

Debate the Electoral College

Overview:

This lesson is an opportunity to allow students to take a stand on a specific issue, specifically the Electoral College.

Essential Question:

Should the Electoral College be changed to meet the needs of our changing society?

1. Share with students the history of why the Electoral College was put into place. Show the history of the Electoral College clip and have students answer the following questions:

[History of the Electoral College with Michael White](#)

- Who put the Electoral College in place?
 - When do the electors generally meet to cast their votes?
 - Where is the Electoral College mentioned in the Constitution?
 - What were some of the reasons that the founding fathers chose the Electoral College system as a means for electing the president?
2. Have students read two articles one on each side of the debate (or one that addresses both sides), then as a class have students watch the following clips from C-SPAN:
 - [National Popular Vote vs. Electoral College Vote](#)
 - [1888 Election Clip](#)

Make sure that students understand that only 48 of the 50 states have a winner-take-all system. Maine and Nebraska has a proportional allocation of votes. Watch the following clip for details.

- [Proportional Voting in the Electoral College](#)
3. Have students watch the final clip on the problems that would occur with a popular vote system. Once your students have watched the video ask them to take one of the following stances:
 - [Changing the System](#)

The Electoral College:

- should be changed.
- should be kept the same.
- should be dismantled and a whole new system put in place.

From here you can either have students do a debate, writing prompt, or create a commercial and tape it.

Extension Activity:

- Have students write a proposal to change the 12th Amendment in regards to the Electoral College. Have the class stage a mock vote to change the Amendment. This would present a good opportunity to teach the process of how an Amendment can be changed.

Media

[History of the Electoral College with Michael White](#)

[National Popular Vote vs. Electoral College Vote](#)

[1888 Election Clip](#)

[Proportional Voting in the Electoral College](#)

[Changing the System](#)

Additional Resources:

[NY Times Article](#)

[Background on Electoral College \(PDF\)](#)

[12th Amendment](#)