

**How Did We Get Here?
The Election of the President
of
The United States**

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Fifth Grade Lesson: How Did We Get Here?

Goal: To strengthen the student's participation in democracy.

Objectives:

- To provide learners “the mountain top moments” that encompassed our collective past as a nation.
- To give students the progression of events that brings clarity to our current democratic society.

Overview

Reasoning behind the concept: Young learners need to understand the breath of history in order to understand why our form of government works. The classroom teacher literally needs to skate across the curriculum so the learners can sequentially differentiate between Kennedy, Clinton, Reagan, Lincoln, both Roosevelts, and Washington which for ten year olds is not a given. Likewise, the Declaration of Independence, Jamestown, the Gettysburg Address, the Constitutional Convention and the United Nation lack a time frame for these young minds.

Similarly, teachers have the option to delve deeply into the issues and the socialization process that encompasses the American Experience:

- * Women's Suffrage through Title IX
- * The Elections of 1860 and the Civil War through the 1960's Civil Rights Movement
- * Pre-Civil War North-South economic divisions over free trade through today's global free trade and tariff debate that led to the North American Free-trade Agreement (NAFTA)

Objective: To give the teacher the dual opportunities of covering the breath of U.S. History, while having the freedom to explore any era or issue in depth.

Concept: (*Anticipating Set*) the teacher connects the broad strokes of social, economic, and political history to the contemporary period.

Time Frame: The entire overview presentation of the outline that starts on page three is determined by the time scheduled by the individual instructor for social studies. Time can vary depending on the instructor. The mini-lesson (page five) on the Electoral College can take five social study periods depending on the depth the teacher plans to take the students in the teaching the historical development of this institution and the time allotted for social studies.

How Did We Get Here?

1492

- Pre-Columbian, Native Americans, and Spanish explorers in the New World

1607

- Jamestown
 - First British Colony
 - Now the state of Virginia

1620

- Plymouth Bay Colony
 - Now Massachusetts
 - Mayflower Compact-written agreement decided on before the Pilgrims came ashore
 - First Thanksgiving

1776 (169 years later)

- The Declaration of Independence
- July 4, 1776
- "Birthday of the United States"
- 13 Colonies and Revolutionary War with England
- Influential People
 - Thomas Jefferson
 - George Washington
 - Benjamin Franklin
 - John and Abigail Adams
 - Others

Civilian Control of the Military

- After the British surrender at Yorktown, General George Washington gives back control of the military to the people (Continental Congress)
- We the People are in charge of military
- Civilian: not a soldier, a person who works

Constitutional Convention

- Citizen George Washington Chairs convention
- Meet to change the Articles of Confederation
 - New Government is formed
 - Same government we have today
 - Three Branches of Government
 - Legislature
 - President
 - Judicial
 - Legislature-makes the laws
 - Large State vs. Small state argument

- Population vs. equality

- **Connecticut Compromise**

- Legislature-Two Houses

- Senate-equality, each state gets two seats
 - House of Representatives-population determines membership
 - New Laws must be passed by both the House and the Senate
 - New Capital-Washington D.C. (District of Columbia)
 - White house, Congress, Pentagon

1803

- Louisiana Purchase from France
 - Lewis and Clark and Sacajawea explored the new territory

1861-1865 Civil War

- Ends slavery
- Abraham Lincoln

1920

- Women gain the right to vote (19th Amendment)

1959

- Alaska and Hawaii join the Union becoming the 49th and 50th states

2008-Presidential Election

- Each state conducts its own presidential election
- The Electoral College
 - 100 Senators (50 States x 2)
 - 435 members of the House of Representatives
 - Utah 5 electoral votes
 - 3 Representatives
 - 2 Senators
 - California 55 electoral votes
 - 53 Representatives
 - 2 Senators
 - Washington D.C. 3 electoral votes
- Electoral College
 - Total electoral votes -538
- Electors from each state vote for the president (December)
- Each state the election
 - 538 votes divided among states, but not equally
- To win the candidate needs 270 electoral votes.

