

## Module 4: The Presidency

### Topic 1 Content: The President

#### Introduction



**Demi Tracy:** Welcome to another episode of WUSG News. Today we are focusing on the executive branch. The head of this branch of government is a position that we are all familiar with, the President of the United States. The President serves as the Chief Executive and has several responsibilities including: executing the laws written by the legislative branch, appointing key federal officials, and running the armed forces, just to name a few. Here to share more about the presidency is Preston Dent, with his segment, *Presidential Presence*.

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#### Presidential Presence



**Preston Dent:** Welcome. I am your host, Preston Dent. You can call it what you like, the Head of State, the Commander-in-Chief, the Chief Executive, or the Chief Diplomat; all of these titles refer to the same person, the President of the United States. Article II, Section 1 of the U.S. Constitution states:

“The executive Power shall be vested in a President of the United States of America. He shall hold his Office during the Term of four Years, and, together with the Vice President, chosen for the same Term...”

The clause establishes the executive branch of government and the offices of President and Vice President of the United States. It also clearly sets their terms for four years. Article II continues, outlining the process of electing the President and the qualifications for becoming President. Let us begin with who may serve as the Commander-in-Chief.

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#### Presidential Qualifications



**Preston Dent:** While it may be said that any citizen of the United States can become the President, this is not technically true. There are formal constitutional requirements and informal requirements that dictate a person's eligibility.

If a person meets the formal requirements outlined in Article II, Section 1 of the Constitution, he or she is eligible to be the President, but the informal requirements are equally as important. The informal requirements are those characteristics and/or qualities that Americans can identify with and therefore trust the most. In today's political world, image is extremely important. The way a candidate looks and the way he or she sounds have a huge influence on the potential to become the President. This means that looking good and sounding good are informal requirements. You could also think about how, until very recently, being a white Protestant male was an informal requirement for anyone attempting to run for the highest office. Informal requirements change with societal standards and are not listed in the Constitution, but they have just as much of a chance of derailing a candidate's presidential ambitions as constitutional requirements.

The specific constitutional requirements for being the President of the United States include the following:

- you must be a natural born U.S. citizen;
- you must be at least 35 years old; and
- you must reside within the U.S. for at least 14 years.

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#### Pathway to the Presidency

