

Path to 270

Trace how electoral votes elect the president and vice president.

CE.8.e "describing the role of the Electoral College in the election of the president and vice president."

NAME _____

DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK _____ Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline the sentences that explain what voters, electors, and Congress do in a presidential election. Circle the two numbers that show the total number of electors and the number needed to win.

How the Electoral College Works

- ① Every four years, voters in each state cast ballots for president and vice president. They usually see the names of candidates, but their votes help choose electors. Electors are people selected under each state's rules to represent that state's result. The total number of electors for a state equals its number of members of Congress, senators plus representatives. The District of Columbia has three electors. Altogether, the Electoral College has 538 electors in all today.
- ② After the popular vote is counted, most states award all of their electoral votes to the candidate who won that state. Maine and Nebraska can divide some electoral votes by congressional district, plus votes based on the statewide winner. This means a candidate can win the national popular vote yet not win the presidency. To become president, a candidate needs a majority of electoral votes, at least 270. The vice presidential candidate on the same ticket is elected with the president.
- ③ In December, electors meet in their own states and cast separate votes for president and vice president. Their certificates are sent to Congress. In early January, Congress opens and counts the electoral votes during a joint session. The candidate with 270 or more electoral votes becomes president, and the winning ticket's vice presidential candidate becomes vice president. If no presidential candidate receives a majority, the House of Representatives chooses the president, with each state delegation casting one vote.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE Use the passage

1 How do votes cast by citizens help choose electors?

2 Why can a candidate win the national popular vote but not become president?

3 What do electors do in December, and what does Congress do afterward?

4 What happens if no presidential candidate receives a majority of electoral votes?

3 YOUR TURN Your own words

Write exactly three sentences to explain why winning the national popular vote does not by itself elect a president. Include the roles of voters, state results, and the 270 electoral-vote requirement.

PART 1 • READ AND MARK

Underline the sentences that explain what voters, electors, and Congress do in a presidential election. Circle the two numbers that show the total number of electors and the number needed to win. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 • ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	How do votes cast by citizens help choose electors?	Citizens' votes help choose electors who represent their state's result.
2	Why can a candidate win the national popular vote but not become president?	Most electoral votes are awarded by state results, and a candidate must win at least 270 electoral votes.
3	What do electors do in December, and what does Congress do afterward?	Electors meet in their states and cast votes for president and vice president. Congress opens and counts those electoral votes in a joint session.
4	What happens if no presidential candidate receives a majority of electoral votes?	The House of Representatives chooses the president, with each state delegation casting one vote.

PART 3 • YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

Voters cast ballots for a ticket, and those ballots help choose electors in each state. In most states, the ticket that wins the state receives all its electoral votes. A ticket needs at least 270 electoral votes, not simply the most popular votes nationwide, to win.

Accept clear explanations that distinguish the national popular vote from electoral votes and state that 270 electoral votes are needed. For the open response, require exactly three sentences that address voters, state results, and the electoral-vote requirement.