American Political Parties and Elections: A Very Short Introduction
L. Sandy Maisel

American Political Parties and Elections: A Very Short Introduction examines the electoral process in the United States and explains why it is widely misunderstood. Why is participation in elections so much lower in the United States than in other mature democracies? What role do the political parties play in the electoral process? And why do unregulated groups such as 527 advocacy organizations have as much, if not more, influence than candidates' campaign organizations? This VSI examines these and other issues to provide an insider's view of how the system actually works and why there remain only two main political parties, despite the fact that many citizens claim allegiance to neither and think badly of both.

American Politics: A Very Short Introduction
Richard M. Valelly

American Politics: A Very Short Introduction introduces the vital elements of American politics. Using an historical-institutional approach, it explains how the American political system is, and always has been, a work in progress — one unfolding within, and also constantly updating, an eighteenth-century constitutional framework. It explores the issue of parties and polarization and surveys the basic institutions: the Presidency, Congress, the judicial branch, the unelected bureaucracy of the independent agencies, and state and local governments. It also deals with political communication, public opinion, voting and the boundaries of the electorate, and the politics of government steering of the economy.

The American Presidency: A Very Short Introduction
Charles O. Jones

The American Presidency: A Very Short Introduction
The Founding Fathers were dedicated to the project of creating an American government both functional and incapable of devolving into tyranny. To do this, they intentionally decentralized decision making among the legislative, executive, and judiciary branches. The American Presidency: A Very Short Introduction delves into the constitutional roots of the American presidency to show how presidents face the challenges of governing within a system of separation of powers. It reviews crucial themes, including democratization of presidential elections, transitioning into and organizing a presidency, challenges in leading the permanent government, making law and executing policy, and reforming and changing the institution, before considering future prospects for the US presidency.

Lincoln: A Very Short Introduction
Allen C. Guelzo

Lincoln: A Very Short Introduction explores the problems that confronted Lincoln and liberal democracy — equality, opportunity, the rule of law, slavery, freedom, and reconciliation. These problems and Lincoln's responses to them are set against the larger world of American and trans-Atlantic liberal democracy in the nineteenth century. Lincoln is shown to be an Enlightenment figure, who struggled to create a common ground between a people focused on individual rights and a society eager to establish a certain moral, philosophical, and intellectual bedrock. Lincoln insisted that liberal democracy had a higher purpose, which was the realization of a morally right political order.

Gil Troy

Nearly two decades after that 1989 speech, debate continues to rage over just how revolutionary those Reagan years were. The Reagan Revolution: A Very Short Introduction identifies and tackles some of the controversies and historical mysteries that continue to swirl around Reagan and his legacy, while providing an illuminating look at some of the era's defining personalities, ideas, and accomplishments. Love him or hate him, Ronald Reagan remains the most influential president since Franklin D. Roosevelt, and one of the most controversial. This VSI situates the reception of Reagan's actions within the contemporary liberal and conservative political scene.