

## Instructional Recipe

# Does Your Vote Really Count?

High School  
Government

### Step 1 – Ask

**Objectives:** Students will explain the purpose of the Electoral College. They will analyze the pros and cons of the Electoral College system and defend their position for or against it.

**Introduction:** Is it possible for a presidential candidate to receive the most people votes and still not win? How is the winner determined in a presidential election? Does this the majority rule? Find out in this investigation.



"Obama and McCain participate in Civil Forum in Lake Forest, California." Online Photograph. EBSCO Image. 14 January 2009

<<http://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=imh&AN=imh477444&site=src-live>>

- ★ What is the Electoral College?
- ★ How does it work?
- ★ Why was it established?
- ★ What are the pros and cons of the Electoral College?
- ★ Why was the Electoral College an issue of controversy in the 2000 Presidential election?
- ★ Do you think the Electoral College is fair?

#### Vocabulary:

- ★ Electoral College

#### Government TEKS:

(11) **Government.** (A) compare different methods of filling public offices, including elected and appointed offices, at the local, state, and national levels; (B) analyze and evaluate the process of electing the President of the United States. (21) **Social Studies Skills.** (A) analyze information by sequencing, categorizing, identifying cause-and-effect relationships, comparing, contrasting, finding the main idea, summarizing, making generalizations and predictions, and drawing inferences and conclusions; (B) create a product on a contemporary issue or topic using critical methods of inquiry; (C) explain a point of view on a government issue; (D) analyze and evaluate the validity of information from primary and secondary sources for bias, propaganda, point of view, and frame of reference; (22) **Social Studies Skills.** (A) use social studies terminology correctly; (B) use standard grammar, spelling, sentence structure, and punctuation; (C) transfer information from one medium to another, including written to visual and statistical to written or visual, using computer software as appropriate; (D) create written, oral, and visual presentations of social studies information

#### Technology Application TEKS:

(4) **Information acquisition.** (B) apply appropriate electronic search strategies in the acquisition of information including keyword and Boolean search strategies. (6) **Information acquisition.** (B) resolve information conflicts and validate information through accessing, researching, and comparing data. (7) **Solving problems.** (A) plan, create, and edit documents created with a word processor using readable fonts, alignment, page setup, tabs, and ruler settings. (G) integrate two or more productivity tools into a document including, but not limited to, tables, charts and graphs, graphics from paint or draw programs, and mail merge; (11) **Communication.** (A) publish in a variety of ways including, but not limited to, printed copy, monitor display, Internet documents, and video

## Step 2 – Investigate

Search the K-12 Databases for “Electoral College.” Here are some suggested articles to read:

- ★ "electoral college." Encyclopædia Britannica. 2009. Encyclopædia Britannica Online School Edition. 14 Jan. 2009 <<http://school.eb.com/eb/article-9032264>>.
- ★ [Two cheers for American democracy](#). Economist, 11/1/2008, Vol. 389 Issue 8604, p43-43 (AN 35039541)
- ★ [MAJORITY RULES?](#) (cover story) By: Ker, Maureen. Scholastic Math, 10/13/2008, Vol. 29 Issue 3, p4-5 (AN 35218352)
- ★ [The Electoral College: An Idea Whose Time Has Come and Gone](#). By: Clayton, Dewey M.. Black Scholar, Fall2007, Vol. 37 Issue 3, p28-41 (AN 27617793)
- ★ [THE ELECTORAL COLLEGE](#). By: Caillet, Alexandre. Creative Kids, Fall2008, Vol. 27 Issue 1, p8-8 (AN 35433699)

**Search Strategies:** Search for “electoral college” AND united states in Student Research Center

**Additional Websites:** <http://www.archives.gov/federal-register/electoral-college/>

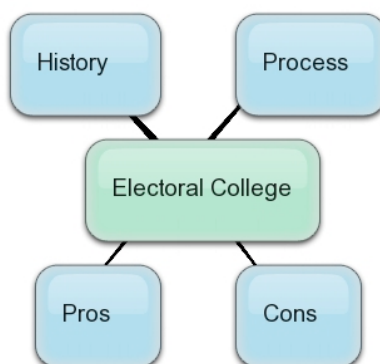
### Books:

Grant, George. [The Importance of the Electoral College](#). San Antonio: Vision Forum Ministries, 2004.

Dover, Edwin. [The Disputed Presidential Election of 2000: a History and Reference Guide](#). Westport: Greenwood Press, 2003.

## Step 3 – Create

After gathering information, students organize their notes into a concept map. They can include information about the Electoral College, such as its purpose, the process of how it works, and the pros and cons of the system.



🔗 **Technology Link** - Use an online graphic organizer program, such as <http://bubbl.us> to create the concept map.

#### Step 4 – Discuss

Is the Electoral College fair? Write a persuasive essay supporting or opposing the Electoral College. In your argument, provide clear reasons for your position. Include facts or statistics that you have gathered during your research.

Options: Students could present their essays as an oral report supported with multimedia, or hold a classroom debate to discuss the topic.

