

Drafting Board: Electoral College

Time Needed: Three to five class periods

Materials Needed:

Computers with internet access
 Drafting Board log-in information
 Student Packet (*Evidence Guide* and *Progress Sheet*)

Copy Instructions:

Reasons & Evidence Guide (for yourself)
Progress Packet (class set)
Evidence Guide (class set)

Learning Objectives. Students will be able to:

- Analyze and synthesize primary and secondary source materials
- Develop an understanding of perspective and bias by comparing and contrasting texts
- Find, evaluate, and categorize information from multiple sources
- Develop claims and counterclaims based on evidence from source material
- Compare the popular vote with the Electoral College as a means to elect the President of the United States
- Articulate arguments for and against the Electoral College

STEP BY STEP

- TEACHER PREP** Make sure your students know their iCivics.org usernames and passwords. These will be used to access *Drafting Board*. There is a space on the *Progress Packet* for the students to keep this information for each visit to *Drafting Board*.
- Look over the pre-writing activities (Free Write and Mind Map) and decide which you would like to have your students complete.
- DISTRIBUTE** the pre-writing activity to the class and give five minutes for the students to brainstorm. When the time is up, you may ask students to share with the class.
 - TELL** students that they will be reading about the debate over how President of the United States is elected in *Drafting Board*.
 - DISTRIBUTE** the *Electoral College* packet to each student. (Includes *Progress Packet* and *Evidence Guide*)
 - SHOW** students where to write their usernames and passwords on the packet.
 - PREVIEW** the objectives for each tool and explain that this is a long-term project that will take a number of class periods. The *Progress Packet* will help them keep track of each visit to *Drafting Board*.
 - ASK** students to log in and begin using the first tool in *Drafting Board*, The Issue Analyzer.
 - CIRCULATE** around the class, helping students as needed.
 - CLOSE** each day by giving the students a 3 minute warning, then asking them to note on the *Progress Packet* where they left off. Collect packets for the next visit to *The Drafting Board*.

Continued on the next page...

Drafting Board: Electoral College

Continued from the last page...

- REVIEW** student progress each day. Intervene either with the whole class or with individual students if necessary.
- PRINT** or export student essays once they have finished *Drafting Board* to prepare for the student editing activity.
- DISTRIBUTE** a peer editing half sheet to each student.
- PAIR** students and have them exchange essays for peer editing. Tell students to follow the directions on the half sheet, or have students peer edit according to methods you have previously taught.

A FEW IMPORTANT REMINDERS...

