

# COLOR IN POLITICS

Colors are used to represent a political stance, a political ideology or — in a telling use of terminology — a position on the political spectrum. While previously competing factions wore colors based on coats of arms or even, in Ancient Rome, racing colors, many colors have now become associated with ideology rather than personality.



Red has historically been associated with socialism or communism.



The color green is often linked to environmentalism and Green parties on one hand, and Islamic parties on the other hand.

Conservative parties are often associated with the color blue, though for much of the 19th century the 'blues' in France and Italy were moderate reforming conservatives, while the absolutist monarchists were whites.



Black has been associated with both anarchism and fascism. The Italian Fascists dressed in the famous 'black shirts' while the Nazi Swastika was a black emblem on a white background.

White has been linked to pacifism (the surrender flag) and to independent politicians like Martin Bell.

Yellow is often used for liberalism, as in Yellow Dog Democrats or the UK Liberal Democrats.

## Exceptions

Political parties vary the shades of their colors depending on the situations. Most U.S. politicians use red, white and blue together. In the UK, the Labor Party has recently used bold red with yellow lettering in areas of majority Labor support but also more purple tones in marginal Conservative areas.



In Australia the Australian Labor Party will typically use red, and the Liberal Party of Australia typically blue. The Australian Greens use green, while a green-and-gold combination is used both by the National Party of Australia and the Australian Democrats.



In Belgium the Liberal Democrats (VLD and MR) are blue and the Christian Democrats (CD&V and CDH) are orange.



In Canada, the official color for the New Democratic Party is orange, while the Liberal Party of Canada uses red, the Conservative Party of Canada uses blue, and the Bloc Québécois uses light blue.



In Germany, the Social Democrats are traditionally branded red while the conservative Christian Democrats are black. The Liberal party is yellow, and the Greens are unsurprisingly green.



In the Netherlands, conservative Liberals (VVD) are blue, Liberal Democrats (D66) use green as well as the Christian Democrats.



In Northern Ireland, the Protestant parties in the Northern Ireland Assembly are called the "orange block" and the Catholic parties are the "green block".

In Taiwan, the New Party uses yellow as its party color though its policies are conservative; Democratic Progressive Party uses green though its international alignment is with the Liberal International and not the Green parties.

In the UK (excluding Northern Ireland), where electoral rosettes are commonly worn for campaigns, the Conservatives uses dark blue; Labor, red; and the Liberal Democrats, yellow.



With many other smaller parties choosing their own color schemes, Independents unsurprisingly use white. Notably the single issue UK Independence Party has chosen to use the non-aligned color purple with yellow.

In the United States there is no official association between political parties and specific colors. The two major political parties use the national colors — red, white, and blue — to show their patriotism. The only common situation in which it has been necessary to assign a single color to a party has been in the production of political maps in graphical displays of election results. In such cases, there has historically been no consistent association of particular parties with particular colors. In the weeks following the 2000 election, however, there arose the terminology of blue states and red states, in which the Republican Party was associated with red and the Democratic Party with blue. Political observers subsequently latched on to this association, which resulted from the use of red for Republican victories and blue for Democratic victories on the display map of a television network. This association has certainly not been consistently applied in the past: during previous presidential elections, about half of the television networks used the opposite association. It remains to be seen whether the “red state/blue state” terminology will solidify in the 2004 presidential year and beyond. However, various ribbons are worn in the United States to support or promote awareness of a social cause.



There is some historical use of blue for Democrats and red for Republicans — in the late 19th century and early 20th century, Texas county election boards used color coding to help Spanish speakers and illiterates identify the parties. However, this system was not applied consistently in Texas and was not picked up on a national level.

Nevertheless, since the 2000 election the news media have tended to use red for Republicans and blue for Democrats, especially as it relates the electoral majority in each state, informally calling them the Red states and Blue states. The color green is often used for the Green Party, and the color yellow is often used for the Libertarian Party.

### List of colors associated with different parties in various countries

#### United Kingdom

- Conservative Party
- Co-operative Party (does not campaign separately from Labor)
- Green Party of England and Wales
- Plaid Cymru
- Labor Party
- Liberal Democrats
- Scottish National Party
- UK Independence Party

#### United States

- Democratic Party  
(see above for a discussion of “blue states” and “red states” in U.S. presidential elections)
- Republican Party:
- Green Party:
- Black Panther Party: