



Democrats 101 Book Discussion Guide

This is a guide for a discussion group for *Democrats 101: A Primer For Us* by J.M. Purvis: <https://www.plainwordspress.com/>.

Promotion - *Democrats 101*

Begin by getting copies of *Democrats 101* to your friends or organizations. You can purchase bulk orders of *Democrats 101*: <https://www.plainwordspress.com/store>. Notify people of the date at least one month early.

Set Ground Rules

- Determine the number of sessions and the time length of each session. We have had *Democrats 101* book discussions from single, 1-hour sessions to four-part 1 ½-hour sessions.
- Consider a round-table format where a facilitator asks a question and gives every person 1-2 minutes to respond. As the facilitator, don't lecture on the book; instead let people come to conclusions on their own. If possible, call on people who haven't spoken.

Prepare a List of Questions

For a single session, 1-hour event you will need 2 or 3 questions, but prepare 4-6 so you have the flexibility to move with the discussion. Here are examples to consider:

- Did *Democrats 101* help you think about why you are a Democrat?
- Does the future of the Democratic Party require a creed or a shared set of values? Would it help Democrats win elections?
- What should be in a Democratic Creed?

Here is a list of additional questions to consider: <https://www.plainwordspress.com/book-clubs>.

Read the Book

Ideally, everyone should read the book, but people are busy. Provide an option for people who have not completed the book to encourage people to attend. Ask them to read The Democratic Creed (pages 127-130) <https://www.plainwordspress.com/the-creed>, and then the opening chapter 'The Question' (pages 11-18) <https://www.plainwordspress.com/opening-chapter>. These 12 pages should provide enough information for anyone to participate.

Start the Book Discussion with "House Rules"

- Be mindful of the time – speak briefly and get to the point.
- Feel free to speak up, but leave room for others to speak.
- Keep to the subject (*Democrats 101*) that everyone came to discuss.
- Be respectful, honest, positive, and optimistic.

The Democratic Creed

Getting everyone familiar with the Democratic Creed is a critical part of these discussions, and it's the best place to start. An excellent idea is to have 6 different individuals each read one of the 6 bullet points aloud to the group. Hearing the Democratic Creed read aloud often has a strong emotional effect <https://www.plainwordspress.com/the-creed>.

Discussion and Disagreement: As the facilitator, your task is to engage group members and keep the conversation going more than to teach or lead. Be ready for people to say things you disagree with but (as facilitator) don't respond. Instead, call on others in the group to respond by asking someone else, "What do you think about Laura's point? Do you agree?"



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The Runaway Discussion: It's difficult to corral someone who dominates the discussion and uses up the time, especially if that person goes off point. As a facilitator, you must gently interrupt without embarrassing that person when necessary to stay on track and on time. An easy way is for you, as the facilitator, to use one of your prepared questions or repeat the current question to stop an off-point monologue and set the group back on track.

Watch the Clock: Set a timer or ask someone to let you and the group know when you are 5 minutes from the end of the session so you can bring the discussion to a graceful finish and talk about Next Steps.

Next Steps for Readers of *Democrats 101*: Use the last 5 minutes to provide calls to action to share the news about *Democrats 101*:

- Follow us on Twitter, Facebook, Instagram (see handles below).
- Post on social media about this book discussion or *Democrats 101*. Tag us in all posts.
- Tell others about *Democrats 101* and the Democratic Creed - let them borrow your book or show them where to buy one.
- Print the *Democrats 101* Creed, available as a double-sided half page, and pass out to friends or at Democratic events.
- Organize discussion groups among colleagues, friends, or group members. Let people know we have the **Democrats 101 Book Discussion Guide** available to help anyone who wants to hold a book discussion.
- Continue the discussion in email, chat rooms, social media, or coffee meetups.
- Turn the ideas of *Democrats 101* into Letters to the Editor or communications to local Democratic Party officials.
- Use the ideas of *Democrats 101* as the basis for messaging in your organizations or when you volunteer for candidates.

Resources

- **Democrats 101 Bulk Orders:** <https://www.plainwordspress.com/store>
- **Printable *Democrats 101* Creed:** TBA
- ***Democrats 101* Suggested Questions:** <https://www.plainwordspress.com/book-clubs>
- **The Democratic Creed:** <https://www.plainwordspress.com/the-creed>
- ***Democrats 101* Opening Chapter 'The Question':** <https://www.plainwordspress.com/opening-chapter>
- **Facebook:** <https://www.facebook.com/Democrats101>
- **Twitter:** @PlainWordsPress
- **Instagram:** <https://www.instagram.com/democrats101/>