



## Number of Electors by State



We the CivicsKids



Lesson 3

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NATIONAL CONSTITUTION CENTER

# We the CivicsKids

## THE VOTE

ARCADIA UNIVERSITY  
— SCHOOL OF CONTINUING STUDIES —  
KING OF PRUSSIA CAMPUS

Lesson 3



## The VOTE

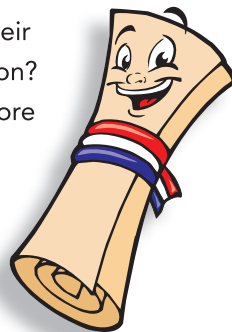
Running for president is a tough job, but so is being a voter! As citizens, it is our responsibility to be “informed” voters. Informed means we have to learn about the issues and problems in our country. We have to think about how these issues and problems affect us and our country. We have to listen to the ideas of the candidates for solving problems and making our country better. We do this by reading newspapers and internet reports; by listening to the candidates’ speeches and debates; and, most importantly, by evaluating all the information and deciding who is the best person to lead our country for the next four years – that’s the person who will get our vote!

Election Day is always the first Tuesday after the first Monday in November. Check a calendar. When will Americans go to the polls to elect their president this year?

When citizens cast their vote, they will not be electing the president directly. Their votes will choose “Electors.” Each state has a number of electors decided by the number of their US senators and representatives. If a candidate gets the most popular (people) votes in the state, he/she gets ALL the electoral votes for that state, except for Maine and Nebraska. If a candidate wins more than half of the electoral votes (270 or more) he/she wins the presidency. Look at the electoral map. Find your state. How many electoral votes does your state have? Which state has the most? Or the least? How does the number of electoral votes a state has affect how you would campaign if you were a candidate? Why?

About a month after the general election, the electors meet in their States Houses and cast their votes for their candidate. Could a candidate win the popular (people) vote and lose the election? Well, it actually happened in 2000. Al Gore won the popular vote, but George W. Bush had more electoral votes. George W. Bush became president.

Some people want the Electoral College vote to end and have the popular vote decide the winner of the presidential election. What do you think?



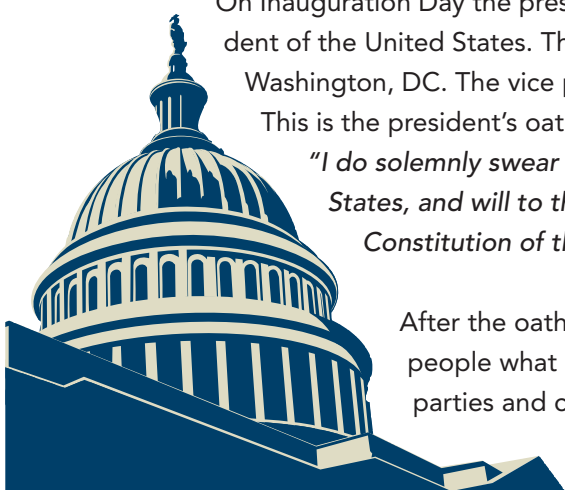
### The Inauguration

On Inauguration Day the president-elect takes his or her oath of office and officially becomes the President of the United States. The ceremony usually takes place on the steps of the Capitol Building in Washington, DC. The vice president takes the oath of office at the same ceremony as the president.

This is the president’s oath:

*“I do solemnly swear (or affirm) that I will faithfully execute the office of President of the United States, and will to the best of my ability, preserve, protect and defend the Constitution of the United States.”*

After the oath of office, the president gives his inaugural speech. In it he or she tells the people what his hopes and goals are for the nation. Later that night there are many parties and celebrations throughout the capital. The next day the president and vice-president get to work!



### Living in the White House

The president and his family live in the White House which is located at 1600 Pennsylvania Avenue in Washington DC. Ever wonder what the White House is like or what it would be like to live there? Well, it is pretty big – 132 rooms. It might take a while to get around, but there are some things that could make the walk worth it. You could go bowling in your own bowling alley, or watch a movie in the White House theater. Outside you would find a swimming pool, tennis court, basketball court, and even a putting green. All that exercise might make you hungry. No problem! The White House has its own chef. In fact, the kitchen staff can serve a meal for up to 140 of your friends. There is even a chocolate shop where fabulous desserts and treats are made!

Would you like to take a tour of the White House? It is open to the public and free. You just have to make a reservation. You can also see what it is like by going to the following sites:

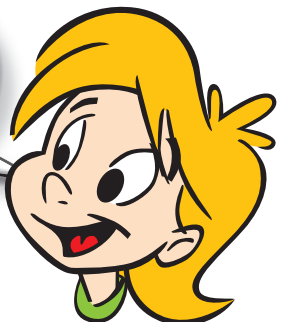
- ★ White House Interactive tour  
<http://www.whitehouse.gov/about/inside-white-house/interactive-tour>
- ★ White House Museum tour  
<http://www.whitehousemuseum.org/overview.htm>
- ★ 3-D tour of the White House and grounds  
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ktqgtlFjWRw>



## Sticky Situation:

Your principal has been given some extra ground behind your school. The school board has given the principal permission to ask the students how to best use the newly acquired ground. After meetings with all of the students in the school, the principal has come up with the top two ideas. You want the ground to be used for a soccer field. Others want the ground for planting vegetables and flowers that can be sold to raise money for trips and special new programs. After the school-wide vote, the idea of planting a flower and vegetable garden wins over the soccer field. Your friends decide not to work on the garden because their idea did not win the vote. They say that voting is a waste of time. How would you feel and what would you say to your friends?

What would you do? Why?



### Literacy Links

- **The Ballot Box Battle** by Emily Arnold McCully
  - **Vote** by Eileen Christelow
  - **Grace for President** by Kelly DiPucchio
  - **Schoolhouse Rock** – Electoral College  
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oylFqf3XH24>
  - **Scholastic Election 2012**  
<http://magazines.scholastic.com/election-2012>
- Video: The Electoral College**