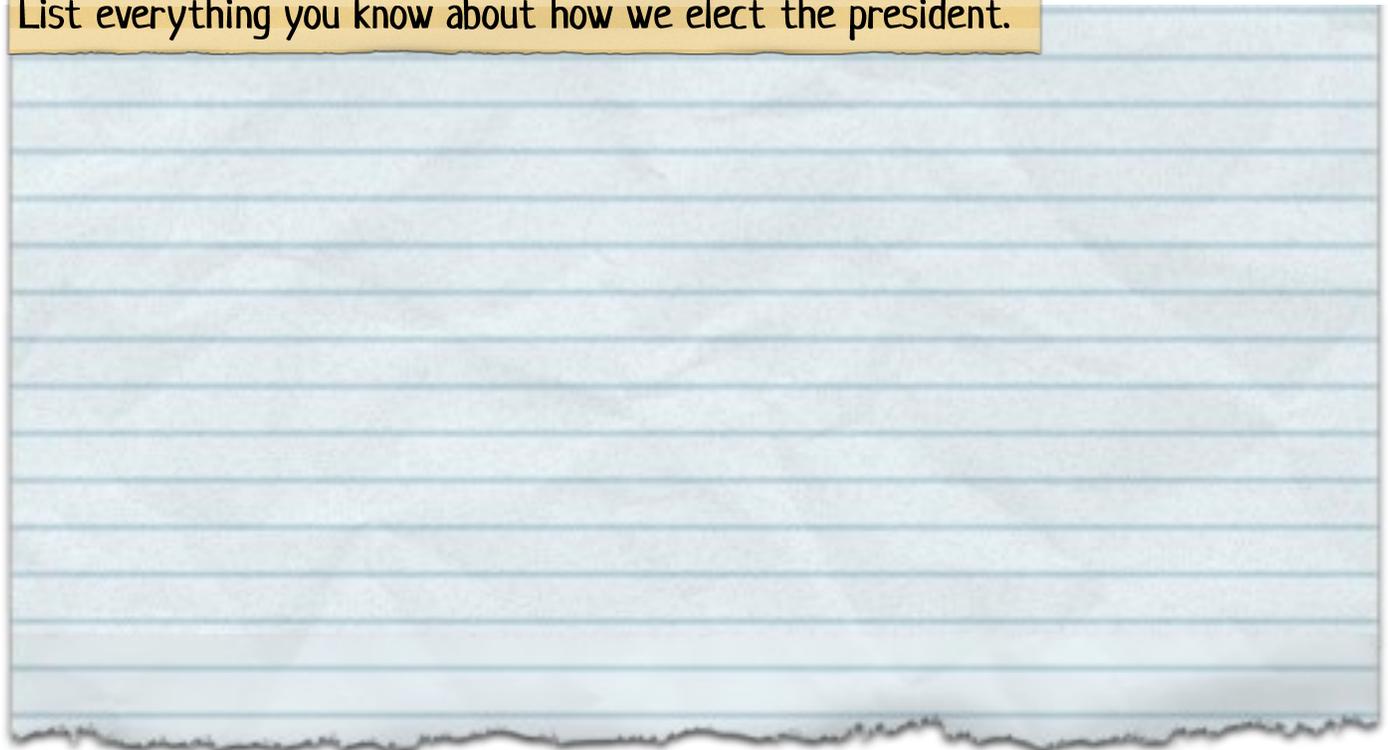
- Unlike other iCivics online activities, *Drafting Board* is not a game. This tool requires the teacher to monitor and oversee student progress as the students work through the tool.
- Each tool will take between 10 and 20 minutes, but students may progress at a faster or slower pace.
 - **For students who finish early:** Assign the game *Win the White House* on iCivics.org, which allows the students to run a presidential campaign.
 - **For students lagging behind:** Students need internet access in order to finish *Drafting Board*. Students with internet access outside school can log in and work remotely from home or from a library. Otherwise, you may need to help students find additional computer access at school.
- Boxes for student reflection appear after some parts of the tools. Students must enter text in the reflection areas before they can move on to the next page of the tool. Text entered into the reflection boxes will not appear in the student's essay; however, you will be able to view student reflections in the progress report on your teacher page.
- You can follow your students' progress by using the iCivics classroom feature. An individual student report is generated for each tool within *Drafting Board*. Each report shows you how the student performed on the activities in the tool, how much time the student spent on task, and what the student wrote. You can also print or export the essay the student generated.

Electoral College

Name: _____

Brainstorm. Read the prompt below and brainstorm as many answers as you can think of until your teacher tells you to stop. Make notes quickly, and don't worry about spelling. Use the back for more space.

List everything you know about how we elect the president.

