From Votes to Leaders

Trace how constitutional rules turn votes into elected offices.

SS24.6.14 "Outline the process of selecting political leaders of the United States as established in the Constitution and its amendments."

NAME _____ DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline each step in choosing members of Congress or the president, and circle the amendment numbers that change who votes or how leaders are chosen.

Three Paths on Election Day

1. On election day, a voter sees names for Congress on a ballot. The Constitution gives each state seats in the House of Representatives based on population. Today, voters in each district choose one representative every two years. Each state also has two senators, who serve six-year terms. Originally, state lawmakers chose senators. The 17th Amendment changed that rule so voters choose them directly. Representatives and senators make laws, but they win separate elections. A vote for one office does not choose the other.

2. The president is chosen through another path. In every state, voters choose a slate of people called electors, usually by voting for presidential and vice-presidential candidates. State rules determine how electors are chosen; today, every state uses a popular vote. Each state has as many electors as its total number of senators and representatives in Congress. Under the 12th Amendment, electors cast separate votes for president and vice president. If one presidential candidate earns a majority of electoral votes, that candidate becomes president. The vice president also needs a majority.

3. If no presidential candidate wins an electoral majority, the 12th Amendment sends the choice to the House. Each state delegation gets one vote as the House chooses from the top three candidates. If no vice-presidential candidate wins a majority, the Senate chooses from the top two. Other amendments shape who can take part. The 19th Amendment bars denying citizens a vote because of sex. The 26th protects citizens age 18 or older from being denied a vote because of age. The 23rd Amendment gives Washington, D.C., electors.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. Outline how voters select a representative and a senator today. How often is each office elected?

2. Trace the usual path from a voter's presidential ballot to the choice of a president.

3. What happens if no candidate wins an electoral majority for president? What happens if no candidate wins one for vice president?

4. How did the 17th Amendment change the selection of senators, and how does the 26th Amendment affect who can help choose leaders?

3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

A student says, “The person with the most votes from people always becomes president.” Write four sentences that correct this claim, invent a situation in which the House makes the choice, and explain one amendment that affects who can vote.

ANSWER KEY

From Votes to Leaders

GRADE 6 · SS24.6.14

PART 1 · READ AND MARK

Underline each step in choosing members of Congress or the president, and circle the amendment numbers that change who votes or how leaders are chosen. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 · ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	Outline how voters select a representative and a senator today. How often is each office elected?	**Voters in each district choose a representative every two years. Voters directly choose their state's senators, who serve six-year terms.**
2	Trace the usual path from a voter's presidential ballot to the choice of a president.	**Voters choose a slate of electors, usually by voting for candidates. Electors vote for president, and a candidate who receives a majority of electoral votes becomes president.**
3	What happens if no candidate wins an electoral majority for president? What happens if no candidate wins one for vice president?	**The House chooses the president from the top three candidates, with one vote per state delegation. The Senate chooses the vice president from the top two.**
4	How did the 17th Amendment change the selection of senators, and how does the 26th Amendment affect who can help choose leaders?	**The 17th Amendment changed the selection of senators from a choice by state lawmakers to a direct vote by voters. The 26th bars denying citizens age 18 or older a vote because of age.**

PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

The person with the most votes from people does not always become president because electors choose the president. Voters choose electors through state elections, and electors cast votes for president. Suppose three candidates split the electoral votes so none wins a majority; the House chooses from the top three, with each state delegation getting one vote. The 26th Amendment protects citizens age 18 or older from being denied a vote because of age.

Accept responses that distinguish voters' ballots from electors' votes, give a possible split with no electoral majority, and correctly describe the House's role. The amendment may be the 19th or 26th if its effect is stated accurately.