Chapter Summary

Public Opinion and Government

Lesson 1 Forming Public Opinion

- Public opinion, or strong opinion that is shared by many people, influences how public officials act. Public opinion determines how effectively the president can carry out his or her programs.
- Public opinion is not just one point of view. Different groups have different points of view.
- Factors that affect people’s opinions include their personal experiences, age, gender, race, income, and occupation.
- Opinions can be shaped by what people read in newspapers and on the Internet and by what they see on television and hear from interest groups.
- Public opinion is described in terms of direction (positive or negative), intensity (strength of opinion), and stability (whether people will change their minds).
- Public opinion is measured with polls, or surveys that ask people about particular issues or a particular public official. Good polls ask fair and unbiased questions and include a diverse group of people.

Lesson 2 The Mass Media

- Most Americans get news from print or electronic mass media.
- Most media outlets are private businesses and cover news that will attract the greatest number of listeners. The stories the media choose to focus on can shape the public agenda.
- Politicians use the media to test public reaction to their ideas, and the media use politicians as sources of news stories.
- Mass media play a watchdog role by monitoring government and exposing corruption and wrongdoing.
- The government can classify certain information, making it off-limits to reporters.
- The First Amendment to the U.S. Constitution protects freedom of the press and prohibits censorship. It is illegal, however, to publish false information that will harm someone’s reputation (libel).
Lesson 2 *The Mass Media, Cont.*

- Some states have shield laws that protect reporters’ sources by allowing them to be kept secret.
- The Federal Communications Commission (FCC) regulates broadcast media.

Lesson 3 *Interest Groups and Lobbying*

- The First Amendment gives people the right to join interest groups.
- Interest groups are made up of people who share a common cause or characteristic.
- Some private interest groups have common economic or business interests; others may be concerned about a particular issue.
- Public-interest groups work to benefit certain large segments of society.
- Some interest groups try to influence the decisions of government leaders by supporting certain candidates. Many form political action committees (PACs) to raise money for the candidates they support.
- Other interest groups try to affect public policy by bringing cases to court or by lobbying lawmakers.
- Interest groups communicate with the public to shape public opinion. They can provide useful information, but citizens should be aware that the information interest groups provide is often biased.
- Interest groups and lobbyists are regulated by federal, state, and local law. Regulations include limits on campaign contributions, required disclosure of the names of contributors, and a waiting period before lawmakers who leave office can become lobbyists.
Lección 1 Formación de la opinión pública

- La opinión pública, es decir, una opinión muy marcada que comparten muchas personas, influye en la manera de actuar de los funcionarios. La opinión pública determina con qué efectividad puede el presidente llevar a cabo sus programas.
- La opinión pública no es solo un punto de vista. Grupos diferentes tienen puntos de vista diferentes.
- Entre los factores que influyen en la opinión de las personas se encuentran sus experiencias personales, la edad, el sexo, la raza, los ingresos y la ocupación.
- Las opiniones se pueden moldear de acuerdo con lo que las personas leen en los periódicos y en Internet y con lo que ven en televisión y oyen de los grupos de presión.
- La opinión pública se describe con respecto a su dirección (positiva o negativa), intensidad (fuerza de la opinión) y estabilidad (si las personas cambiarán de parecer).
- La opinión pública se mide con encuestas, o sondeos, que formulan preguntas a las personas sobre asuntos específicos o un funcionario público en particular. Las buenas encuestas formulan preguntas equitativas e imparciales, e incluyen a diversos grupos de personas.

Lección 2 Los medios de comunicación social

- La mayoría de estadounidenses se informa a través de los medios de comunicación social impresos o electrónicos.
- La mayoría de los medios informativos son empresas privadas y cubren noticias que atraen el mayor número de oyentes. Las historias en las que los medios deciden enfocarse pueden moldear la agenda pública.
- Los políticos usan los medios de comunicación para probar la reacción pública a sus ideas, y los medios de comunicación usan a los políticos como fuentes de sus noticias.
- Los medios de comunicación social funcionan como organismos de control, supervisando al gobierno y poniendo al descubierto la corrupción y la maldad.
- El gobierno puede clasificar determinada información y ponerla fuera

(Continued on page 2)
Resumen del capítulo
Grupos de Presión

del alcance de los periodistas.

