

LESSON PLAN

Caily Bridgeland, Charlotte Davis, and Jennifer Massengill

Title: The Electoral College		Content Area/s: The Electoral College	
Grade Level: Fourth	Time Frame: 1 hour	Date: October 26, 2012	
SOLs: VS.1: The student will demonstrate skills for historical and geographical analysis and responsible citizenship, including the ability to e) <u>make connections between past and present</u> ; h) <u>evaluate and discuss issues orally and in writing</u> ;			
National Standards: V. 1.D. Students should be able to explain why certain responsibilities are important to themselves and their family, community, state, and nation. To achieve this standard, students should be able to identify such responsibilities as the following and explain their importance: Civic responsibility: communicating with their representatives in their school, local, state, and national governments and voting...			
Lesson Objectives: <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Given information provided by teacher, students will be able to identify reasons why the Electoral College compromise was necessary.2. Given the history of the Electoral College, students will simulate voting for snack choices based on the Electoral College and the popular vote.3. Given simulation of the Electoral College, students will evaluate whether the Electoral College promotes democracy and/or equal representation for all U.S. citizens.		Resources (Texts & Technology): <ul style="list-style-type: none">• http://www.270towin.com/• http://www.archives.gov/federal-register/electoral-college/about.html• http://www.congressforkids.net/Elections_electoralcollege.htm• http://www.commoncraft.com/video/electing-us-president• http://www.google.com/imgres?imgurl=http://teachingamericanhistory.org/images/christy.jpg&imgrefurl=http://teachingamericanhistory.org/convention/&h=488&w=740&sz=121&tbnid=146-1J9g6oFduM:&tbnh=90&tbnw=136&zoom=1&usq=i zYOVM6PEOm4hH099MdHAWAUXxI=&docid=XUCHOcQPTURSMM&sa=X&ei=icKAUJa6MYij2QXZ-YHwBQ&ved=0CCEQ9QEwAA&dur=421• Flip chart with key vocabulary defined, historical painting of the Constitutional Convention, and diagrams to reinforce the Common Craft video of the Electoral College process.	
Content: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• The Electoral College was created during the Constitutional Convention, when members could not agree on how the president should be elected. Certain members of the Convention thought that common people were not educated enough to elect the president directly. Others believed in the importance of the public vote. Also, some people thought each state's choice should count equally; other people thought states with more people should count more. As a compromise, the Convention members came up with the Electoral College system.• The electors are people who cast their states' official votes in the election. All together, these electors for the whole country form what we call the Electoral College.• In this system, whichever candidate wins a state's popular vote wins that state's electors. In total, there are 538 electors for all the states. The number of electors that each state gets depends on how many people live in that state. For example, California gets 55 electors. Delaware gets 3 electors. Virginia is in between – it gets 13 electors.• To win the election, the presidential candidate needs a majority of the 538 Electoral College votes, which means they need to win at least 270 electoral votes.			
Instructional Procedures: <p>Introduction (10 minutes): Review basic information about the election (who is being elected) and review student responses to the pre-assessment question about how they thought a president gets elected on the Interest Inventories.</p> <p>Focus (15 minutes): Introduce key political vocabulary, provide historical background, and guide students through an instructional video on the Electoral College system (see website under “Resources” and attached script).</p> <p>Student Engagement (25 minutes): Simulation with snack foods. Students will elect a class snack using an Electoral College. The class will be divided into three “states” – small, medium, and large. After voting among themselves, they will send electors to represent and vote their interests. The electoral vote will determine the class</p>			

snack, and results will be compared to the overall popular vote.

Closing (10 minutes): Ask students, “What are the strengths and weaknesses of the Electoral College and a popular vote?” and “If you could decide how we should elect a president, what would you choose?” Review importance of people’s votes in making this whole system work. Say, “Now that you understand how this process works, the most important thing to remember is that it doesn’t work at all if people don’t vote!”

Assessment/s:

Formative: Assess student response to questions given in script

Summative: Assess student responses to same multiple choice question as given for pre-assessment (below):

Multiple choice question or non-reader counterpart:

Which of the following best describes the process by which a U.S. president is elected?

- A. People vote for President --> President is elected
- B. People vote for Congress members --> Congress members vote for President --> President is elected
- C. People vote for electors --> electors vote for President --> President is elected
- D. Members of Congress vote for President --> President is elected

Extension Activities/Interdisciplinary Links:

- Write a factual paragraph that includes all of the vocabulary words you learned from this lesson.
- Class debate: Should the US abolish the Electoral College? Divide class into two teams, assign each group a position, and have each team come up with a list of reasons to support their position. Then have each team present their points, and let each team present counter-arguments to each other’s points. After this, have each student vote on whether or not the Electoral College should be abolished to see which position won the debate. Have students write one paragraph describing why they voted how they did.
- Using the 270toWin website, students work in small groups to devise plans for which combination of undecided states Romney and Obama need to win the election.

Differentiation Strategies/Activities (State nature of differentiation):

There is one student with a slight hearing impairment. The student will be seated at the front of the classroom. We will use the class microphone if available, and will be conscious of consistently using our “teacher voice”.

Reflection/Recommendations for Future use [this part is completed after the lesson]:

This lesson would be part of a larger unit on civic responsibility and government organization. The lesson could include more interactive activities and activities involving higher level thinking, such as using the 270towin.com website to determine how to make a candidate win the popular vote and lose the election. This lesson could be the basis for a class project to do a school-wide mock election. Also, another lesson prior to this one could give the students more historical background on the establishment of our country’s government, or this lesson could be part of a larger unit on this topic.

