

SAMPLE ANSWERS: Electoral College Maps Scavenger Hunt

Using C-SPAN's **Historical Electoral College Maps resource**, search through the various election slides and answer each of the following questions relating to the electoral college. View the maps and data associated with the answers and complete the chart. Answers might be found using the map, the election results or the "Did you know?" section on the slides.

| How the Electoral College Works | |
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| Question | Answer |
| How does the electoral vote determine the winner of the election? | The candidate that receives the majority of the electoral votes (270/538) wins the presidency |
| How many electoral votes are currently required to win the presidency? | 270 |
| How is the number of electors per state determined? | By the US Constitution. The number of electors a state receives is equivalent to the number of its members in Congress. Number of US Representatives + 2 US Senators = Number of Electors |
| How are Maine and Nebraska unique in how they allocate electoral votes? | Each of these states awards its electoral votes proportionally. Meaning the candidate that wins the most votes in one of these states' congressional districts gets that electoral vote. The candidate that wins the most votes in the entire state gets the remaining two electoral votes. |
| What is meant by a faithless elector? | Someone who does not cast their electoral vote for the candidate that won a state's electoral vote. |
| What happens if neither presidential candidate receives 270 electoral votes? | The election is sent to the US House of Representatives. Each state's House delegation acts as one vote. The candidate that wins 26/50 votes is elected president. The US House has decided the president of the United States twice, in 1800 and 1824. |

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| What happens if neither vice presidential candidate receives 270 electoral votes? | The election is sent to the US senate, where each senator casts a vote. The vice presidential candidate with the most votes is elected vice president. This has happened only once, in 1836. |
| What is meant by the “winner-takes-it all” rule? | The candidate that wins the popular vote in a state receives all of the state’s electoral votes. |
| What is the process and timeline for counting electoral votes? | Per the US Constitution, on the Monday following the second Wednesday in December, electors from each state meet to cast their vote for president and vice president. The votes are sealed and sent to the president of the Senate (sitting US vice president), who, on January 6 at 1:00pm, before a joint session of Congress, opens and reads the votes. |

History of the Electoral College

| Question | Answer |
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| Why did the founding fathers create the electoral college? | As a compromise between the Congress and the people electing the president. US Citizens vote for electors who then vote for president. |
| How did the 12th Amendment change how presidents and vice presidents are elected? | It made candidates for president and vice president be elected separately. Since the passage of the 12th Amendment, electors cast one vote for president and one vote for vice president. |
| From the maps, when was the last time the total number of electoral votes changed? What caused this? | 1964. The passage of the 23rd Amendment granting 3 electoral votes to the District of Columbia, which is the minimum and state receives. |
| Comparing the electoral votes on the maps, which candidate had the largest margin of victory in the electoral college since 1900? | Ronald Reagan, 1984, with 525 electoral votes |

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| When was the first election that Washington, D.C. was granted electoral votes? | 1964 |
| Using the election results on the slides, since 1900, how many third-party candidates won electoral votes? Who were they and what parties did they represent? | <p>1972, John Hospers, Libertarian, 1 vote</p> <p>1968, George Wallace, Independent, 46 electoral votes</p> <p>1960, Harry Byrd, Democrat, 15 electoral votes</p> <p>1948, J. Strom Thurmond, Democrat (Dixiecrat), 39 electoral votes</p> <p>1924, Robert LaFollete, Progressive, 13 electoral votes</p> <p>1912, Teddy Roosevelt, Bull Moose, 88 electoral votes</p> |
| When was the last time a third-party candidate won any electoral votes? | 1972, John Hospers, Libertarian Party candidate won one electoral vote thanks to a faithless elector in Virginia. |
| Comparing the maps, in general, what areas of the country did the Democrats consistently win for the first part of the 20th century? How did this change? | The South. Changing political dynamics and policy preferences transitioned the South from being solidly Democratic to solidly Republican. |
| Use the election results to name the two times since 1900 that a candidate has won the electoral college but lost the popular vote. | <p>2000, George Bush</p> <p>2016, Donald Trump</p> |
| Using the election results on the slides, which candidate won the highest popular vote since 1900? | 2008, Barack Obama, 69,297,997 popular votes |
| Comparing the election results, since 1900, which election had the closest electoral vote count? | 2000, George W. Bush, 271 electoral votes; Al Gore, 266 electoral votes |

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| Use the maps to determine the first election to include all 50 states. | 1960 |
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| Current Patterns and Trends | |
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| Question | Answer |
| Compare the most recent electoral maps to determine which state has continuously voted for the Democratic candidates the longest. | Multiple answers |
| Compare the most recent electoral maps to determine which states have continuously voted for the Republican candidates the longest. | Multiple answers |
| On the 2020 electoral college map which five states have the most electoral votes? | California (55), Florida (29), Illinois/Pennsylvania (20), New York (29), Texas (38) |
| On the 2020 electoral college map which states are tied for the least electoral votes? | Alaska, Delaware, Montana, North Dakota, South Dakota, Wyoming, and Vermont |
| Based on the last 20 years, what states and areas of the country appear to vote more for the Democratic candidates? Which states and areas of the country appear to vote more for the Republican candidates? | Northeast and West are more Democratic. Midwest, Plains region, and South are more Republican. |

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| Based on the electoral maps from the last 20 years, which states do you see as the most important “swing states” for candidates to target? Explain your answer. | Ohio, Michigan, Pennsylvania, Wisconsin, (Answers will vary, but in general changing policy preferences of the eligible voters of that state will contribute to the outcome. |
| By comparing the historical maps, how has the number of electoral votes in your state changed since 1900? Why do you think this is? | More people have moved to the state of Florida, so after each census, Florida has gained seats in the US House of Representatives, increasing its number of electoral votes. |

For the final step, research the 2020 election results and determine the missing information from the boxes on the first map.

Biden: 306 electoral votes; 81,284,666 popular votes

Trump: 232 electoral votes; 74,224,319 popular votes