**Drag and drop the candidate on the pathway icons.**

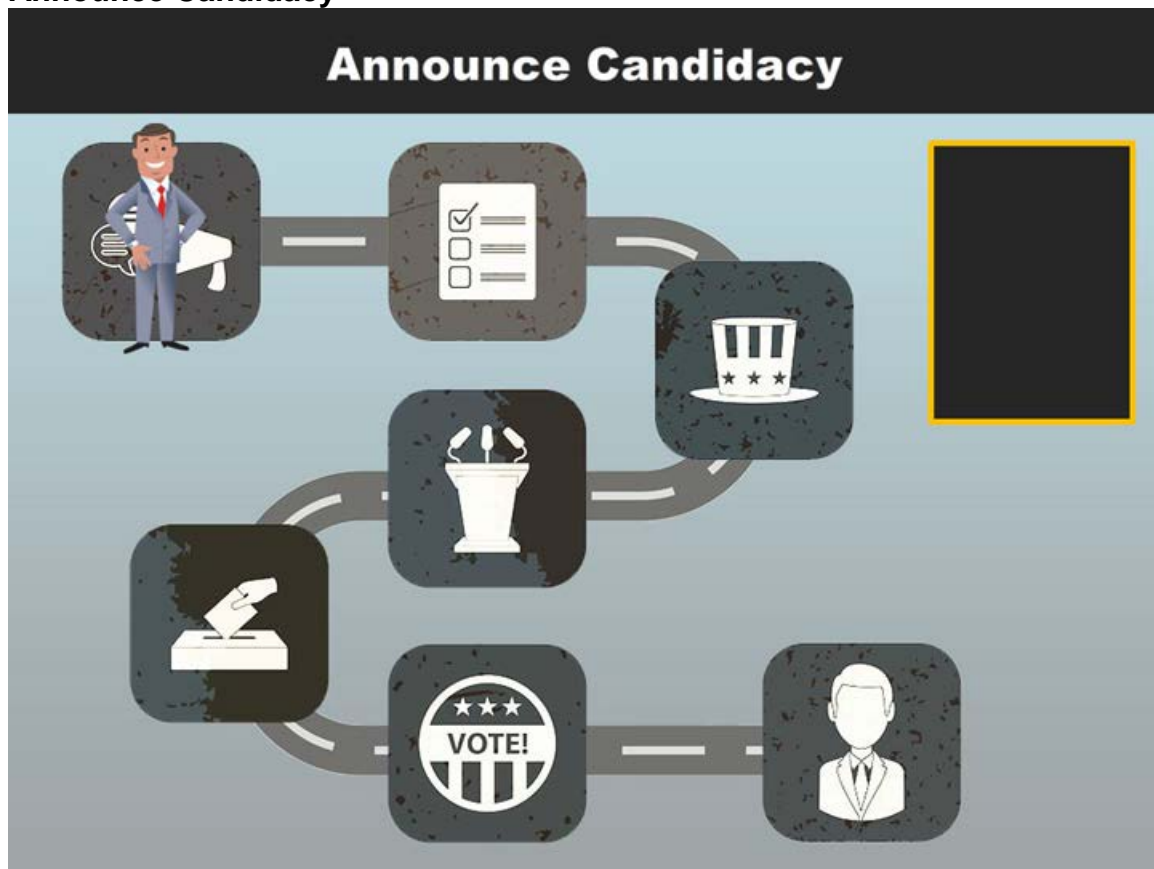


The diagram shows a winding grey pathway on a light blue background. The pathway starts at a ballot box icon on the left and winds through several icons: a megaphone with speech bubbles, a document with a checklist, a top hat with stars, a podium with microphones, a 'VOTE!' sign with stars, and a candidate's silhouette. At the end of the pathway on the right is a framed illustration of a man in a suit, representing the candidate.

**Preston Dent:** Imagine that you are planning on running for president. If you meet all of the qualifications, you may begin travelling down the pathway to the presidency.

