice to the other. In the last election, both Parties recognized the ever-increasing value of the independent and third party voters. Unlike previous political campaigns where independent voters were all-but-ignored, both presidential candidates in this election desperately tried to appeal and sway Independent voters into their respective camps.  For the first time in modern history, the growing number of disenchanted, independent voters, were sought and actually heard by both parties and the media. It is expected that the number of Independent voters in the United States will continue to grow, and as it does, so will Independent and Third Party candidates who will appeal to voters with more mainstream and moderate points of view and new solutions to address the issues problems facing our nation.  Traditionally, what did Republicans stand for?  Traditionally what did Democrats stand for?  Which would you have picked? Why?  Who are independents? What’s their issue with the two major parties?  Look at the chart below. With your group make an argument for each of these positions (one person write and attach this paper): |

Look at pages 174-178. For each sociological factor that influence voters determine whether you are part of the ‘norm’ and explain.

1)

2)

3)

4)

5)

6)

For each psychological factor that influence voters determine whether you are part of the ‘norm’ and explain.

1)

2)

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| **Republicans** | **Democrats** |
| **Generally believe it is the responsibility  of citizens to run the government.  Believe in free market and strong international alliances.   Believe in the right to bear arms.   Favor the death penalty.   Believes abortion is wrong.  Believe that people determine their own destiny and do not support welfare programs.**  **Believe in separation of church and state, but some on the far right feel it is ok to pray in schools.** | **Generally believe that it is the government's  responsibility to care for the citizens.  Believe in structured, regulated markets and minimal external entanglements.  Believe in strong gun control.  Oppose the death penalty.  Believes in a woman’s right to choose.  Believe that people should share economic burdens and generally support welfare programs for aid to the poor.  Believe in separation of church and state.** |