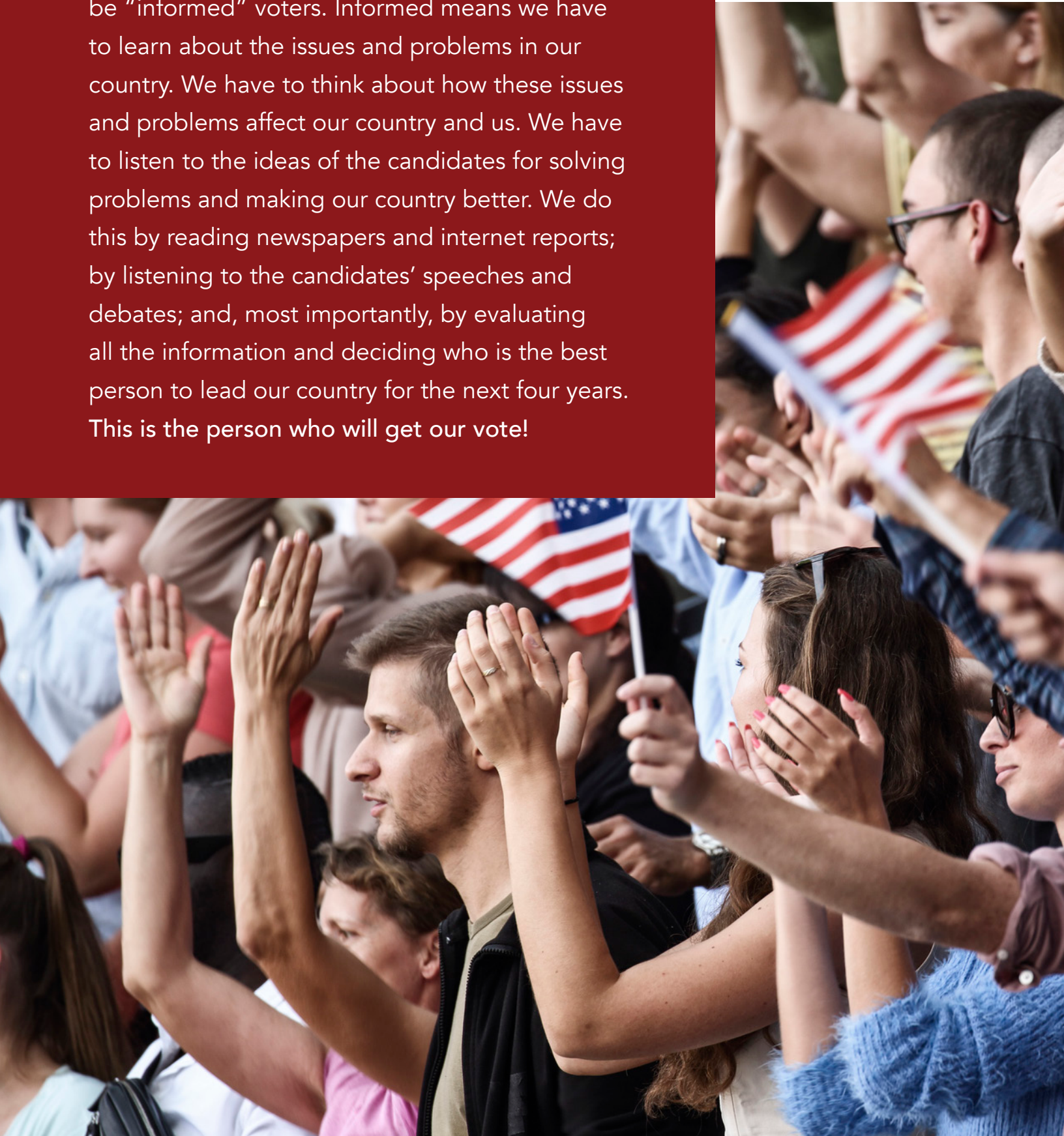


A Kid's Guide to *Becoming President*

Lesson Three: The Vote



Running for president is a tough job, but so is being a voter! As citizens, it is our responsibility to be "informed" voters. Informed means we have to learn about the issues and problems in our country. We have to think about how these issues and problems affect our country and us. We have to listen to the ideas of the candidates for solving problems and making our country better. We do this by reading newspapers and internet reports; by listening to the candidates' speeches and debates; and, most importantly, by evaluating all the information and deciding who is the best person to lead our country for the next four years. This is the person who will get our vote!