- La Primera Enmienda de la Constitución de Estados Unidos ampara la libertad de prensa y prohíbe la censura. No obstante, es ilegal publicar información falsa que perjudique la reputación de alguien (difamación).

- Algunos estados tienen leyes de la protección de la fuente que permiten que los periodistas mantengan sus fuentes en secreto.

- La Comisión Federal de Comunicaciones (FCC, por sus siglas en inglés) regula los medios de radiodifusión y teledifusión.

Lección 3 Grupos de presión y cabildos

- La Primera Enmienda otorga a las personas el derecho de unirse a grupos de presión.

- Los grupos de presión los conforman personas que tienen una causa o una característica en común.

- Algunos grupos de presión privados tienen intereses económicos o comerciales en común; otros se preocupan por un asunto en particular.

- Los grupos de presión públicos trabajan para beneficiar a grandes segmentos de la sociedad.

- Algunos grupos de presión tratan de influir en las decisiones de los líderes del gobierno apoyando a determinados candidatos. Muchos conforman comités de acción política (en inglés, PAC) con el fin de recaudar dinero para los candidatos a quienes respaldan.

- Otros grupos de presión tratan de afectar las políticas públicas llevando casos ante los tribunales o haciendo cabildeo entre los legisladores.

- Los grupos de presión se comunican con el público para moldear la opinión pública. Aunque pueden ofrecer información útil, los ciudadanos deben estar conscientes de que esta información por lo general es parcializada.

- Las leyes federal, estatal y local regulan los grupos de presión y los cabilderos. Las regulaciones incluyen límites a los aportes a las campañas, divulgación obligatoria y un tiempo de espera antes de que los legisladores se puedan convertir en cabilderos.
Lesson 1 Forming Public Opinion

ESSENTIAL QUESTION
• How do citizens, both individually and collectively, influence government policy?

Public Opinion

1. Identifying As you read the text, complete the graphic organizer by listing factors that may influence a person’s opinion on an issue or candidate.
Directions: Match the content vocabulary words to their definitions by writing the letter of the definition next to the word.

1. pollster
2. leak
3. watchdog
4. libel
5. malice
6. shield law
7. nonpartisan
8. lobbyist
9. mass media
10. prior restraint
11. public opinion
12. public-interest group
13. public agenda

A. written lies about a person
B. not tied to party politics or bias
C. release of secret government information to the media
D. representative who contacts lawmakers to influence their policy making
E. law that protects a reporter from revealing sources
F. evil intent
G. media organization that exposes illegal practices or waste
H. someone who conducts opinion polls
I. issues considered most significant by government officials
J. organization supporting causes that affect lives of Americans in general
K. mechanism of communication, such as television and radio
L. ideas and attitudes people hold about political issues
M. the act of stopping information from being known by blocking it from being published
Direction: Fill in the blanks with the academic vocabulary word that fits the definition.

| gender | guarantee | random | regulatory | acknowledge | biased |

1. to admit
2. male or female
3. describing an agency that governs
4. to promise
5. by chance
6. favoring one view
C. Combined Vocabulary Reinforcement

Directions: Fill in the blanks with the correct academic or content vocabulary word or term. You may need to change the form of the word to fit the sentence.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>acknowledge</th>
<th>public opinion</th>
<th>public opinion poll</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>public agenda</td>
<td>lobbyist</td>
<td>public-interest group</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>guarantee</td>
<td>pollster</td>
<td>mass media</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>interest group</td>
<td>prior restraint</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

1. We Care! is a(n) _______________ that supports the rights of people with disabilities. In order to sway _______________ , We Care! runs ads on television and in other _______________. In addition, We Care! has _______________, who contact lawmakers and government officials to influence policy decisions.

