The US midterm elections



<u>DOC 1</u> – Watch this video from CNN-18. Pick up key words and create an infographic to explain how the mid-terms work. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bcBTqfUieKo

Listen and read for more information …
https://theconversation.com/etats-unis-tout-comprendre-aux-midterms-284686

https://www.letemps.ch/videos/actualite/en-video-midterms-comment-le-charcutage-electoral-peut-changer-le-resultat

https://www.courrierinternational.com/explainer/tout-s-explique-les-midterms-americaines-du-3-novembre-comment-ca-marche_247905_1

<u>DOC 2</u> - Groupwork : each group reads a paragraph and reformulates its information, then report to the class. Focus on <u>numbers</u> and <u>key words</u>: underline 3–5 keywords and identify at least two important figures in your paragraph before presenting your recap to the class.

What are the US midterms? A simple guide – BBC News, James FitzGerald – 6th October 2026

The US midterm elections, when voters take part in a ballot that could have a major impact on the rest of Donald Trump's presidency, will take place on Tuesday November 3rd, 2026.

1.What are the midterms?
On 3 November, Americans will choose members of Congress, which is made up of two parts - the House of Representatives and the Senate. Elections take place every two years, and when they happen in the middle of the president's four-year term of office, they are called the midterms.
A key task of Congress is to create and pass federal laws - laws that apply nationwide. The outcome of the midterms will decide which political party - Trump's Republicans or opposition Democrats - controls Congress and how easy it is for the president to carry out his plans. The results are also seen as a measure of how happy people in the US are with the president's performance so far.
2.Who is being elected?
All 435 members of the House - the lower chamber of Congress - will be elected. They serve fixed terms of two years. The House is commonly where proposed laws are introduced and debated. Meanwhile, 35 of 100 seats in the Senate, the upper chamber, will also be up for grabs. Senators serve six-year terms. Among other jobs, they approve or block proposed laws that have been received from the House.
On the same day, voters across much of the US will also choose state-level politicians. Governor contests in California, Florida, Georgia and Michigan will be among the most closely watched.
3.What are the key issues?
The US economy is on the minds of many voters struggling with the price of fuel, groceries, housing and healthcare. Inflation remains above the level targeted by the US Federal Reserve, partly down to the war that the US and Israel started with Iran in February. Democrats argue Trump's programme of trade tariffs has also pushed up prices for Americans.
Immigration is another key issue. Republicans say Trump has delivered on a major campaign pledge in 2024 by tightening the border and launching a widespread - and often controversial - crackdown on illegal immigration.
Concerns over AI have grown in urgency in recent weeks. Senior politicians from both parties have agreed on the need to regulate it - setting themselves in opposition to Trump, who has rejected the idea of laws to control development of the technology.

4.What is at stake?

Congress is one of the three branches of government, alongside the presidency and the judiciary. Control of it matters for the shaping of legislation. Both the House and Senate are currently held by the Republican Party. But its majority is a slender one. They have 218 seats in the House, which is the minimum number needed to control it, plus one independent who votes with them.

In the Senate, they have 53 seats. The upper chamber will only change hands if the Democrats win 51 seats, which would overcome a tie-breaking vote by the vice-president - currently a Republican - in the event of both sides getting 50. If opposition Democrats win back control of at least one chamber, they will gain power to bring their own laws to the floor.

5.Who might win?

Voters have tended to "punish" the party of the president in the past and vote against them. Recent polling shows a low approval rating for the president. He began his second term as president with an approval rating of just over 50%, according to polling resource website Silver Bulletin, but in early October it was sitting at about 37%. Meanwhile 61% disapproved of him.

But not all seats in each chamber are competitive. Some are a safe bet for Republicans or Democrats.

The BBC's US partner CBS News has identified ten Senate races to watch, in states like Iowa and New Hampshire, and 42 House races, in states like Arizona and Ohio.

