

CIVIC ENGAGEMENT ***THE ELECTORAL COLLEGE***

Lynne M. Middleton, State 4-H Curriculum Specialist, State 4-H Office, UT Extension



The Electoral College

Lesson 3 of Civic Engagement Program

Skill Level

Intermediate (6th-8th grades)

Educational Standards

Supported

Politics C1.12

Citizenship Participation GC.31

Learner Outcomes

The learner will be able to:

- Define 'democracy'
- Demonstrate what the popular vote is
- Demonstrate how the electoral college works

Tag(s)

4-H Citizenship

Time Needed

30-45 minutes

Materials Needed

Lesson 3 PowerPoint

LCD Projector/Screen

Computer

Worksheet

Blue state pieces

Red state pieces

Yellow state pieces

Chalkboard or White board

Expo marker

Author

Lynne M. Middleton, State 4-H Curriculum Specialist,
State 4-H Office, UT Extension

Introduction to Content

This lesson will focus on voting, and the popular vote versus the Electoral College. Students will learn what the Electoral College is, how it works and the pros and cons of it.

Introduction to Methodology

This lesson includes a worksheet, a mock election and a simulation of the Electoral College.

Terms/Concepts

Popular Vote – the actual number of the people who cast a vote

Electoral College – the process of electing a president; the number of electoral votes each state has to be counted



Setting the Stage/Opening Question

Begin PowerPoint presentation on Slide 1.

Show the YouTube video to 1:39:

[youtube.com/watch?v=uPRBUru3_0M](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uPRBUru3_0M)

Say, "Now that we've reviewed a little bit of what you learned in Lesson 1, we are going to take a deep dive into the voting process along with exploring the popular vote and the Electoral College."

Say, "How do we conduct voting in the United States? Let's see what the video says about voting."

Continue the YouTube video. Stop the video at 4:06.

Following the video, ask students what the difference is between the presidential election and midterm elections.

Strategies to Increase Student Engagement

Don't require students to participate in the election. Some students may not feel comfortable sharing their political views with others.

If you are in a location that is politically charged, change the candidates to Mickey Mouse and Donald Duck. The candidates don't really matter as long as the students understand how the winner is chosen.

Experience

Advance to Slide 2. Go through the information on the slide with each click. At the end of the slide, ask, "What happened to the other voters?" Let the students answer. **ANSWER: The other voters did not cast their votes.**

Tell the students, "We are now going to vote on something that would affect us here at school. We are going to vote on whether or not we will have pizza available every day for lunch."

Then say, "There are _____ many people in this room. I am now going to ask for your vote. If you would like to vote to have pizza available for lunch every day at school, raise your hand." Count the votes.

Say, "Now for those of you who do not want lunch to be available at school lunch every day, raise your hand."

Write the vote on the board.

_____ FOR PIZZA @ LUNCH EVERY DAY

_____ AGAINST PIZZA @ LUNCH EVERY DAY

Announce the vote and explain that we go with a majority vote.

Say, "This is an example of a popular vote."

Advance to Slide 3. Distribute the student worksheet and ask students to write their name and date at the top.

Continue through slides 4, 5, 6, and 7 reading the information on the slide as the students write their answers into the worksheet blanks.

Pass out state pieces to random students in the classroom. Explain that we are going to vote on the most recent election. Say, "The candidates in today's vote are Kamala Harris and Donald Trump. When you come up to the board, if you have a blue state card, you will add your votes to Kamala Harris's column. If you have a red state card, you will add your votes to Donald Trump's column. If you have a yellow card, you are a swing state and you get to choose which person your state will cast its votes to." Ask, "Are there any questions?"

Create a chart on the chalkboard or white board that looks like this:

<u>Kamala Harris</u>	<u>Donald Trump</u>

Call up the blue states first:

Maine – They will add 4 votes to Kamala Harris's column.

Oregon – They will add 7 votes to Kamala Harris's column.

Washington – They will add 11 votes to Kamala Harris's column.

Wisconsin – They will add 12 votes to Kamala Harris's column.

This should equal 34 votes but don't write that on the board yet

Call up the red states:

Arizona – They will add 10 votes to Donald Trump's column.

Idaho – They will add 4 votes to Donald Trump's column.

Kentucky – They will add 8 votes to Donald Trump's column.