2. In a _______________, We Care! asked citizens about Senator Bill Smith’s plan to make parks more accessible to people with disabilities. The information that our _______________ gathered shows that 49 percent of Americans support Senator Smith’s _______________. The group’s members _______________ that they do not yet have a majority, but they are optimistic that this will change.

3. One reason that _______________ are effective in this country is the constitutional _______________ that allows them to publish information without _______________.

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2. **Comparing** Complete the chart below to show how interest groups and different types of mass media work to shape public opinion.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Shaping Public Opinion</th>
<th>Mass Media</th>
<th>Interest Groups</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Mass Media</strong></td>
<td>- Mass media include TV, radio, Internet, newspapers, magazines, books, recordings, movies; they promote ideas through each medium.</td>
<td>- Interest groups are made up of people who share an opinion; they work together to promote their ideas.</td>
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Guided Reading

Public Opinion and Government

3. **Describing** Use the graphic organizer below to describe the three features of public opinion.

   ![Diagram of public opinion features]

   - **Direction:**
   - **Intensity:**
   - **Stability:**

**Public Opinion Polls**

4. **Summarizing** Describe how pollsters might go about choosing people to answer their surveys.

   ____________________________
   ____________________________
   ____________________________

5. **Defining** What are push polls, and why are they criticized by responsible scientific pollsters?

   ____________________________
   ____________________________
   ____________________________

   ____________________________
   ____________________________
   ____________________________
6. **Evaluating** As you read the text, use the chart below to note the pros and cons of public opinion polls.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Public Opinion Polls</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Pros</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Cons</strong></td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Lesson 2 The Mass Media

ESSENTIAL QUESTION
• How do citizens, both individually and collectively, influence government policy?

The Influence of the Media

1. **Explaining** Fill in the flowchart to show how private media businesses can influence the public agenda.

   The media cover issues based on what will attract the most
   or

   A larger media audience earns more
   from advertisers for the media.

   The public becomes more
   about the issues the media covers most.

   The public expects the government to put the issues on the

2. **Generalizing** Explain the connection, if any, between the way candidates are covered in the media and who decides to run for office.

3. **Connecting** As you read the text, complete the web diagram to show how leaked stories affect politicians and journalists.

   [Diagram showing Politicians and Reporters connected by Leaked Stories]

   [Blank spaces for filling in the diagrams]
Guided Reading
Public Opinion and Government

4. **Inferring** How does the media’s role as a government watchdog benefit the media, the public, and the government?

5. **Identifying** Why does the government classify some information as secret?

**Protecting the Press**

6. **Organizing** As you read the text, complete the chart on the protections, restrictions, and regulations of the mass media.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Freedom of the Press</strong></th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Protections</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• The First Amendment says that ____________ ____________ ____________ ____________.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• The First Amendment protects against <strong>prior restraint</strong>, meaning ____________ ____________ ____________ ____________.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Some states have ____________ laws that protect the press from having to reveal its sources of information.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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Lesson 3 Interest Groups and Lobbying

ESSENTIAL QUESTION
- How do citizens, both individually and collectively, influence government policy?

Interest Groups
1. Applying Use what you know about the First Amendment to explain how it affects interest groups.

   
   
   

2. Identifying As you read the text, complete the web diagram to show the types of interest groups that are concerned with business and labor issues.

   Business and Labor Groups
   
   Type: Act for
   Example:
   
   Type: Focus on
   Example:
   
   Type: Represent
   Example:
3. **Compare and Contrast**: As you read the text, fill in the Venn diagram to compare and contrast public and private interest groups. Describe the goal of each type of group, and give a specific example. At the intersection of the ovals, identify the shared main goal of interest groups.

- **Private-Interest Groups**
  - **Goal**: To promote
  - **Example**:

- **Public-Interest Groups**
  - **Goal**: To support
  - **Example**:

- **Both types influence**

4. **Summarizing** Interest groups have different ways of influencing public policy. Many interest groups use lobbyists. As you read the text, complete the diagram by listing the ways lobbyists work to influence public policy.