The vote is more unpredictable this year because of a battle between the two parties over the way voting districts in the House of Representatives are drawn. Republicans tried to gain an advantage by creating more favourable electoral maps in certain states and Democrats followed suit.

6.What does it mean for Trump?

If the Democrats win either the House or the Senate then Trump will find it difficult to get any laws through Congress. So his domestic plans could be frustrated, although he has found ways to exercise power without his wider party. Democratic control of either chamber would also mean they could use committees to investigate aspects of the Trump presidency. Corruption allegations, the new White House ballroom and ICE tactics could be subject to scrutiny. There is also a debate within the Democratic Party about whether to impeach Trump, which means to bring charges in Congress that will form the basis for a political, not criminal, trial.

If the Republican Party stays in control of Congress, Trump will be able to keep going with his plans for the remainder of his time in office.

7.What does it mean for the 2028 election?

The president's name is not on the ballot during the midterm elections, though Trump has urged Republicans to pretend that it is by voting for him as an endorsement of his actions so far.

Whichever way the results fall, commentators are likely to use them to make arguments about how voters feel about the direction of the country under Trump's leadership.

Trump cannot run to be president a third time. After the midterms, we can expect speculation to start building about who might be his successor as the Republican presidential nominee for 2028 - and who might compete against that person for the Democrats.

<u>DOC 3 - GROUPWORK</u> - How immigration is molding the US midterms: 'Trump has gone too far'

Maanvi Singh – The Guardian - 12 October 2026

<u>GROUP 1</u> – create a graph with the issues around President Trump's immigration policies in different states. Don't forget to distinguish between economic consequences and political consequences.

If there is one campaign promise that Donald Trump has kept, it is his pledge to deliver "mass deportations". Two years later, voters are living uneasily with the consequences. Trump himself has called the midterm elections this November – which will decide which party controls each house of Congress –

a referendum on his presidency. In many ways, they will also serve as a referendum of his hardline anti-immigration policies, and the many ways they have reshaped Americans' daily lives.



In Florida, restaurant and hotel owners have said that ICE's presence is frightening away both workers and customers, and Republican congresswoman María Elvira Salazar, who is running for re-election, aired a Spanish-language ad breaking with the president, saying his immigration crackdown had "betrayed" Hispanic voters in her district. In Maine, the fatal ICE shooting of a 25-year-old asylum seeker has cast a pall over the campaign to re-elect the Republican senator Susan Collins, who supported Trump's plans to supercharge immigration enforcement. In Kansas, cattle ranchers said ICE operations were having "a massive chilling effect on the legal, documented, skilled workers that put beef on the table" and warned that meat prices would spike as a result. At the same time, the Republican senator Roger Marshall – who had once vehemently backed Trump's immigration agenda – started to grow uneasy in a tightening re-election race, and softened his hardline rhetoric. And in Texas, which has seen a slew of violent ICE arrests including a fatal shooting in July and a non-fatal shooting in September, the Democratic Senate candidate James Talarico appears to be gaining momentum against the state's Trump-backed attorney general, Ken Paxton, with a message that Trump's ICE has gone too far.

Several national polls have shown voters' growing distaste for the Trump administration's militarized immigration enforcement operations. A Reuters/Ipsos poll released on 21 September found that only 36% of voters approved of Trump's handling of immigration. According to Pew research, half of Americans see the administration's immigration tactics as too aggressive.

In Texas, a recent poll by the New York Times and Siena University found voters there evenly split on which Senate candidate they trusted more to handle immigration – a striking shift in a state that hasn't elected a Democratic senator in almost 40 years.

And while Latino voters, who swung toward Trump in 2024, still rank the economy as a top issue, a strong majority are viscerally opposed to the president's immigration agenda. An October NBC News/Telemundo poll of registered Latino voters found that two-thirds believe his enforcement policies have gone "too far". The issue is deeply felt, with more than one in four saying they know someone who had been deported or detained by ICE since Trump's second term began, and 17% saying that they or someone close to them had considered not voting in person this year because of concerns about ICE.

