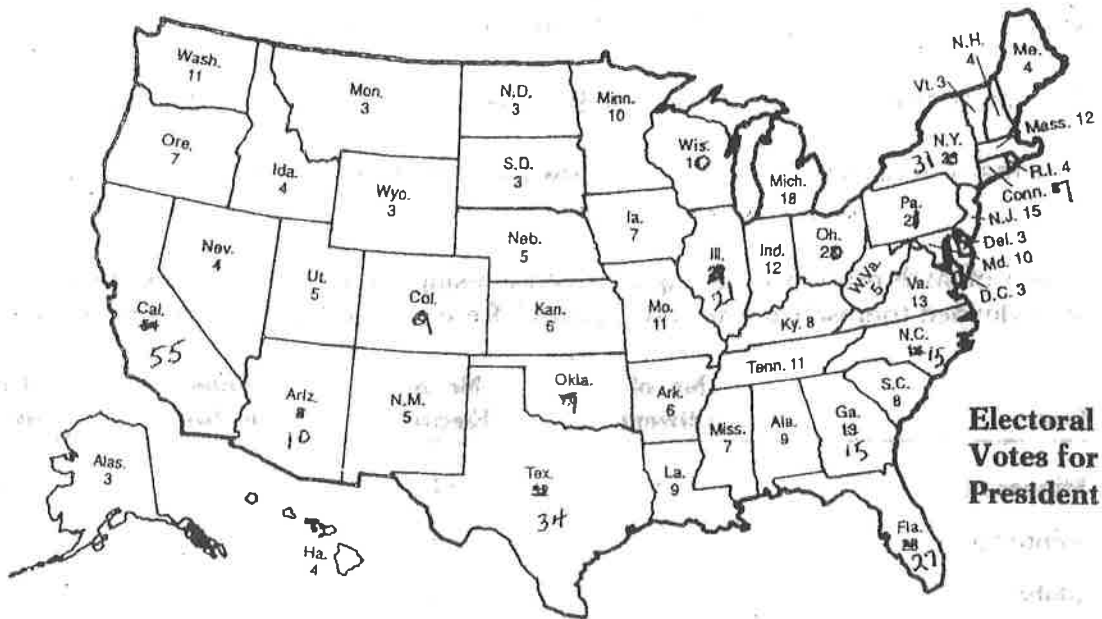


The Electoral Map



Electoral
Votes for
President



To win the Presidency, a nominee needs a majority of the electoral votes. On Election Night, you'll notice that the TV commentators keep track of the states each nominee wins. They add up the number of electoral votes that each state win represents. As soon as one of the nominees gets one more than half of the total of electoral votes, the race is over.

The nation usually knows the winner of the election on Election night or early the next morning. However, the President is not officially elected until the members of the Electoral College cast their state's votes in December and Congress counts those votes on January 6.

When George Washington was elected, there were just 13 states and only 69 electoral votes. Our nation has grown a lot since then, and today there are 538 electoral votes. But the number of electors each state has is still determined in the way that it was in Washington's day. The Constitution allows each state to have as many electoral votes as it has representatives in Congress. The number of representatives depends on the size of the state's population. Because each state has two **Senators** and at least one **Representative** in the House of

Representatives, no state has fewer than three electoral votes.

Every ten years, at the beginning of every decade, the government takes a census to determine the population of each state. If a state's population has decreased, it might lose electoral votes. If a state's population has increased, it may be given more electoral votes than it previously had. The electoral map at the top of the page was drawn up after the 1990 census was completed.

Over the years, there have been many criticisms of the Electoral College system. Some of the attempts to change it have been successful, as you saw in the previous article. But two important criticisms still remain unanswered. First, there is no guarantee that an elector who is pledged to vote for a certain candidate will actually do so. Only a few electors have switched their vote, however, and none changed the outcome of an election. The second criticism is about the winner-take-all system. A nominee can get all of a state's electoral votes by getting just one more popular vote than the opponent. Because of the system, three nominees have been elected President even though their opponents received more popular votes nationally.