Louisiana – They will add 9 votes to Donald Trump's column.

Wyoming – They will add 3 votes to Donald Trump's column.

This should equal 34 votes but don't write that on the board yet

Then call up the swing states. Remind these students that they can cast their votes for whichever candidate their state wants:

Montana – They will add 3 votes to whichever candidate's column they choose.

Nevada – They will add 6 votes to whichever candidate's column they choose.

New Mexico – They will add 5 votes to whichever candidate's column they choose.

North Carolina – They will add 15 votes to whichever candidate's column they choose.

Ohio – They will add 20 votes to whichever candidate's column they choose.

Then count the votes for each candidate and announce the winner. Ask the students if one state's votes could have changed the outcome. **The answer is yes.** Take up the yellow swing state cards and pass them out to four other students that have not had one. Erase the last five entries from the columns and do another swing state call in order: Montana, Nevada, New Mexico, North Carolina and Ohio.

Share

Ask students to turn to a neighbor and share one thing they learned during this lesson.

Process

Ask someone to explain to the class why the electoral college was set into place. **Answer – this was a way for all of the states to have a say in the election process, as well as a way for the smaller states to have their votes counted.**

Generalize

Ask the students what changed when the second group of swing states added their votes. Why did the final count change?

Apply

Tell students, “Many of your guardians may not even understand the electoral process. I encourage you to go home today and talk with your guardian about how the process works. Even ask their opinion and see which they would prefer – the popular vote or the electoral vote.”

Notes

Supplemental Information

Educational Standards Met

The Executive Branch

GC.18 Explain the Electoral College system and compare and contrast arguments for and against it.

TIPPS ***Life Skills***

Head – Thinking

Heart – Relating, Caring

Hands – Working

Health - Being

Name: _____ **Date:** _____

The Electoral College

1. The Electoral College is not a _____, it is a _____.
2. It was established in the year _____.
3. Founding fathers thought the “_____”
should have a vote but that they would not make the best decision.
4. The only President of the United States who has been elected with all electoral votes was
_____.
5. When citizens vote, they are not electing a president directly. They are voting for a
_____, a delegate who is pledged to vote for that same candidate.
6. Electors:
Are people who are _____ active in their party.

Are chosen differently from one _____ to another.

Are not defined by the U.S. _____.
7. There are _____ electors chosen in every presidential race.
8. Each state is allocated a number of electors equal to the number of U.S. _____
plus the number of their U.S. Representatives.
9. _____ electoral votes are needed to become President.
10. Tennessee has _____ electors.
11. List one state with at least 20 electors: _____
12. List one state with only 3 electors: _____

13. "Swing States" are where the real election is _____.
14. Characteristics of "swing states" are that they have diverse: _____

15. "Swing states" tend to vote for the _____ presidential candidate.
16. Who was the most recent President elected by electoral votes without having the popular vote?

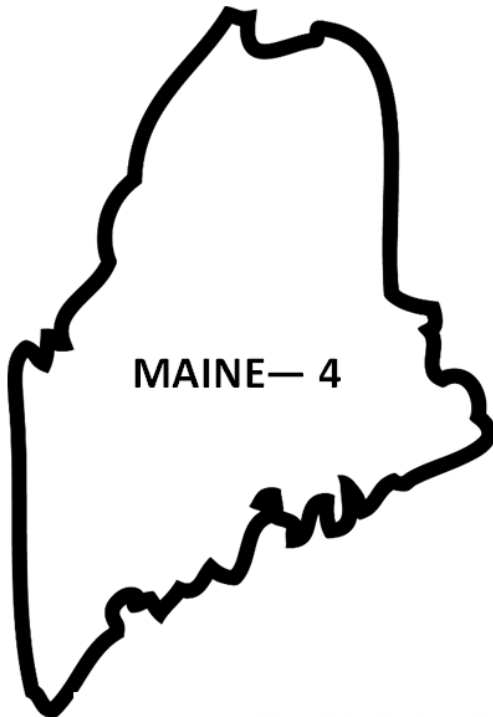
17. Pros of the Electoral College:
- ✓ Certainty of the _____
 - ✓ To protect states' _____
 - ✓ Promotes a _____-party system
 - ✓ Avoids a " _____ - _____ "
 - ✓ Helps small _____ states have a say in the election
18. Cons of the Electoral College:
- ✓ _____ states do not have as much of a say.
 - ✓ Election is focused on " _____."
 - ✓ Possibility that the winner of the _____ vote may not win.
 - ✓ "The _____ Elector" – an elector who does not vote for his/her party.
 - ✓ Too complicated and _____ voters.