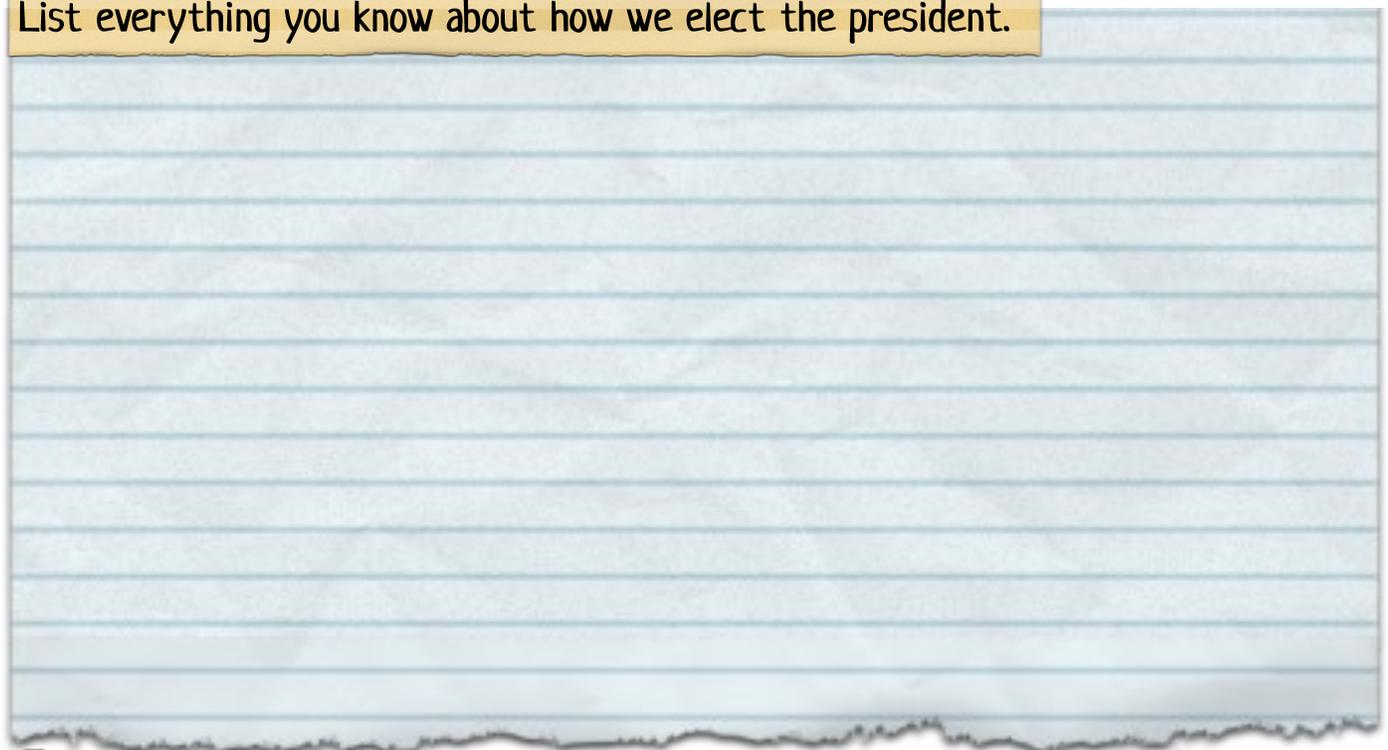


Electoral College

Name: _____

Brainstorm. Read the prompt below and brainstorm as many answers as you can think of until your teacher tells you to stop. Make notes quickly, and don't worry about spelling. Use the back for more space.

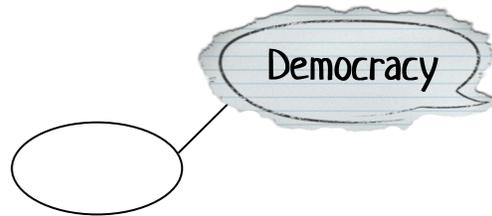
List everything you know about how we elect the president.



Electoral College

Name: _____

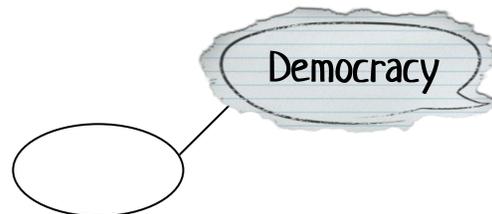
Mind Map! Think about the term in the center of the page. Brainstorm all the ideas you can think of that are related to this phrase. Circle each idea you add and draw a line to connect it to the main phrase (or to another idea you added). Keep brainstorming until you run out of room or time.

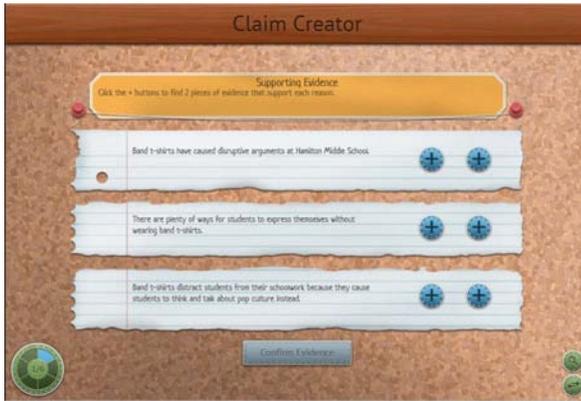


Electoral College

Name: _____

Mind Map! Think about the term in the center of the page. Brainstorm all the ideas you can think of that are related to this phrase. Circle each idea you add and draw a line to connect it to the main phrase (or to another idea you added). Keep brainstorming until you run out of room or time.



