

AP U.S. Government & Politics
Ch 10- Voting and Elections
Electoral College FAQ's

Name _____

Period _____

Background

The Electoral College selects the president in the U.S. in a fairly complicated system that relies on the popular vote only indirectly. Most Americans don't understand how it works. Your job is to learn about it so you can impress your friends and be potentially smarter than your parents!

Process

Use the resources to answer the FAQ's below. You may collaborate with a partner but every student should do his/her own work in you INB on a new LEFT side.

Electoral College Assigned Questions

1. **Why was the Electoral College created?** Why did the authors of the Constitution choose the Electoral College rather than direct popular vote? Rather than election by the Congress? Or by the states? Explain.
2. **How are the Electoral College votes distributed among states?** - How is the number of electoral votes determined for each state? What is the total number of electoral votes? What is the total needed to win the presidency? What happens if no candidate wins at least 270 (and how is that possible)?
3. **Are all states equal?**- Which state is most OVER represented in the Electoral College? Which state is most UNDER represented in the Electoral College? Why? Explain why small states have an advantage in the system as it is today.
4. **What is the Winner-Take-All feature of the Electoral College?**- 48 states use the "winner-take-all" system in the Electoral College. How does it work? How does this system hurt or help candidates? Describe how Maine and Nebraska's process for casting Electoral votes is different than the other 48 winner-take-all states.
5. **Why are *Swing States* so important?** -What is a "swing" or "battleground" state? Which states are most important in winning Presidential Elections? Why?
6. **What is the greatest flaw in the Electoral College system?** -How is it possible for the winner of the nation's popular vote to lose in the Electoral College? Describe what happened in the 2016 election between Donald Trump and Hillary Clinton that allowed Trump to ultimately win. What other historical elections were not decided in a conventional format for this reason or others?

We will answer this question in class on WEDNESDAY.

7. **What are the main Pros & Cons of the system?** -(a) What are the main weaknesses of the Electoral College system? Highlight THREE. (b) What are the main strengths of the system? Highlight THREE.

Resources: Use the following sites:

1. **US Electoral College Overview** - <http://www.archives.gov/federal-register/electoral-college/faq.html>
2. **270 to Win** -Map of each state and historical voting data: <http://www.270towin.com/>
3. **Project Vote Smart**- <https://votesmart.org/education/electoral-college#.W-pNrxOQGCO>
4. **Actual Text of the 12th Amendment**- <https://constitutioncenter.org/interactive-constitution/amendments/amendment-xii>