Circle: After what you have learned today, are you in favor of or against the Electoral College?

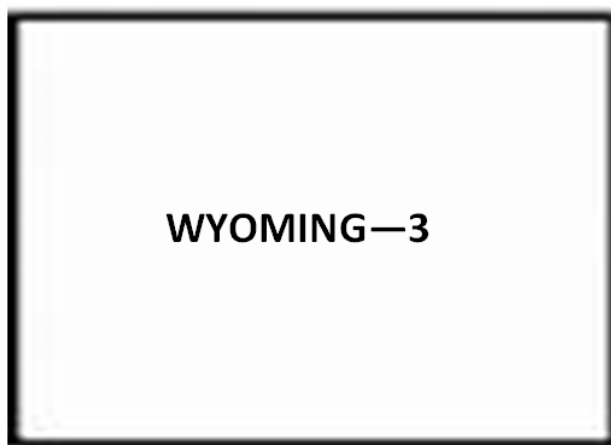
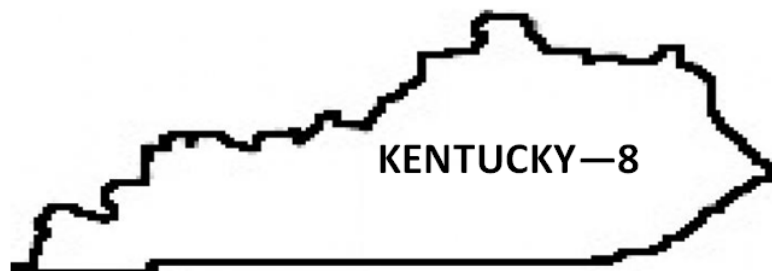
19. Name two things you learned about the electoral college today that you did not already know.
- _____
- _____



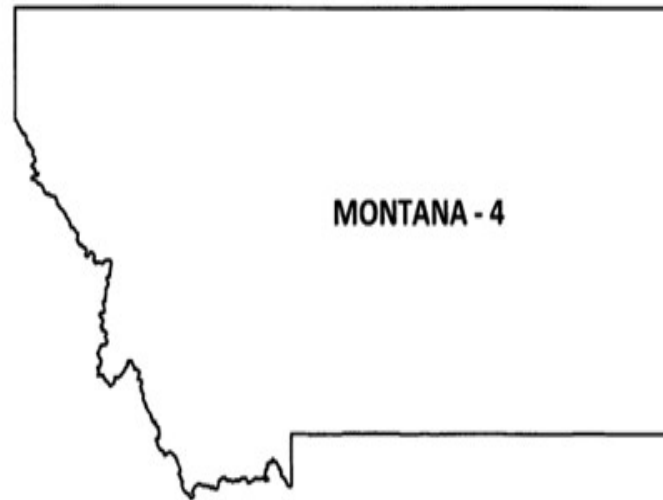
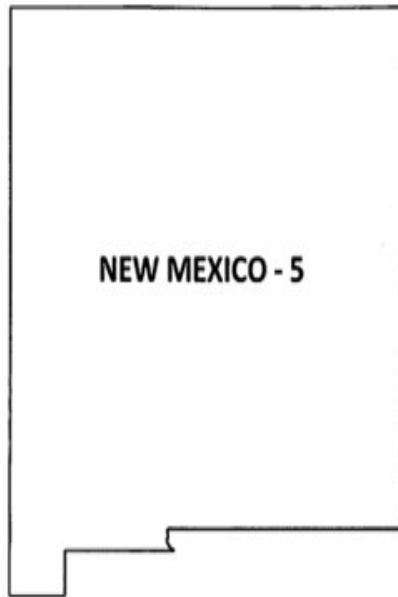
COPY THESE CUT-OUTS ON BLUE PAPER—THESE ARE DEMOCRATIC STATES.



COPY THESE CUT-OUTS ON RED PAPER—THESE ARE REPUBLICAN STATES.



COPY THESE CUT-OUTS ON YELLOW PAPER – THESE ARE SWING STATES.





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