



Voting, Campaigns, and Elections

Chapter Eleven

Important Questions

- If Americans cherish the right to vote, why do so many neglect to exercise it?
- Why is political party identification, which many Americans discount, still the best single predictor of how people will vote?
- If attentive and informed voters are likely to be turned off by negative advertisements, why do campaigns pour so much money into running them?
- Is the reform of the campaign finance system really working?



The 2008 Presidential Election

- Unusual features:
 - scathing criticism of outgoing president by his own party's presidential nominee
 - for the first time since 1952 neither candidate was a sitting president or vice-president
 - both parties had lively and lengthy nomination campaigns
 - Democrats' contest had narrowed to an African American and a woman—a historical first, with Sen. Obama winning a narrow victory
 - Sen. John McCain came from behind to win the Republican Party's nomination at 72 years of age
 - chose a young, charismatic, and relatively unknown running-mate, Alaska governor Sarah Palin
 - second woman to be nominated for the office