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### Announce Candidacy

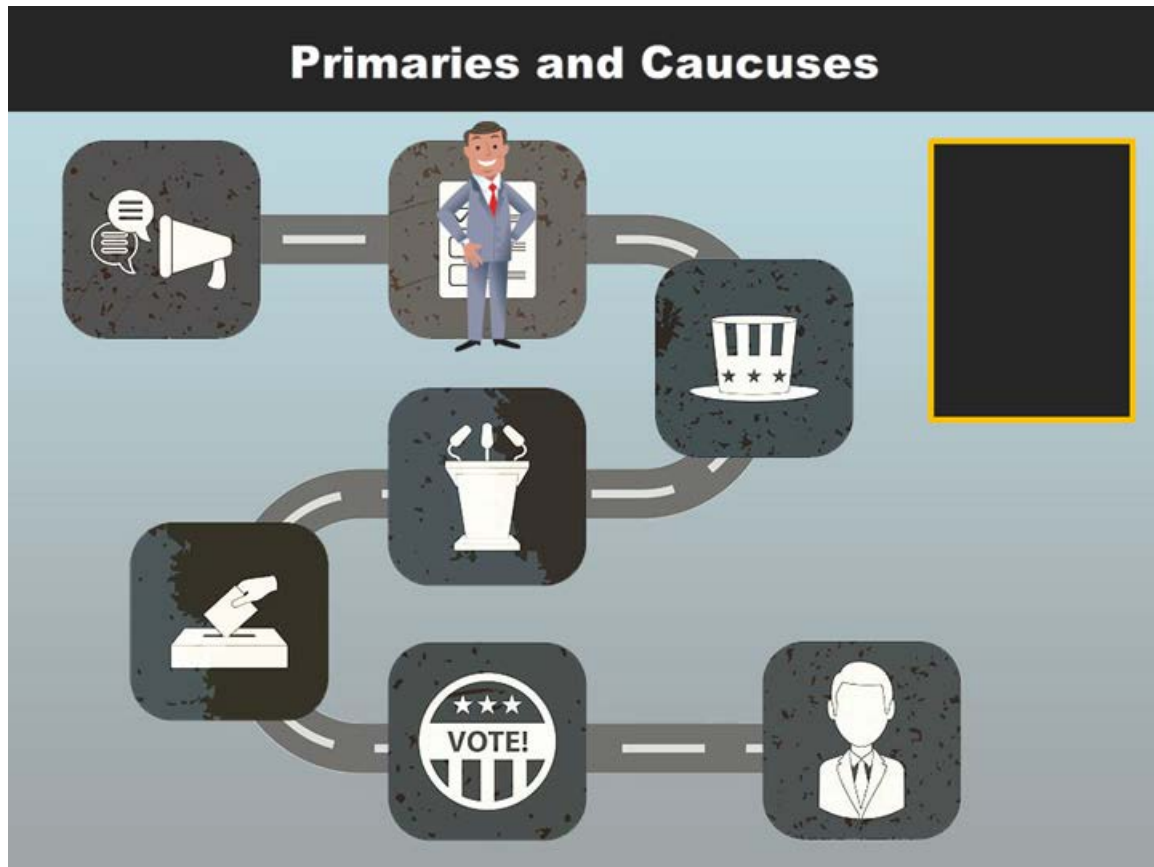


**Preston Dent:** Obviously the public will need to know that you that you are running. Papers must be filed with the federal election commission. At this point, you are referred to as a “Nominee.”

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#### Primaries and Caucuses



**Preston Dent:** In order for a political party to narrow down the pool of nominees to one candidate, a primary or caucus is held.

Primaries are elections that decide who will serve as the representative of the party in the upcoming election. There are closed primaries, in which only members of the political party can vote, and open primaries, in which anyone can vote.

A caucus is a meeting of the political party, in which the members have a discussion and decide who will be the strongest candidate for the upcoming election. That individual is chosen as the party's representative.

