

Does My Vote Count?

Electoral College

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Grade Level	9th – 12th Grade	**Time Frame**	3-4 class period(s)
Subject	Social Studies	**Duration**	150 minutes
Course	U.S. Government		

Essential Question

Does my vote count? How does the Electoral College affect voting in the US?

Summary

Students will understand how the Electoral College works in presidential elections and identify its benefits and challenges.

Snapshot

Engage

Students examine the popular vote between George W. Bush and Al Gore in the 2000 Presidential election. Students respond to the question, "Why did Al Gore lose?" Students will answer based upon the picture and/or any prior knowledge.

Explore

Students investigate further, why Al Gore lost, as an introduction to the Electoral College process. Students identify the electoral votes in the 2000 presidential election to understand how Bush won.

Explain

Students then read a variety of information about the Electoral College in more detail. Students will choose five facts from the information they read. They will meet with other students who read the same handout and both revise and expand their list. Student groups will present their facts to the class. The class will take notes using a graphic organizer.

Extend

The teacher has two options for the Extend activity. Choice one is for students to act as campaign managers for a Democratic or Republican presidential candidate. Representing their candidate, they map out a campaign strategy that will garner the most electoral college votes for their candidate. Another choice is for students to take a stand as to whether the electoral college is still the best choice for a presidential election or should the US, through a Constitutional amendment, opt for the popular vote of the majority.

Evaluate

The graphic organizer and the writing assignments in the extension section will serve as assessments.

Standards

Oklahoma Academic Standards (Social Studies: United States Government (9th through 12th grade))

USG.4.2A: Identify the constitutional qualifications for holding public office and the terms of office, including the composition of Congress, the Supreme Court, and the executive branch.
USG.5.5: Explain the steps of the electoral process including the components of local and national campaigns, the nominative process,and the Electoral College.

Attachments

- Handout 1 Article II, Section 1—Does My Vote Count - Spanish.docx
- Handout 1 Article II, Section 1—Does My Vote Count - Spanish.pdf
- Handout 1 Article II, Section 1—Does My Vote Count.docx
- Handout 1 Article II, Section 1—Does My Vote Count.pdf
- Handout 2 The Election of 1800—Does My Vote Count - Spanish.docx
- Handout 2 The Election of 1800—Does My Vote Count - Spanish.pdf
- Handout 2 The Election of 1800—Does My Vote Count.docx
- Handout 2 The Election of 1800—Does My Vote Count.pdf
- Handout 3 Bush V. Gore—Does My Vote Count - Spanish.docx
- Handout 3 Bush V. Gore—Does My Vote Count - Spanish.pdf
- Handout 3 Bush V. Gore—Does My Vote Count.docx
- Handout 3 Bush V. Gore—Does My Vote Count.pdf
- Handout 4 The Pros and Cons of the Electoral College—Does My Vote Count - Spanish.docx
- Handout 4 The Pros and Cons of the Electoral College—Does My Vote Count - Spanish.pdf
- Handout 4 The Pros and Cons of the Electoral College—Does My Vote Count.docx
- Handout 4 The Pros and Cons of the Electoral College—Does My Vote Count.pdf
- Handout 5 Should the Electoral College Be Abolished—Does My Vote Count - Spanish.docx
- Handout 5 Should the Electoral College Be Abolished—Does My Vote Count - Spanish.pdf
- Handout 5 Should the Electoral College Be Abolished—Does My Vote Count.docx
- Handout 5 Should the Electoral College Be Abolished—Does My Vote Count.pdf
- Handout for Class Notes—Does My Vote Count - Spanish.docx
- Handout for Class Notes—Does My Vote Count - Spanish.pdf
- Handout for Class Notes—Does My Vote Count.docx
- Handout for Class Notes—Does My Vote Count.pdf
- Lesson Slides—Does My Vote Count.pptx
- Sample Electoral Map Assignment—Does My Vote Count - Spanish.docx
- Sample Electoral Map Assignment—Does My Vote Count - Spanish.pdf
- Sample Electoral Map Assignment—Does My Vote Count.docx
- Sample Electoral Map Assignment—Does My Vote Count.pdf

Materials

- Student Handouts 1-5 (attached)
- Handout for Class Notes (attached)
- Lesson Slides (attached)
- Sample Electoral College Map Assignment (attached)
- Paper
- Markers

Engage

On **slide 2** of the attached **Lesson Slides**, share the guiding questions. Move to **slide 3**. Tell students to silently examine the information under each presidential candidate's picture. Ask students to answer the question posed on this slide:

In 2000, who won the presidential election?

Ask for a show of hands to determine what students know of this election.

Move to **slide 4**, and ask the second question posted on the slide:

Why did George Bush win and not Al Gore?

Teacher's Note: Discussion

If students do not know that George W. Bush won the 2000 election, then the teacher will have to give them the answer to question one to get them to think about the second question. Allow students to discuss question two with a partner if no one can identify the reason on their own. If someone does volunteer the Electoral College as an answer, ask further what anyone knows about the Electoral College.

Explore

Show the video of Does your Vote Count? The Electoral College Explained. The link to this video is embedded in **slide 5** for your convenience.

Teacher's Note: Additional Options

There are two additional videos you can show as well. One video presents the benefits of the electoral college and the other presents some of the challenges that the electoral college creates in presidential elections.

Pro electoral college (conservative/political): Do You Understand the Electoral College?

Oppose electoral college (liberal/political): The Trouble with the Electoral College

Ask students to turn to an elbow partner and together on a scrap piece of paper, explain the Electoral College in one or two sentences to each other and in their own words. Have partners share their sentences aloud to the class. As the teacher, point out and discuss commonalities or similar statements. Summarize or restate what is known about the Electoral College process. To reinforce the electoral college process, as a class read aloud and summarize Article II, The Executive Branch, Section 1 of the Constitution and discuss the electoral college process that has been determined by the state legislature for your state.

