

3.5: The Electoral College Guided Worksheet

STEP 1: Background/Information on the Electoral College

1. Why is the use of the Electoral College called an indirect method for electing the president?
2. What part of the Constitution explains the Electoral College?
3. Describe how a state's number of electoral votes are determined.
4. How are electors selected?
5. When do electors meet?
6. How does a candidate win a state's electoral votes?
7. How many electoral votes does a candidate need to win an election?
8. What happens if no candidate wins a majority of the electoral votes? What part of the Constitution explains this?
9. Is it possible for a candidate who wins the popular vote not being elected president? How?

STEP 2: Influence of the Electoral College & Swing States

1. Given what we know about what factors influence the way people vote, what factors might influence a state to vote 'red' or 'blue' overall?
2. What is a "swing" state?
3. After looking at the website 270towin.com and the elections of 2000, 2004, 2008, 2012, what states would you consider "swing" states? Why?
4. Which states appear to be the most flexible? How does the concept of swing states affect campaign strategies?
5. Compare the 2012 Electoral College results with the 2012 Electoral Strength Map. How are they different?
6. Compare the 2012 Electoral College results with the 2012 County Map A. How are they different? Why?

STEP 3: Should the Electoral College System be changed?

1. Explain what happened in the following elections:
 - a. 1824 –

 - b. 1876 –

 - c. 1888 –

 - d. 2000 –

2. Describe two problems with the electoral process resulting from the 2000 presidential election.

3. How does the outcome of the 2000 election compromise the legitimacy of the Electoral College system?

4. Why do some opponents of the Electoral System disagree with it?

5. Why are supporters of the system still in favor of it?

6. What is the Direct Vote System proposal?

7. What is the Direct Plan proposal?

8. What is the Proportional Plan proposal?

9. What is the National Bonus Plan proposal?

10. What is the National Popular Vote proposal?

11. Is the Electoral College likely to change? Why? Do you think the Electoral College is fair and democratic?

12. Your opinion: Should we keep the Electoral College as is, or should we change it? Support your answer with specific information and ideas from the readings/videos/text of today's lesson.

STEP 4: FRQ Practice

Please make an OUTLINE for the following possible FRQ for the AP Exam regarding the Electoral College.

QUESTION: A significant feature of the Electoral College is that most state have a winner-take-all system.

- (a) Describe the winner-take-all feature of the Electoral College.
- (b) Explain one way in which the winner-take-all feature of the Electoral College affects how presidential candidates from the two major political parties run their campaigns.
- (c) Explain one way in which the winner-take-all feature of the Electoral College hinders third party candidates.
- (d) Explain two reasons why the Electoral College has not been abolished.