🔗 **Technology Link** – Use a word processing program, such as Microsoft Word or Pages, to type the persuasive essay. Students could include charts, graphs, statistics, or any additional information in a multimedia slideshow to provide evidence that supports their position.

#### Step 5 – Reflect

Allow students to present their projects to the rest of the class. Use the following suggested rubric to assess the students' work. Make sure that the students are familiar with the rubric *before* they begin creating their project. They should refer to the rubric repeatedly to monitor their progress in creating their project.

🔗 **Technology Link:** You can also create your own rubric with your students at <http://rubistar.4teachers.org/index.php>.

*Intel Education: Assessing Projects* tool also has a library of rubrics and checklists. <http://educate.intel.com/en/assessingprojects/>

## Rubric Multimedia Presentation

CATEGORY	4 - Above Standards	3 -Meets Standards	2 - Approaching Standards	1 - Below Standards
<b>Accuracy of information</b>	Student accurately describes the electoral college, its strengths and weaknesses.	Student accurately describes most pros and cons of the electoral college.	Student accurately describes some pros and cons of the electoral college.	Student describes only a few pros and cons of the electoral college.
<b>Persuasiveness</b>	Student provides numerous convincing reasons and steps to support his/her position.	Student provides several convincing reasons and steps to support his/her position.	Student provides only few convincing reasons or steps to support his/her position.	Student does not provide any convincing reasons to support his/her position.
<b>Creativity</b>	The student includes many creative elements in the presentation.	The student includes some creative elements in the presentation.	The student includes very little creative elements in the presentation,	The presentation lacks any creative elements.
<b>Delivery of Presentation</b>	Student delivers the presentation with enthusiasm and fluency. Student has obviously practiced for the presentation.	Student delivers the presentation with enthusiasm and fluency. Student has obviously rehearsed for the presentation, although he or she may make a few minor mistakes.	Student struggles with the delivery of the presentation, but the information is still easily understood by the audience.	Student struggles with the delivery of the presentation, making it difficult for the audience to hear or understand the information.
<b>Sources</b>	All sources used for quotes, statistics and facts are credible and cited correctly.	All sources used for quotes, statistics and facts are credible and most are cited correctly.	Most sources used for quotes, statistics and facts are credible and cited correctly.	Many sources are suspect (not credible) AND/OR are not cited correctly.

## Persuasive Essay Rubric

CATEGORY	4 - Above Standards	3 -Meets Standards	2 - Approaching Standards	1 - Below Standards
Position Statement	The position statement provides a clear, strong statement of the author's position on the topic.	The position statement provides a clear statement of the author's position on the topic.	A position statement is present, but does not make the author's position clear.	There is no position statement.
Support for Position	Includes 3 or more pieces of evidence (facts, statistics, examples, real-life experiences) that support the position statement. The writer anticipates the reader's concerns, biases or arguments and has provided at least 1 counter-argument.	Includes 3 or more pieces of evidence (facts, statistics, examples, real-life experiences) that support the position statement.	Includes 2 pieces of evidence (facts, statistics, examples, real-life experiences) that support the position statement.	Includes 1 or fewer pieces of evidence (facts, statistics, examples, real-life experiences).
Evidence and Examples	All of the evidence and examples are specific, relevant and explanations are given that show how each piece of evidence supports the author's position.	Most of the evidence and examples are specific, relevant and explanations are given that show how each piece of evidence supports the author's position.	At least one of the pieces of evidence and examples is relevant and has an explanation that shows how that piece of evidence supports the author's position.	Evidence and examples are NOT relevant AND/OR are not explained.
Sequencing	Arguments and support are provided in a logical order that makes it easy and interesting to follow the author's train of thought.	Arguments and support are provided in a fairly logical order that makes it reasonably easy to follow the author's train of thought.	A few of the support details or arguments are not in an expected or logical order, distracting the reader and making the essay seem a little confusing.	Many of the support details or arguments are not in an expected or logical order, distracting the reader and making the essay seem very confusing.
Graphic Organizer	Graphic organizer or outline has been completed and shows clear, logical relationships between all topics and subtopics.	Graphic organizer or outline has been completed and shows clear, logical relationships between most topics and subtopics.	Graphic organizer or outline has been started and includes some topics and subtopics.	Graphic organizer or outline has not been attempted.
Diagrams & Illustrations	Diagrams and illustrations are neat, accurate and add to the reader's understanding of the topic.	Diagrams and illustrations are accurate and add to the reader's understanding of the topic.	Diagrams and illustrations are neat and accurate and sometimes add to the reader's understanding of the topic.	Diagrams and illustrations are not accurate OR do not add to the reader's understanding of the topic.
Sources	All sources used for quotes, statistics and facts are credible and cited correctly.	All sources used for quotes, statistics and facts are credible and most are cited correctly.	Most sources used for quotes, statistics and facts are credible and cited correctly.	Many sources are suspect (not credible) AND/OR are not cited correctly.