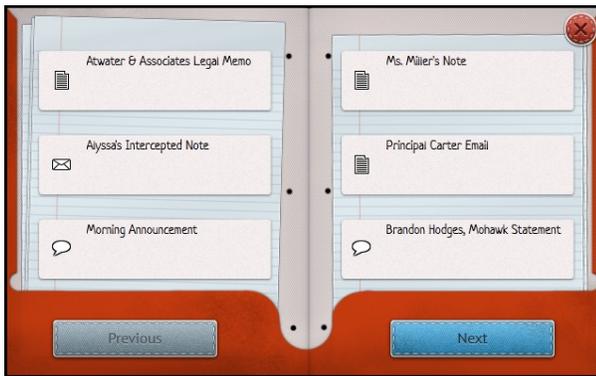


Claim Creator: Helping Students Choose the Right Evidence

The Claim Creator asks students to select three reasons to support their claim, then find the two pieces of evidence that support each reason. Use this guide to help students find the correct evidence. First give them the key words and phrases to look for, then use the last two questions to help them narrow down the options.

Claim: The president should be elected by popular vote.

	Guiding Questions for Struggling Students
<p>Reason 1</p> <p>The Electoral College is undemocratic.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>Key words and phrases</u>: lose popular vote; one person, one vote; equality • Is there evidence that presidents have lost the popular vote but still become president? (<i>Losing... But Winning</i>) • Are there any pieces of evidence that discuss the number of people represented by each electoral votes? Is it the same in all states? (<i>VoteBlog: Unequal Representation</i>)
<p>Reason 2</p> <p>The Founding Fathers' fear of letting people vote directly for president does not make sense in our modern democracy.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>Key words and phrases</u>: voter access to information; modern communication; government class • Does any of the evidence talk about how easy it is for people to get information about candidates? (<i>Radio Interview: Voter Ignorance</i>) • Is there evidence that students have to take a government class? (<i>Students'IM Chat</i>)
<p>Reason 3</p> <p>People in a state's political minority have little incentive to vote when all of the state's electors will go to the candidate chosen by the state's political majority.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>Key words and phrases</u>: outnumbered; vote doesn't count; competitive election; voter turnout • Is there any example of a voter of one political party feeling like his vote doesn't count? (<i>John Smith, Voter</i>) • Is there evidence that more people turn out to vote when the election is competitive? (<i>Evening News: Voter Turnout</i>)
<p>Reason 4</p> <p>The Electoral College system encourages presidential candidates to focus on a few states and ignore the rest.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>Key words and phrases</u>: campaign money; battleground states; travel; candidate visits • Is there evidence that most of the candidates' campaign money goes to only a few states? (<i>Article: Campaign Spending</i>) • Does any of the evidence show information about how many states got visits from candidates? (<i>Candidate Visits in 2008</i>)



Claim Creator: Helping Students Choose the Right Evidence

(continued)



Claim: *The president should be elected through the Electoral College system.*

	Guiding Questions for Struggling Students
<p>Reason 1</p> <p>The Electoral College has stood the test of time.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>Key words and phrases:</u> constitution; amendments; history; peaceful elections • Does any evidence talk about how long the Electoral College has existed? (<i>Article: Electoral College is Staying</i>) • Does any of the evidence make the claim that we should keep the Electoral College because it has always worked peacefully? (<i>Eyeing the Issues with Ivan</i>)
<p>Reason 2</p> <p>Getting rid of the Electoral College would require an entirely new method of choosing the president.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>Key words and phrases:</u> small share; first round; second round • Are there any examples of an imaginary election where someone wins with a low percent of the vote? (<i>Landscape of a Popular Election</i>) • Is there an examples of a country that has more than one round of voting? (<i>2007 Election in France</i>)
<p>Reason 3</p> <p>The Electoral College is democratic.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>Key words and phrases:</u> representational democracy; state popular elections • Does any of the evidence talk about how a representational democracy works? (<i>Diggin' the Issues with Leah</i>) • Does any evidence claim that people in each state actually do participate in a popular vote on election day? (<i>Pro-Electoral College Flyer</i>)
<p>Reason 4</p> <p>Without the Electoral College, candidates would be encouraged to focus only on large population centers.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>Key words and phrases:</u> big cities; urban areas; rural areas • Is there an example of a voter who gets to see presidential candidates even though she lives out in the country? (<i>Interview: Mary Schneider</i>) • Does any of the evidence suggest that people in low-population states would be ignored without the Electoral College? (<i>"Issues Week" on People's Television</i>)