Show the electoral map from the 2000 election on **slide 6** to the class. Ask students to think about the questions on the slide. Have a class discussion about the questions. Ask students which of the states with the most electoral votes helped Bush win the election.

Explain

Pass out the graphic organizer to all students. Go over the various headings and explain the directions of the graphic organizer. **Slide 7** has the following directions provided for students: You are to read one handout about the electoral college and how it has played a part in the election of presidents. Once you have completed your reading, write down five important facts that you think others should know from the reading. You will write these facts under the heading on your graphic organizer that is the same as the handout you read.

There are five handouts to read. Number students off 1-5 in the classroom. Hand students the appropriate numbered handout. The teacher should allow 20 to 25 minutes for each student to read the material assigned to them and to write five of the most important facts about that reading. The teacher should monitor how long students are working on task and make adjustments to the time as needed.

Teacher's Note: Stop And Jot Reading Strategy

A reading strategy sometimes helps struggling readers. If you want to use a reading strategy, **slide 8** provides the information for Stop and Jot. Once students receive their reading, they can use Stop and Jot reading activity to identify the main ideas of their reading. Students read one or two paragraphs of the reading material and then in the margins, they stop and jot down the main points they just read. This slide can be hidden or skipped if you do not wish to use this strategy.

Once students have completed reading the assigned handout and created five important facts or ideas, move students into groups who have read the same handout. Allow 15- 20 minutes for this activity. **Slide 9** has the directions for the group activity.

1. Have them share the 5 main ideas or important facts they wrote down with their group.
2. Discuss the facts shared and decide as a group what are 8 of the most important facts.
3. Revise their individual list so that everyone has the same 8 facts.
4. Determine which group members will present which facts or pieces of information to the class.
5. Give groups a piece of chart tablet and marker to write their 8 facts down.

Students will remain in groups and share their information with the class. Each group member will present one or two facts that came from the group list until all eight facts are shared. Students in the audience will copy these shared facts on to their own handout, as they are presented to the class.

Teacher's Note: Students Presenting Class Notes

Show the notes from each group's reading. There are several ways to do this. You can give each group a piece of chart tablet paper and they copy their eight facts onto the paper to present. If technology is readily available, you can have them create a Google slide. If the classroom is equipped with a document camera, that could be used for presentation purposes as well.

Allow an additional 30 to 40 minutes for presenting and copying down the facts from all presentations.

45 minutes

Extend

Choice 1 - Who will win? Scenario - Number students off as a one or two. Tell students number one that they are campaign managers for the Democratic presidential candidate for 2020. Students that were numbered as two will be campaign managers for the Republican presidential candidate for 2020. Pass out the Sample Electoral College Map. Group campaign managers **of the same party** into groups of three or four. Divide the room into the Democrats' side and the Republican side. Have students sit in their respectful groups on their side of the room. Using the electoral college map, ask campaign managers to map out a strategy for their candidate. Which states are needed for their candidate to win? Where should their candidate concentrate their time? Historically, how has this state voted for presidential candidates? Does the state vote for more Democrats or Republicans? Have groups write out and present their campaign strategy to share with the class.

Choice 2 - Is the Electoral College outdated? Take a stance. You may wish to pass out the handout of Should the Electoral College Be Abolished? to all students. After reading or reviewing the handout again, have students create an email to one of their U.S. Senators that explains what they know about the Electoral College and their reasoning for wanting to keep this system or change it. They should support their reasoning with the facts that they learned from the reading AND the information provided in the lesson.

Teacher's Note: U.S. Senator Resource

The Take A Stance email assignment example can simply be a product of this lesson. Some teachers have had students email congressmen if their emails are both civil and based upon researched facts. School policy and teacher judgement should dictate this decision. The following links provide lists and access to members of the U.S. Congress. To contact your U.S. Senators, go to http://www.senate.gov/senators/contact/. To contact your members of the House of Representatives, go to http://www.house.gov/representatives/find/.

Evaluate

The graphic organizer of notes, group presentation and participation, and the extension writing choices will serve as assessments.

Resources

- CNN 2016 Electoral College Map (2016). CNN.com website. http://www.cnn.com/election/interactive-electoral-college-map/
- Article II, Section 1- Executive Branch (n.d.). The National Constitution Center. http://constitutioncenter.org/interactive-constitution/articles/article-ii
- Levinson, Sandford. (n.d.) Interpretation of the Twelfth Amendment (excerpted). The National Constitution Center. http://constitutioncenter.org/interactive-constitution/amendments/amendment-xii
- Bush V. Gore and the Presidential Election (2016). Bill of Rights Institute. http://billofrightsinstitute.org/educate/educator-resources/lessons-plans/presidents-constitution/bush-v-gore/
- Database of Educational Resources K-12, North Carolina Education Consortium (n.d.). The Electoral College. http://civics.sites.unc.edu/files/2012/05/ElectoralCollege1.pdf
- Scholastic. Inc. (2016). Should the Electoral College be Abolished. http://civics.sites.unc.edu/files/2012/05/ElectoralCollege1.pdf
- K20 Center. (n.d.). Stop and jot. Strategies. https://learn.k20center.ou.edu/strategy/168
- 2000 Presidential Election (2016). 270 to Win. Retrieved from: http://www.270towin.com/2000_Election/
- United States Presidential Election, 2000 (2016). Wikipedia. Retrieved from: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/United_States_presidential_election,_2000
- TED-Ed. (2012, November 1). *Does your vote count? The Electoral College explained - Christina Greer* [Video]. YouTube. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=W9H3gvnN468