Name _____

1. How many electoral votes does a nominee need in order to win the Presidency?

2. What are the five states with the highest numbers of electoral votes?

What is the total number of electoral votes of these five states? _____

3. How many electoral votes does your state have? _____

How many Senators? _____ How many Representatives? _____

4. A class of sixth graders is having an election using the Electoral College system. They have divided themselves into four "states." Refer to the chart to answer the questions.

State	No. of Citizens	No. of Electors	Votes for Bob	Votes for Sue
Minnesota	15	10	7	8
Kentucky	9	6	4	5
Idaho	6	4	5	1
Alaska	3	3	2	1

a. Why does Minnesota get more electoral votes than Idaho? _____

b. How many popular votes did Sue win? _____

c. How many electoral votes does she get? _____

d. How many popular votes did Bob win? _____

e. How many electoral votes does Bob get? _____

f. Who won the election? _____

*5. In your opinion, is the Electoral College a good way to elect a President?
Explain your answer on a separate sheet of paper.

**6. Which three Presidents were elected by the Electoral College even though they had fewer popular votes than their opponents?

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ELECTORAL COLLEGE ACTIVITY

Directions: The electoral college activity simulates a mock presidential election. The activity requires two participants or two teams, one die, an electoral college map of the U.S., and a tally sheet per game. Once the activity begins, be sure to keep accurate records. These records will be used at the end of the activity.

How to Play:

1. The object of the activity is to capture as many electoral votes as possible, thus winning a presidential election. In order to win the election, a participant or team must capture at least 270 electoral college votes.
2. Write both participants' or teams' name on the two spaces provided on the tally sheet.
3. Roll the die to see who goes first.
4. The winner of the first roll selects a state in which s/he/they wish to campaign. Record this state on the tally sheet.
5. Once a state has been selected, both players or teams roll the die. The numbers that are rolled should be recorded on the tally sheet. These numbers represent the popular vote.
6. The person or team who rolls the higher number wins all of the electoral college votes from that state. These votes should then be recorded on the tally sheet.
7. The winner of the previous state then selects the next state in which s/he/they wish to campaign. Steps 4 and 5 are then repeated until all the 50 states electoral college votes have been decided.
8. In the event of a tie during the die roll, each player or team will re-roll until the tie is broken. The student or team that wins the re-roll(s) captures all of the electoral votes from that state.
9. Once all 538 of the electoral college votes have been decided, add up the columns on the tally sheet. These totals should then be recorded on the tally sheet.
10. The person or team with at least 270 electoral college votes wins the presidential election.

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ELECTORAL COLLEGE ACTIVITY

Name: _____ Name: _____

State	Electoral Votes	Number Rolled	Electoral Votes	Number Rolled
1.				
2.				
3.				
4.				
5.				
6.				
7.				
8.				
9.				
10.				
11.				
12.				
13.				
14.				
15.				
16.				
17.				
18.				
18.				
19.				
20.				
21.				
22.				
23.				
24.				
25.				

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ELECTORAL COLLEGE ACTIVITY

State	Electoral Votes	Number Rolled	Electoral Votes	Number Rolled
26.				
27.				
28.				
29.				
30.				
31.				
32.				
33.				
34.				
35.				
36.				
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46.				
47.				
48.				
49.				
50.				
51.				
TOTALS				

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ELECTORAL COLLEGE ACTIVITY

Directions: Using the tally sheet from the Electoral College Activity, answer the following questions in the spaces provided. Use the back of the sheet if necessary.

1. What were the first five states selected at the start of the activity?
2. Why were these states selected first?
3. How might the number of electoral votes that each state has impact a real presidential campaign?
4. Was the popular vote (die total) as close as the electoral college vote?
5. Was the winner of the popular vote also the winner of the electoral college vote?
6. Did the electoral vote accurately reflect the popular vote?
7. What would be the lowest number of states that a candidate would need to win in order to become President?
8. Does the electoral college process represent the phrase "We the people..."? Explain your answer.