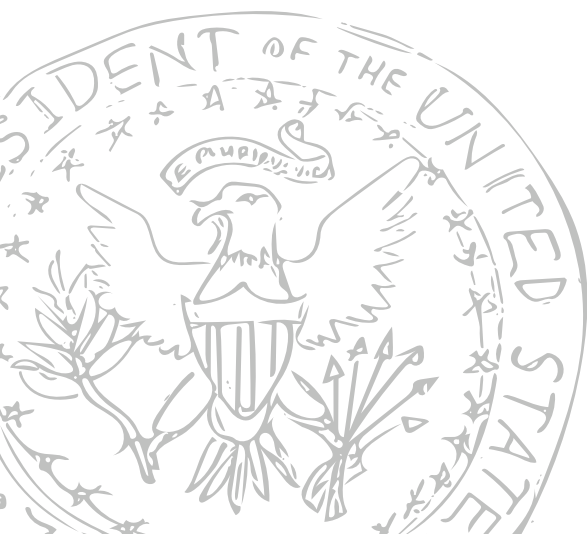


★ Election Day

Election Day is always the first Tuesday after the first Monday in November.

Check a calendar. When will Americans go to the polls to elect their president this year?

When citizens cast their vote, they will not be electing the president directly, rather, their votes will choose “electors”. Each state has a number of electors decided by the number of their US senators and representatives. If a candidate gets the most popular (people) votes in the state, he/she gets ALL the electoral votes for that state, except for Maine and Nebraska. Maine and Nebraska use the congressional district method, which allocates one electoral vote to each congressional district in the state of Maine or Nebraska state. The winner of each congressional district is awarded the one electoral vote, and the winner of the statewide vote is then awarded the state’s remaining two electoral votes. If a presidential candidate wins more than half of the electoral votes in the country (270 or more) he/she wins the presidency.



★ Electoral & Popular Votes

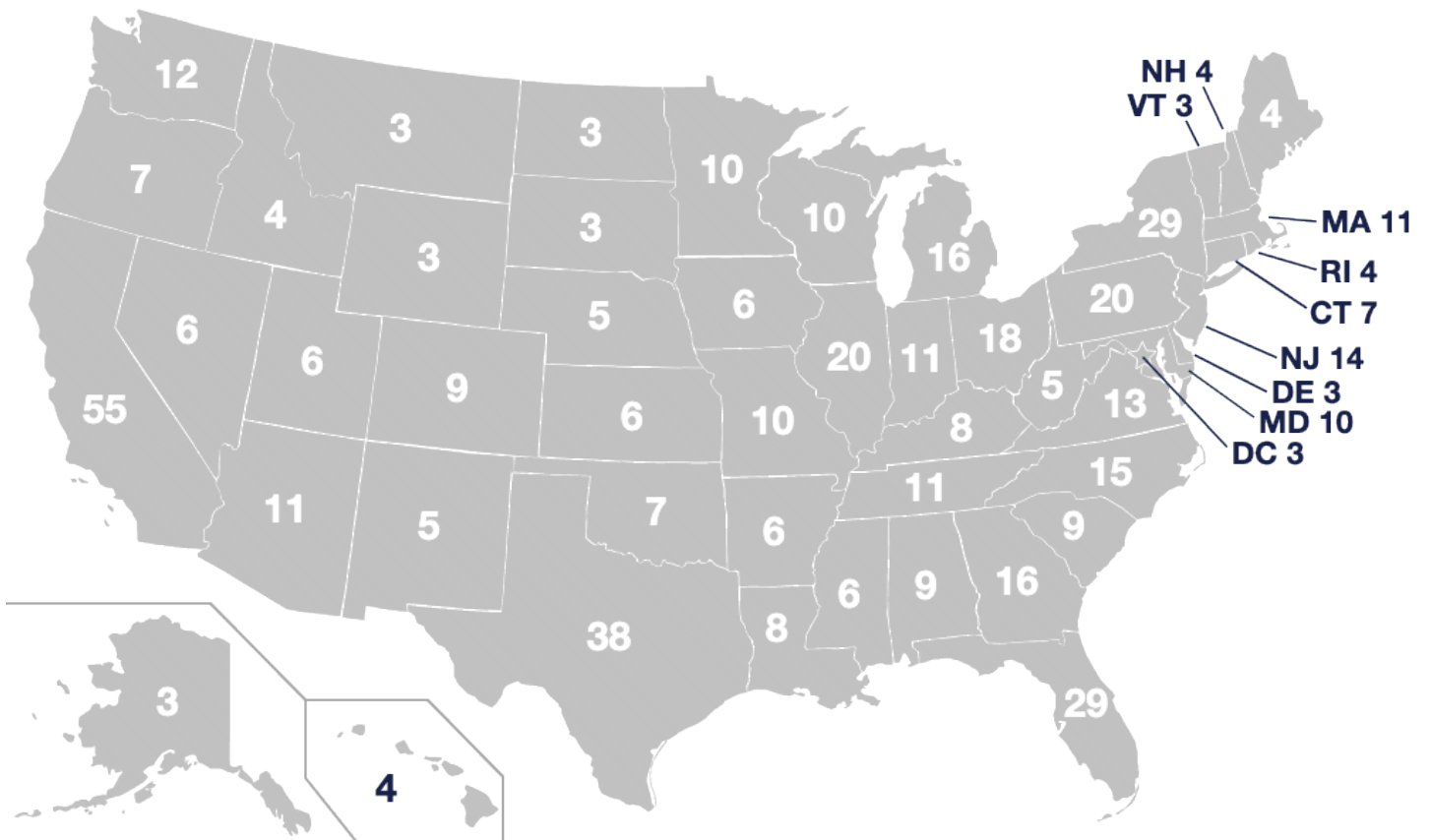
If you were a candidate does the number of electoral votes a state have affect how you would campaign? Would you spend any time in Alaska or Hawaii? Why? Would you spend more time in California or Pennsylvania? You might be surprised by the answer. Pennsylvania is called a “battleground state.” California is not. In California the Democratic candidate wins by large margins. In Texas, it is the Republican candidate who wins. States such as Pennsylvania and Florida are “battleground states” because the vote is close between the two major parties. Currently, our nation has two major parties the Republicans and the Democrats. Sometimes there is a third-party candidate.