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#### National Convention

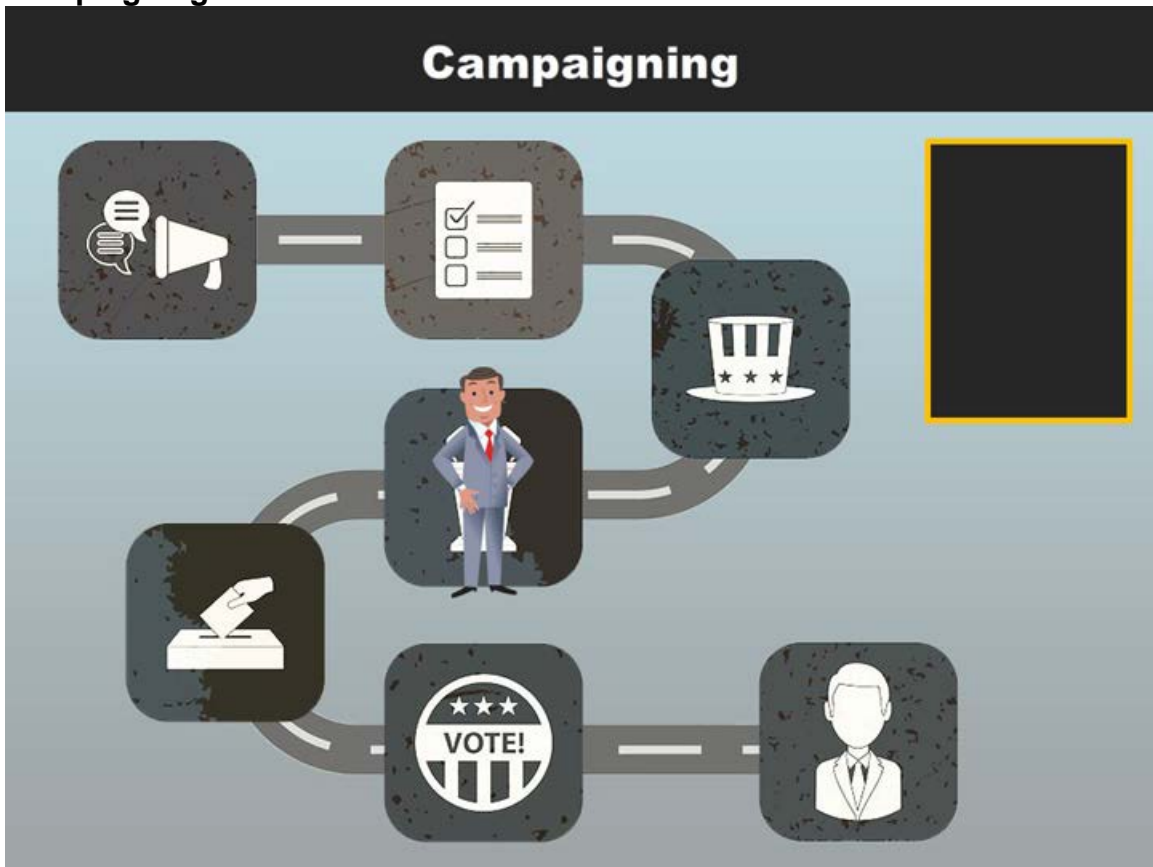


**Preston Dent:** The National Convention serves as a pep rally for the upcoming election. The convention starts with the Keynote Address, during which the Keynote speaker attempts to get the audience excited about the election. The second day is spent checking the credentials and adopting the platform, which is the party's set of beliefs on the issues. Day three is the official announcement of the candidate. This is also the day on which the name of the Vice Presidential candidate is revealed by the nominee.

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#### Campaigning



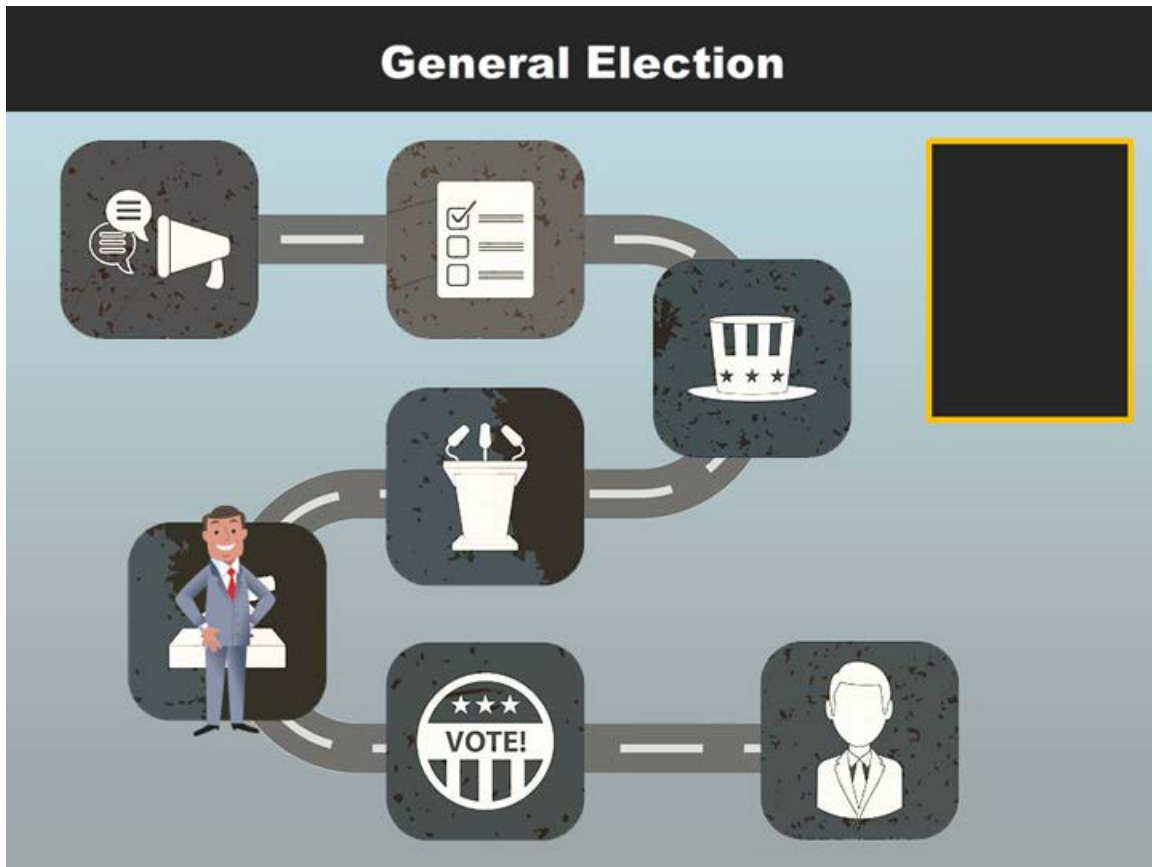
**Preston Dent:** After the candidates have been selected, it is time for them to travel around the country and explain to the people why they should be the next President and Vice President. This involves speeches, news interviews, meet and greets with the public, and debates with their opponents.