Losing... But Winning

Did you know it's possible for a candidate to become president without getting the most votes? It doesn't happen often, but it has happened:

1876 Election	Rutherford Hayes	Samuel Tilden
Popular Votes	4,034,142 (47.92%)	4,286,808 (50.92%)
Electoral Votes	185	184
Winner	X	
1888 Election	Grover Cleveland	Benjamin Harrison
Popular Votes	5,538,163 (48.63%)	5,456,002 (47.87%)
Electoral Votes	168	233
Winner		X
2000 Election	Al Gore	George W. Bush
Popular Votes	50,999,897 (48.38%)	50,443,633 (47.80%)
Electoral Votes	266	271
Winner		X



VoteBlog: Unequal Representation

If a pizza was divided into 100,000 slices, would you rather have 53 of those slices or only 15? Either way, you wouldn't get much pizza. But you'd still have more if you got 53 slices.

Now imagine that instead of a pizza, you have a vote. And that vote has been divided into 100,000 shares. A person with 53 of those shares has more voting power than someone who only has 15 shares. Got it?

This is exactly what happens in the Electoral College: The Electoral College assigns each state a certain number of electoral votes for president. Each state gets as many electoral votes as it has representatives in Congress: two per state, plus an additional number based on population. No state gets less than three electoral votes no matter how small its population.

This means that the number of people represented by each electoral vote is different in each state. People in small states end up with more voting power than people in large states, and that's not fair. Just look:

State	Electoral Votes	Total State Population	People Per Electoral Vote	Voting Power per Person
WY	3	563,626	187,875	.00053% of a vote
CA	55	37,253,956	677,344	.00015% of a vote

Radio Interview: Voter Ignorance

Host: I'm here with Dr. Reeda Lott, an expert in modern communication. Dr. Lott, in today's age do voters have any excuse for not being informed about the candidates they're voting for?

Dr. Lott: There's not much excuse left, Bob. In 2011, 96.7% of U.S. households owned a TV set.

Host: Wow. That's almost everyone. But what about the internet?

Dr. Lott: According to the 2010 census conducted by the U.S. government, people in 80.2% of U.S. households used the internet either at home or at another location.

Host: So if people want to find out about a political candidate, it should be pretty easy to get information. Just turn on the TV or surf the Web.

Dr. Lott: That's right. These days, voters have easy access to all the information they need to make informed decisions about candidates.

Student IM Chat

AnneInCA: Yay! We R going 2 B seniors! What classes R U taking?

JasonInNY: Government, math, English, band

PaulInTX: Government--me too! Plus Spanish, math, drama, literature

ChanaInFL: Government--totally! Ditto on the rest. Can't wait for school to start.

AnneInCA: I have government too

JesseInGA: Me too. Looks like government is a requirement to graduate in most states!

Electoral College

Name: _____

John Smith, Voter

TRANSCRIPT | 8675579 | SEP 23 2008

"Presidential elections are really depressing for me. I'm a Republican, but here in New York the democratic candidate usually wins--by a lot! In 2008, Obama won our state with 62% of the vote. McCain only got 32%. The same thing happened in the last two elections: The Democrat got about 60% of the vote, while the Republican only got 35 or 40%. All of New York's electors always go to the Democratic candidate. Republicans are completely outnumbered in my state, so I feel like my vote doesn't count!"



Article: Campaign Spending

DOC#061A

11/25/11

[T]he campaigns spent 1% of their political advertising money in two-thirds of the states. Indeed, they spent no money at all in 23 states Meantime, fully 72% of all presidential campaign money was spent in five familiar battleground states: Florida, Iowa, Ohio, Pennsylvania, and Wisconsin. It is well-understood now that "most states are largely ignored even in close presidential races."

