From Ballot to Office

Trace nominations, elections, and electoral votes

9-12.GOV.51 "Describe the nomination and election process in American national and state elections, including the Electoral College."

NAME _____ DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline the steps that select party nominees, circle actions voters take in general elections, and number the Electoral College steps in order. Use your marks to track how candidates reach office.

Two Choices, Two Stages

1. Imagine choosing candidates for governor and president in the same year. Before the general election, parties select nominees. In many states, voters choose among presidential hopefuls in primaries; in others, caucus participants meet to discuss and choose preferences. These results help determine delegates to national party conventions, where parties formally nominate presidential candidates. Parties also nominate candidates for state offices under state rules that may include primaries. A primary chooses a party's nominee, not the final officeholder.

2. Next comes the general election. Voters decide between the parties' nominees and any other eligible candidates. For governor, voters cast ballots statewide, and the Electoral College plays no role. Voters also elect U.S. senators statewide and U.S. representatives by district. A candidate who loses a party primary usually does not appear as that party's nominee in the general election. Thus, nomination narrows the field before voters fill offices.

3. The presidential general election has an extra step. Voters cast ballots for slates of electors pledged to presidential and vice presidential candidates. Each state receives electors equal to its number of U.S. senators plus representatives, and Washington, D.C., has three. Most states award all their electors to the statewide winner; Maine and Nebraska can split theirs by congressional district. Electors then cast the official votes. A presidential candidate needs a majority of electoral votes, currently at least 270 of 538, to win.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. Trace how a presidential candidate moves from a primary or caucus to a party nomination.

2. How does the general election for governor differ from the presidential general election?

3. Describe how voters elect U.S. senators and representatives, then explain how electing the president differs.

4. How is each state's number of electors set, and how do most states award them?

3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

Write a 60 to 80 word election-night report for a fictional state whose voters favored one candidate in a presidential primary and a different candidate in the presidential general election. Explain what each result does, what happens to electors under the usual rule, and how the state's governor is elected.

ANSWER KEY

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HIGH SCHOOL · 9-12.GOV.51

PART 1 · READ AND MARK

Underline the steps that select party nominees, circle actions voters take in general elections, and number the Electoral College steps in order. Use your marks to track how candidates reach office. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 · ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	Trace how a presidential candidate moves from a primary or caucus to a party nomination.	**Primary or caucus results help determine delegates, and delegates at the national party convention formally nominate the candidate.**
2	How does the general election for governor differ from the presidential general election?	**Voters cast ballots statewide for governor without an Electoral College. In the presidential election, voters choose slates of electors, who cast the official votes.**
3	Describe how voters elect U.S. senators and representatives, then explain how electing the president differs.	**Voters elect senators statewide and representatives by district. The presidential election also involves electors, who cast the official votes.**
4	How is each state's number of electors set, and how do most states award them?	**A state has as many electors as it has U.S. senators and representatives combined. Most states award all electors to the statewide winner; Maine and Nebraska can split theirs by district.**

PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

In Cedar State, voters favored Rosa Vale in a presidential primary. That result helped determine delegates to her party's national convention, but it did not make Vale president. At the general election, voters statewide backed another party's nominee, Malik Chen. Under the rule used in most states, Chen's slate is awarded all Cedar State's electors. Those electors cast the official presidential votes. Cedar State's governor is chosen through a statewide election, not through the Electoral College.

Accept accurate variations that distinguish nomination from election and distinguish statewide or district voting from the Electoral College. In the report, the primary favorite need not become the party's national nominee.