<u>GROUP 2</u> – Pick out the two consequences of the new immigration policies which are disturbing American citizens. Use precise vocabulary such as labour shortages, rising living costs, community disruption, workforce dependency and public backlash.

After the killing of two US citizens during immigration raids in Minneapolis sparked massive public backlash, the Trump administration signalled it would take a softer approach, and the new homeland security secretary, Markwayne Mullin, said his goal would be to keep ICE out of the news headlines.

But immigration agents are still shooting people. And with enforcement operations across the US gaining momentum, and immigration arrests at a record high, voters are continuing to see a supercharged ICE at work. "It does cause quite a disruption in the community," Scott Fischer, the Republican chair in Ford county, Kansas, told Politico. "We don't want our community disrupted."

Perhaps even more pertinently, voters – and the politicians vying for their support – are coming to the realization that even if immigration itself doesn't rank in surveys as a top issue, Trump's immigration policies have affected every other issue that matters to them. Take, for instance, the cost of living – a consistently top-ranking issue for voters in midterm polls. Trump's immigration raids, and his policies stripping legal work permits from thousands of workers, are causing disruptions not just in the cattle industry, but also across agriculture, food service, hospitality and construction.

"So many industry segments are reliant on immigrants, so it's an issue across the economy," said Matt Teagarden, CEO of the Kansas Livestock Association. Dairy producers and ranchers have long lobbied the

government to create more legal pathways for the immigrant workers who staff their enterprises. But now, the US cattle herd has shrunk to its lowest numbers in 75 years – and ranchers are struggling to keep up with consumer demand, Teagarden said, adding: “But they are not able to expand without the workforce.”

<u>GROUP 3</u> – Pick out the different sectors of the new immigration policies which are disturbing American citizens. Use precise vocabulary such as labour shortages, rising living costs, community disruption, workforce dependency and public backlash.

Meanwhile, about two-thirds of farm workers are non-citizen immigrants. As the administration targets these workers, food producers could struggle to keep up operations, and prices are expected to increase steeply, according to a study by the thinktank Fwd.us.

Many of the staff at chef Carlos Raba’s restaurant Clavel in Baltimore are Salvadorians who have lived and worked in the US for years while holding temporary protected status (TPS). Trump has already revoked TPS for thousands of Haitians and Syrians, and if the administration also revokes TPS protections for Salvadorians – as it is imminently expected to do – Raba could lose 80% of his staff, he said at a congressional hearing. “We could not operate the way that we operate today if they are all gone,” he said. “I think about the cooks, dishwashers, farmers, bakers, entrepreneurs that I work with,” he said. “They are my co-workers, my friends and my community.”

The owner of a burger restaurant not far from Trump’s Mar-a-Lago golf course said the president’s policies and immigration raids had affected not only workers but also customers, who are scared to come out and eat due to the constant presence of ICE officers. “Our sales have dropped 70%. We spend hours empty,” said Katia Rios of Pipo Burgers.

The same applies for healthcare, a top issue especially for rural voters, according to a KFF-AP poll. According to the Association of American Medical Colleges, a non-profit organization representing physicians in North America, nearly one in four doctors in the US was trained abroad – and these immigrant physicians have been key to addressing medical staff shortages especially in rural areas, where few American doctors want to move.

Senior living and eldercare facilities – which are also heavily staffed with immigrant caregivers – have also been left in the lurch. Of the 330,000 Haitian TPS holders who suddenly lost their legal status this summer, about 13,000 work daily as nursing assistants, caring for 65,000 patients, according to the Boston Globe.

Even voters who aren’t cattle ranchers or restaurateurs, who might not clearly see the impacts of immigration policies on their economic reality, are nonetheless feeling the effects, said Grossman, of Michigan State University.

“Regardless of whether people connect the dots between the president’s policies and outcomes, if those policies have real effects, then that’s another channel by which people tend to move against the party in power,” he said.