Note: *Teachers are free to add any other issues of importance or interest to them.*

Sample Mini-Lesson: The Electoral College

Goal: To give the student the historical perspective of the creation of the Electoral College

Objectives:

- To show the learner that states were entities unto themselves and wanted equal representation in an election
- To enable the student to understand that population also determines representation in a presidential election

Materials Needed:

- Map of the United States
- Colored pencils

Resources:

- Utah Education Network – Social Studies Curriculum
- Google – Electoral Maps
- geography.about.com/library/blank/blxusa.htm (free blank maps)

Overview

Bridging the Constitution Convention of 1787 to the Presidential Election of 2008 gives the learner the ability to connect the dots of the Constitutional Convention issues surrounding the type of legislature to establish. A legislature based on population, the more populated states having more representatives or a legislature based on equality with each state have one vote and all the states having the same number of representatives.

The deadlock was solved by the Great Compromise or the Connecticut Compromise. It created a two-house legislature based on equality and population. The Senate consists of two senators for each state (equality). The House of Representatives based on population, the more populous states having more representatives. Each state has at least one representative in the House.

In the selection of a president, the Convention used a formula combining equality and population, known as the Electoral College. A state's electoral vote was determined by adding its two senators to the number of its representatives. For example: Utah has two senators and three representatives, therefore it has five electoral votes. California has two senators and 53 representatives; therefore it has 55 electoral votes.

In today's numbers, 435 members of the House of Representatives
+ 100 members of the Senate (two from the 50 states)
+ 3 for the District of Columbia

538

270 Electoral Votes are needed to elect a president, one more than half of the electoral votes.

Activity One: Students practice figuring out an Electoral College vote maps.

- Step 1. Give students a numbered an alphabetized list of the states that includes the District of Columbia.
- Step 2. Instruct the students to select two colors.
- Step 3. Distribute a labeled map of the United States. You may want to label D.C.

- Step 4. Have students assign a color for odd number states and a color for even number states.
- Step 5. Have students total all the electoral vote count for each count. To see which colored states receive the majority of 270 and above.

Activity Two: Students recreate the 2008 Electoral Map by coloring red states and blue states using a blank map. You can use Google to find electoral vote maps that you can print out, enlarge as a poster, or have students use to make the distribution of votes relevant. You can expand electoral vote result activities by using maps from previous elections. Be aware that the electoral votes vary from decade to decade depending on the census.

Activity Three: Challenge students to find the twelve states a candidate can win to become president by receiving a combine total of 271 electoral votes. (Look below for the answer.)

California	55
Florida	27
Georgia	15
Illinois	21
Michigan	17
New Jersey	15
New York	31
North Carolina	15
Ohio	20
Pennsylvania	21
Texas	34
	271

These activities give students an opportunity to bridge the generations and understand the Electoral College, while taking in a key component of American democracy's frequent and free elections.

Election Day Score Card

State	Electoral Votes	Obama Democratic Candidate	McCain Republican Candidate
ALABAMA	9		
ALASKA	3		
ARIZONA	10		
ARKANSAS	6		
CALIFORNIA	55		
COLORADO	9		
CONNECTICUT	7		
DELAWARE	3		
FLORIDA	27		
GEORGIA	15		
HAWAII	4		
IDAHO	4		
ILLINOIS	21		
INDIANA	11		
IOWA	7		
KANSAS	6		
KENTUCKY	8		
LOUISIANA	9		
MAINE	4		
MARYLAND	10		
MASSACHUSETTS	12		
MICHIGAN	17		
MINNESOTA	10		
MISSISSIPPI	6		
MISSOURI	11		
MONTANA	3		
NEBRASKA	5		
NEVADA	5		
NEW HAMPSHIRE	4		
NEW JERSEY	15		
NEW MEXICO	5		
NEW YORK	31		
NORTH CAROLINA	15		
NORTH DAKOTA	3		
OHIO	20		
OKLAHOMA	7		
OREGON	7		
PENNSYLVANIA	21		
RHODE ISLAND	4		
SOUTH CAROLINA	8		
SOUTH DAKOTA	3		
TENNESSEE	11		
TEXAS	34		
UTAH	5		
VERMONT	3		
VIRGINIA	13		
WASHINGTON	11		
WASHINGTON, D.C.	3		
WEST VIRGINIA	5		
WISCONSIN	10		
WYOMING	3		
TOTAL	538		

Weekly Reader 2008 Presidential Issue