— from the *Harvard Journal on Legislation*

Page 1 of 1

Evening News: Voter Turnout

TRANSCRIPT | 8675579 | SEP 23 2008

News Anchor #1: Tonight we've got some telling statistics about voter turnout. Data shows that in the 2004 presidential election, voter turnout rose by 2% in the 12 states where the election was least competitive. But in the 12 states where the election was most competitive, voter turnout rose by a whopping 9%.

News Anchor #2: That's a big jump.

News Anchor #1: It is. This data shows that voter turnout was 7% higher in states where the election was most competitive.



Candidate Visits in 2008

DOC#061A

11/25/11

During the 2008 presidential campaign, the two presidential candidates traveled the country visiting states to talk to voters. But not all states received the same amount of attention:

0 Visits	14 States
1 - 5 Visits	18 States
9 - 19 Visits	16 States
27 - 29 Visits	2 States

Page 1 of 1

Electoral College

Name: _____



Article: Electoral College is Staying

DOC#06 A

11/23/11

In February 2011, another bill to replace the Electoral College with a popular vote was introduced in Congress. Will the bill pass? If history is any guide, probably not. The Electoral College has existed as part of our Constitution for over 220 years. In that time, constitutional amendments to abolish or change the Electoral College have been proposed in Congress more than 700 times. Not one of those proposals has passed.

Page 1 of 1



Landscape of a Popular Election

Imagine that it's election night, you're waiting to find out who will be the next president, and you see these results:

Candidate	% of Popular Vote
Chin	20%
Hill	27%
Perez	18%
Ray	12%
Drake	23%

These imaginary results show what could happen if the U.S. changed to a popular vote. In this example, there are five candidates running in the national election. As you can see, this kind of straight popular vote could lead to several candidates receiving small shares of the vote. Even though Candidate Hill only receives 27% of the vote, she still wins the election! With this method, someone could become President with a very low percentage of popular support.

Page 1 of 1

Eyeing the Issues with Ivan

TRANSCRIPT# 18675809

SEP 2 3 2011

Ivan: We're talking about whether the Electoral College should be abolished. Professor Goldman, you say it should stay? Tell us why.

Prof. Goldman: Look, how many presidential elections has the U.S. had in its history?

Ivan: Fifty-six.

Prof. Goldman: Exactly. The Electoral College has worked 56 times, and have we ever had riots during our presidential elections? Ever had a war break out?

Ivan: Never. Our elections are always peaceful.

Prof. Goldman: Some countries can't hold a presidential election without violence and strife. That has never happened in the United States. Obviously, we've got a system that works.



2007 Election in France

DOC#06 A

11/23/11

In France, if no candidate wins more than 50% of the vote in the first round, they hold a second round of voting to decide between the top two candidates from the first round.

First Round Popular Vote (April 21-22, 2007)

Sarkozy, N.	Royal, S.	Bayrou, F.	Le Pen, J.	Others
31.2%	25.9	18.6%	10.4%	13.9%

Second Round Popular Vote (May 5-6, 2007)

Sarkozy, N.	Royal, S.
53.1%	46.9%

Winner: Nicholas Sarkozy

Page 1 of 1

Electoral College

Name: _____

Diggin' the Issues with Leah

Leah: Today we're talking about whether the Electoral College is democratic. Senator Duffy, you say it is? Tell us why.

Sen. Duffy: People forget there is more than one kind of democracy. In a "representational" democracy, citizens choose people to represent them in government.

Leah: That's the kind of democracy we have in the United States. Citizens in each state vote for people to represent them in the Senate and the House of Representatives.

Sen. Duffy: Exactly. And did you know that each state has the same number of electors in the Electoral College as it has representatives in Congress?

Leah: That seems fair.

Sen. Duffy: And democratic! I've never heard anyone say we should get rid of Congress and let all the citizens travel to Washington, D.C. to make laws. Have you?

Leah: Sounds like a nightmare, Senator.

Sen. Duffy: We don't call ourselves undemocratic because we send representatives to Congress. Our Electoral College is just another form of representational democracy.

Interview: Mary Schneider

Interviewer: Tell us how you feel about the Electoral College.

Mary: I like it. The election is always pretty close in Pennsylvania, so presidential candidates pay a lot of attention to our state.

Interviewer: But you live way out in the country. Do you get to see any candidates in person?

Mary: Sure! That's one great thing about the Electoral College. Candidates pay attention to everyone in the state--not just people in the big cities.