About a month after the general election, the electors meet in their States Houses and cast their votes for their candidate. Could a candidate win the popular (people) vote and lose the election? Well, it actually happened in 2016. Hillary Clinton won the popular vote, but Donald Trump had more electoral votes. Therefore, Donald Trump became President of the United States.

Some people want the Electoral College vote to end and have the popular vote decide the winner of the presidential election. What do you think?

★ Electoral Votes by State

U.S. State	Electoral Votes	U.S. State	Electoral Votes
Alabama	9	Montana	3
Alaska	3	Nebraska	5
Arizona	11	Nevada	6
Arkansas	6	New Hampshire	4
California	55	New Jersey	14
Colorado	9	New Mexico	5
Connecticut	7	New York	29
Delaware	3	North Carolina	15
District of Columbia	3	North Dakota	3
Florida	29	Ohio	18
Georgia	16	Oklahoma	7
Hawaii	4	Oregon	7
Idaho	4	Pennsylvania	20
Illinois	20	Rhode Island	4
Indiana	11	South Carolina	9
Iowa	6	South Dakota	3
Kansas	6	Tennessee	11
Kentucky	8	Texas	38
Louisiana	8	Utah	6
Maine	4	Vermont	3
Maryland	10	Virginia	13
Massachusetts	11	Washington	12
Michigan	16	West Virginia	5
Minnesota	10	Wisconsin	10
Mississippi	6	Wyoming	3
Missouri	10		



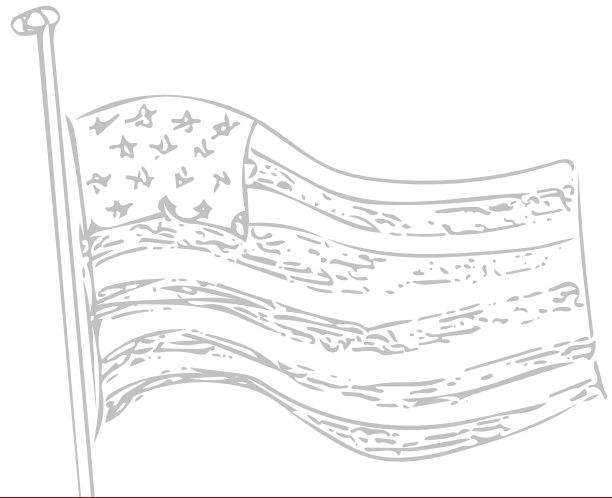
Look at the electoral map. Find your state.

- How many electoral votes does it have?
- Which state has the most?
- Which state has the least?

