



Voters cast ballots during a presidential election, but they are for ELECTORS, who then officially cast ballots for the president in the month of December. This is known as an **indirect election**. The writers of the Constitution did not believe that the “common man” would make an educated choice for the president, so they developed the electoral college. **Each state chooses a number of electors based on the number of people they have in the House of Representatives and in the Senate.** The residents of **Washington D.C. have 3 votes** even though they are not represented in Congress.

In order to win a presidential election, the candidate must win a majority of the electoral votes, not the popular vote. Today that winning number would be 270 electoral votes because there are a total of 538 electoral votes available. We have 435 members in the House, 100 in the Senate, and D.C. receives 3 votes. **Four different times someone has not won the popular election but has won the election.**

In many states (24), electors are required by law to cast their ballot for the winning candidate. When a state is won by a Republican candidate, all the electors to cast their ballots will be from the Republican party. If a Democrat would win, all of the electors would be Democrats.

**Every state except Maine and Nebraska give all of their electoral votes to the winning candidate in that state.** Nebraska and Maine give two votes automatically to the winner and then one vote for each district that voted for the candidate.

**If no candidate receives a majority of electoral votes, the House of Representatives chooses the president.** In this special election, each state delegation has one vote. D.C. does not have a vote. The House of Representatives continues to vote until there is a winner with a majority number of votes. **Because of this, the House of Representatives has chosen the president twice in our history.**

**Use the map, your chart, and the notes above to help you answer the following questions.**

1. What is the “job” of the electoral college? \_\_\_\_\_
2. Why did the writers of the constitution decide to use electors instead of relying on the popular vote? \_\_\_\_\_
3. How many electoral votes does a candidate need in order to win a presidential election? \_\_\_\_\_.
4. How did the government determine how many electoral votes each state would receive? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
5. If electors officially choose the president, what is the point of a presidential election for the people? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
6. Using the map, and a calculator, what is the **least** amount of states you would have to win in order to have a majority of electoral votes? \_\_\_\_\_
7. List the states you would need to win in order to do it with the least amount.  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
8. Which two states do not have a “winner take all” policy for presidential elections?  
\_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_
9. What happens if no one wins a majority of the electoral votes in a presidential election?  
\_\_\_\_\_
10. If election results are counted all day long and news stations release results throughout the day, why might someone living on the west coast of the United States be less likely to vote for the president than someone living on the east coast?(Think about time zones in the US.)  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
11. Find out which presidents have won a presidential election without winning the “popular” vote \_\_\_\_\_
12. Do you think a change is needed in how we officially choose the president? Does the electoral college really reflect the phrase, “We the People”? \_\_\_\_\_ Why/why not  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
13. Look back at your tally sheet. What were the first five states selected at the start of the activity? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
14. Why were these states selected first? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
15. How might the number of electoral votes that each state has impact a real Presidential campaign? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
16. Look at your tally sheet. Was the popular vote (the total) as close as the Electoral College vote? \_\_\_\_\_
17. Was the winner of the popular vote also the winner of the Electoral College vote?  
\_\_\_\_\_
18. Did the electoral vote accurately reflect the popular vote? \_\_\_\_\_