Interviewer: So you don't support a change to a national popular vote?

Mary: No way. In Pennsylvania, 73% of the people live in urban areas. If we didn't have the Electoral College, presidential candidates would only campaign in the big cities. Those of us in rural areas would never see them!

"Issues Week" on People's Television

Host: It's time for another election season! Today we have expert Maddy Watson in the studio to talk about how the Electoral College protects the interests of all Americans. Ms. Watson, how does that work?

Ms. Watson: With the Electoral College, candidates must get support from enough states in order to win the election.

Host: That's because voters in each state decide which candidate will get their state's electoral votes?

Ms. Watson: Exactly. That means candidates need to think about the needs and interests of Americans all across the country--even Americans who live in low-population states such as Nebraska or Idaho.

Host: And if we had a national popular vote, then what? People in low population states would be ignored?

Ms. Watson: Look at it this way: With a population of more than 8 million, New York City alone has more people than Nebraska, Idaho, West Virginia, Hawaii, Vermont, and Wyoming put together. Why would a candidate bother visiting any of those states when so many more people could be reached with a single trip to New York City?

Pro-Electoral College Flyer

Think there's no popular vote for President?

THINK AGAIN!

1 popular election per state x 50 states (plus the District of Columbia) =

51 Separate Popular Elections for President

When you go to the polls on Election Day, you are participating in a popular vote to elect the President. Each state has its own popular vote to decide which candidate should get the state's electors.

Your Vote Counts!

Paid for by the Electoral College Action League

DRAFTING BOARD

Electoral
College



Name: _____
Class: _____
iCivics Username: _____
iCivics Password: _____

Use this worksheet to keep track of your progress in *Drafting Board*.

Glossary of Terms

Claim: where you stand on an issue

Counterclaim: where the other side stands on an issue

Reason: an explanation for something, like why your claim is right

Evidence: proof that can be given to support something; it backs up your reason

Rebuttal: statement of why you disagree with something

Transitions: words used to make a paragraph flow smoothly

Use this space to write down the basics of your essay.

Big Question: Should the Electoral College be abolished?

Yes or No

My claim:

DRAFTING BOARD

Issue Analyzer

In the Issue Analyzer, you will investigate both sides of the issue. First you must sort through your evidence to complete the missing sections of the story. When you're done, you will understand both sides of the issue and have a chance to pick your side.

Here are your objectives:

- Read the article
- Complete the story chunks
- Choose a side

Date Completed: _____



Claim Creator

The Claim Creator helps you outline the reasons behind your claim. These reasons will help you draft the three main paragraphs of your essay, so they're really important. You will also have to back up your reasons with evidence, so read closely.

Here are your objectives:

- Pick sides
- See vote results
- Select your reasons
- Justify your best reason
- Support your side with evidence
- Select the other side's reasons

Date Completed: _____



Paragraph Constructor 1

The Paragraph Constructor helps you write the three body paragraphs of your essay. For the 1st paragraph, make sure to support your reason with evidence.

Here are your objectives:

- Arrange the sentences
- Complete the sentences with evidence
- Place transitions
- Edit your paragraph

Date Completed: _____



DRAFTING BOARD

Paragraph Constructor 2

Now it's time to create your 2nd body paragraph. For your 2nd paragraph, make sure to support your reason with evidence. This time use your own language to complete the evidence sentences.

Here are your objectives:

- Arrange the sentences
- Complete the sentences with evidence
- Place transitions
- Edit your paragraph



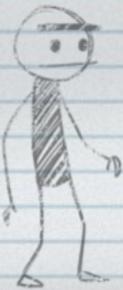
Date Completed: _____

Paragraph Constructor 3

Now it's time to create your final body paragraph. For your 3rd body paragraph, make sure to support your reason with evidence. This time you are ready to write the whole paragraph yourself. If you get stuck, use the blue evidence buttons for help.

Here are your objectives:

- Write your paragraph using your third reason and evidence
- Edit and check your paragraph



Date Completed: _____

Critic Crusher

The Critic Crusher will help you look at the other side's argument. You can see your opponent's reasoning and use your evidence to shoot it down. The first exercise will guide you through how to write a rebuttal paragraph and the second exercise will let you try it yourself. At the end, you will pick which paragraph you think is best.