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#### General Election



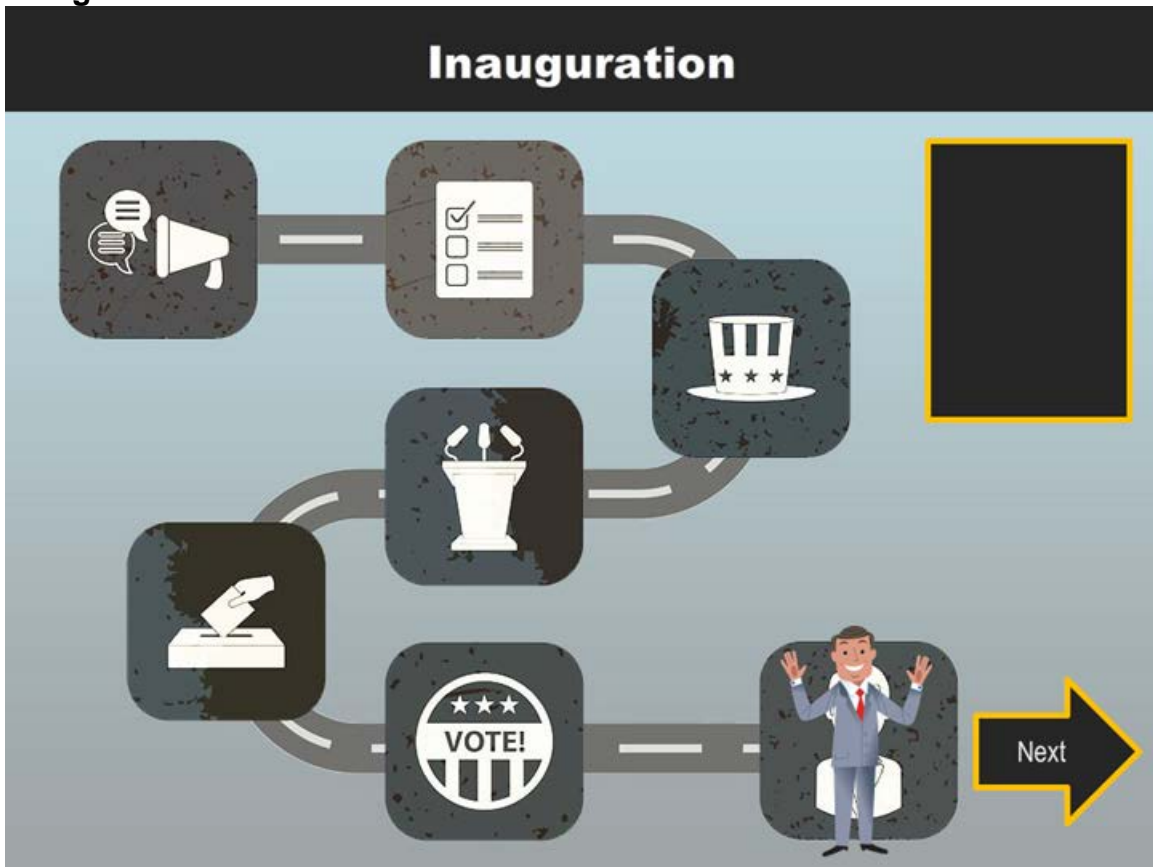
**Preston Dent:** The people cast their vote for President on the Tuesday after the first Monday in November. This means that the elections are held no earlier than November 2 and no later than November 8. These elections are held every four years.



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#### Inauguration



**Preston Dent:** This is the official ceremony in which the President is sworn in, takes the oath of office, and begins his or her term. This takes place on January 20, following the November election.

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#### Ending of Episode



**Demi Tracy:** Thank you, Preston. In the Electoral College system, some states award electoral votes based on which Congressional districts are won. Not all electors are legally required to cast a vote for a Presidential candidate that won that State's electoral votes. Due to the confusion about the Electoral College and the flaws with the system, there have been reforms proposed over the years. Some suggest that electoral votes should be based on the popular votes of the districts they represent. Others suggest that the President should be elected by the popular vote directly. Thank you for joining us. See you next time.