★ Sticky Situation

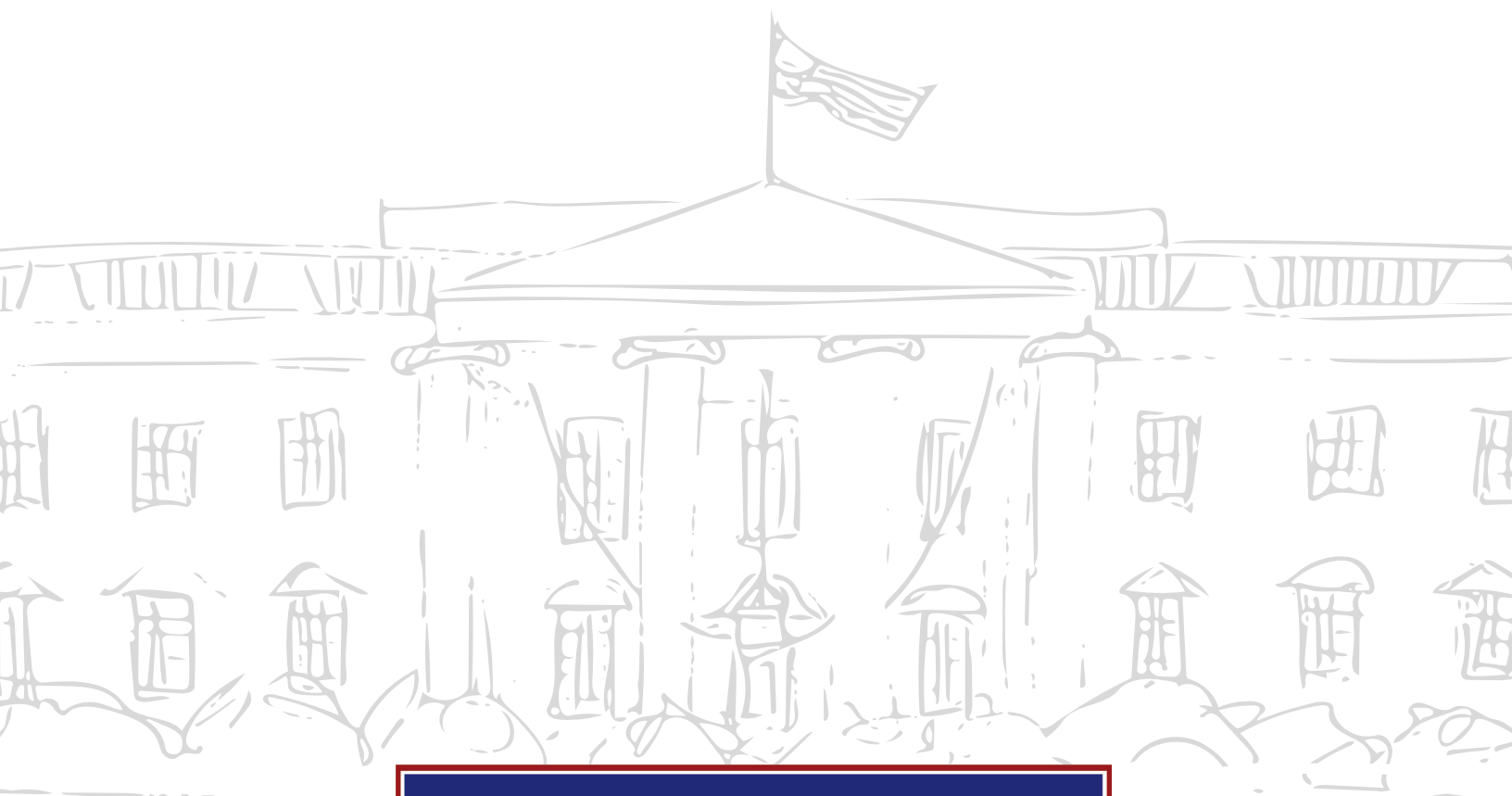
Your principal has been given some extra ground behind your school. The school board has given the principal permission to ask the students how to best use the newly acquired ground. After meetings with all of the students in the school, the principal has come up with the top two ideas. You want the ground to be used for a soccer field. Others want the ground for planting vegetables and flowers that can be sold to raise money for trips and special new programs. After the school wide vote, the idea of planting a flower and vegetable garden wins over the soccer field. Your friends decide not to work on the garden because their idea did not win the vote. They say that voting is a waste of time.

How would you feel and what would you say to your friends?



Literacy Links

- *The Ballot Box Battle* by Emily Arnold McCully
- *Vote* by Eileen Christelow
- *School House Rock – Electoral College* (On YouTube.com, search "School House Rock Electoral College")



The Rendell Center

for

Civics & Civic Engagement

Inspiring the Next Generation of Citizens

More civics education resources are available at

www.rendellcenter.org