Here are your objectives:

- Acknowledge the other side's reason
- Use your reasons & evidence to show the other side is wrong
- Restate your claim to make your point
- Pick a paragraph
- Place transitions
- Edit and check



Date Completed: _____

DRAFTING BOARD

Introduction Introducer

The Introduction Introducer will provide you with strategies to create a strong opening paragraph that will grab your reader's attention. Remember, you only have one chance to make a first impression.

Here are your objectives:

- Sort the hook sentences
- Edit your paragraph
- Choose a hook for your paragraph
- Place transitions



Date Completed: _____

Intro Strategies

Background info gives the reader a better understanding of the history behind the problem.

Statistics or quotes can engage the reader and get them interested in your side of the debate.

Questions or scenarios catch the reader's attention and makes them curious.

Conclusion Crafter

The Conclusion Crafter will give you the strategies for creating a strong closing paragraph that summarizes your argument. You will have the chance to put everything in your own words and make an impact!

Here are your objectives:

- Summarize your side of the issue
- Pick a clincher sentence
- Restate your reasons
- Place transitions
- Sort the clinchers
- Edit and check



Date Completed: _____

Closing Clincher Strategies

Statistics or quotes reinforce your message by showing that you can back it up with facts and figures.

Next steps gives you a chance to make suggestions based on your argument.

Consequences can show your reader what might happen if something isn't done to solve the issue.

One last edit & check, and you are done!

Peer Editing

Name: _____

STEP ONE Give Compliments! Mark places in the text where the writing is effective. For example:

STEP TWO Make Suggestions. Offer specific ideas for how to improve the writing. For example:

Easy to Understand. Are there places where the writing is really clear? Compliment the writer on things like...

- Good use of details
- Effective organization of ideas
- Sticks to the topic—no unrelated ideas



Great Words. Has the writer chosen some words that really sparkle? Circle great word choices and mark them with a star. ☆

Sentence Flow. Does the writing read smoothly? Mark places where the writer has...

- Used transitions effectively
- Used a variety of sentence lengths
- Done anything you think works well!

Confusion. Are there confusing parts? Figure out why you are confused. Should the writer...

- Add some details?
- Organize the ideas in a clearer sequence?
- Stick to the topic and cut ideas that don't fit?

Word Choice. Could the writer spice up the writing by choosing more interesting words? Mark boring words (such as *bad* or *nice*) so the writer can find a more descriptive alternative.

Sentence Flow. Does the writing read smoothly? If not, figure out why:

- Do any sentences seem *way* too long? Suggest a way to break them up.
- Are too many sentences really short? Suggest a way to connect some of them.

STEP THREE Make Corrections. Check the essay for problems with spelling, grammar, sentence structure, capitalization, punctuation, and other technical errors. Mark these on the text.



Drafting Board

Peer Edit Guide

Peer Editing

Name: _____

STEP ONE Give Compliments! Mark places in the text where the writing is effective. For example:

STEP TWO Make Suggestions. Offer specific ideas for how to improve the writing. For example:

Easy to Understand. Are there places where the writing is really clear? Compliment the writer on things like...

- Good use of details
- Effective organization of ideas
- Sticks to the topic—no unrelated ideas



Great Words. Has the writer chosen some words that really sparkle? Circle great word choices and mark them with a star. ☆

Sentence Flow. Does the writing read smoothly? Mark places where the writer has...

- Used transitions effectively
- Used a variety of sentence lengths
- Done anything you think works well!

Confusion. Are there confusing parts? Figure out why you are confused. Should the writer...

- Add some details?
- Organize the ideas in a clearer sequence?
- Stick to the topic and cut ideas that don't fit?

Word Choice. Could the writer spice up the writing by choosing more interesting words? Mark boring words (such as *bad* or *nice*) so the writer can find a more descriptive alternative.

Sentence Flow. Does the writing read smoothly? If not, figure out why:

- Do any sentences seem *way* too long? Suggest a way to break them up.
- Are too many sentences really short? Suggest a way to connect some of them.

STEP THREE Make Corrections. Check the essay for problems with spelling, grammar, sentence structure, capitalization, punctuation, and other technical errors. Mark these on the text.



Drafting Board

Peer Edit Guide