

Votes That Decide

Follow the process from state voters to the presidency.

SS.7.CG.3.14 "Explain the purpose and function of the Electoral College in electing the President of the United States."

NAME _____

DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline the sentences that explain how citizens' popular votes lead to electoral votes, and circle the sentence that states the number of electoral votes needed to win.

From Ballots to President

- ① On Election Day, voters across the United States choose a president, but they do not cast the final official votes for president. Instead, each state holds a popular vote to choose a group of electors. Together, these electors form the Electoral College, a process created by the Constitution. The number of electors for each state equals its senators, always two, plus its representatives in the House. The District of Columbia has three electors. There are 538 electoral votes in all.
- ② After a state's popular vote is counted, the winning candidate usually receives all of that state's electoral votes. Maine and Nebraska can divide electoral votes by congressional district, so a candidate may receive some, rather than all, of their votes. Electors meet in their states in December and cast electoral votes for president and vice president. Congress counts these votes in January. To win the presidency, a candidate needs a majority of 538 electoral votes, which is at least 270.
- ③ The Electoral College gives every state a role in the national election while using state results to select electors. It can produce a different winner from the candidate with the most popular votes nationwide because electoral votes are awarded state by state. If no candidate wins 270 electoral votes, the House of Representatives chooses the president. In that special election, each state delegation has one vote. The Electoral College does not replace voting by citizens, because citizens' votes determine which electors their state selects.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE Use the passage

1 How is a state's number of electors determined?

2 What do electors do after their state's popular vote has been counted?

3 Why can the Electoral College winner be different from the candidate with the most popular votes nationwide?

4 What happens if no candidate receives at least 270 electoral votes?

3 YOUR TURN Your own words

Write 2 or 3 sentences describing a possible election in which Candidate A wins the presidency but Candidate B receives more popular votes nationwide. Explain how the Electoral College could lead to this result.

PART 1 • READ AND MARK

Underline the sentences that explain how citizens' popular votes lead to electoral votes, and circle the sentence that states the number of electoral votes needed to win. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 • ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	How is a state's number of electors determined?	A state has two electors for its senators plus one elector for each of its representatives in the House.
2	What do electors do after their state's popular vote has been counted?	They meet in their state in December and cast electoral votes for president and vice president.
3	Why can the Electoral College winner be different from the candidate with the most popular votes nationwide?	Electoral votes are awarded state by state, so a candidate can win enough electoral votes without receiving the most popular votes nationwide.
4	What happens if no candidate receives at least 270 electoral votes?	The House of Representatives chooses the president, with each state delegation having one vote.

PART 3 • YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

Candidate A wins several states by narrow margins and receives at least 270 electoral votes. Candidate B wins more votes nationwide, but Candidate A wins the presidency because electoral votes are awarded state by state.

Accept any accurate explanation showing that electoral votes are awarded by state and that a candidate needs at least 270 electoral votes to win. The student scenario may use invented candidates and states.