

# The Electoral College

*Yesterday, Today and Tomorrow*

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INSDG 616  
Design Document  
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# Introduction

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## **Background**

The League of Women Voters of the United States encourages the informed and active participation of citizens in government and influences public policy through education and advocacy. Its primary purpose is to promote political responsibility through informed and active participation of citizens in government.

This WBT project will be funded through The League of Women Voters Education Fund (LWVEF). The LWVEF provides local and state leagues, as well as the wider public, with information and educational services on elections and on current public policy issues. The LWVEF is “renowned for its ability to make complex and controversial issues accessible to the non-expert citizen in a balanced, evenhanded way.”

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## **Opportunity statement**

The goal of the League of Women Voters is to increase the active participation of U.S. citizens voting in the 2000 Presidential election. The League works to promote the election of the President and Vice-President by direct popular vote and believes strongly that the electoral college should be abolished.

This module will be accessed by clicking on a link on the Election Process web page of the League; the link will be an icon using a representative graphic from the module.

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## **Audience**

The primary audience is U.S. citizens ages 18 and older. This is a very broad audience of young and old, multi-cultural, and with educational levels varying from non-degreed citizens to those who have attained the highest education levels. Computer skills vary from those who are new to a computer and those who are very computer-literate.

Entry level skills are:

- Basic computer skills
  - Access to Internet through browser
  - Ability to send and read email
  - Ability to read and write English at a minimum of 6<sup>th</sup> grade level
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## Introduction continued

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- Goal/Objectives** The goal of this on-line module is for American citizens to participate in a dialog about the value of the Electoral process.
- At the end of this on-line module, participants should be able to:
- Define the difference between the popular vote and the Electoral Vote in the presidential election.
  - Critically judge the merits and faults of the current American electoral process.
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# Instructional Strategy

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## **Presentation of Information**

Cognitive skills are the domain of learning for this program, in particular:

- Knowledge
- Comprehension
- Synthesis
- Evaluation

Because of the cognitive domain of learning, and the geographic spread of the audience, WBT was chosen to deliver the course material.

This program will use a combination of CBT for the historical and current descriptions of the Electoral College, and VAC, for the asynchronous discussion and feedback evaluating the value of the electoral college.

A timeline metaphor (Yesterday, Today, Tomorrow) was chosen to engage the learner and organize the information.

Audio clips are available to further engage the user in the learning. Users with computers without soundcards will see transcription of the audio.

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## **Learner participation**

Several types of interactions are included to meet the objectives of the course, and to keep the participant involved.

- One pre-test question will be part of the opening screen to stimulate further interest. Feedback will be provided.
  - Rollovers on graphics will reveal additional text information about the topic.
  - Rollovers on graphics will play short audio clips for those users with computers with sound cards. The audio can be enabled or disabled by a button on the screen.
  - Map graphics of the United states programmed with the ability for the learner to be able to visually see the number of electoral votes per state and to allow and to be able to track the current electoral polling of the 2000 election. The Map can be further viewed by state or by region.
  - A “game” using the map and a vote count graphic will allow the learner to manipulate and predict the outcome of not only the current election but past elections based on a variety of factors.
  - Threaded discussion question: Do you think the Popular Vote should be used to elect the President instead of the current Electoral College? Why?
  - Email a friend about this site.
-

## Instructional Strategy continued

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### Evaluation strategy

#### **Level I Evaluation - Comments on the website**

Learners will be able to post their opinions about the website to the League of Women Voters by clicking on the "Register Your Opinion about this site" navigation button.

#### **Level II Evaluation – After the November Election**

Learners who participate in this on-line course will be asked to provide email and contact information. Learners will be contacted by email and telephone after the election to determine if 1) they voted in the 2000 Presidential election and 2) if they want join the League in abolishing the Electoral College (Take Action).

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## Navigation Map and WBT Outline

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<b>Navigation Map</b>	Refer to Appendix A for a complete map of the navigation of the module.
<b>Goal</b>	American citizens will understand the role of the Electoral College in presidential elections and develop an opinion on its effectiveness.
<b>Objectives</b>	After completing this lesson, the users should be able to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Define the difference between the popular vote and the Electoral vote in the presidential election.</li><li>• Critically judge the merits and faults of the current American electoral process.</li></ul>
<b>Module Title</b>	The Electoral College: Yesterday, Today, Tomorrow
<b>Length</b>	30 minutes
<b>Content</b>	<p>This module begins with an introductory exercise to grab the interest of the user, then directs the user to the Welcome Screen. The Welcome Screen introduces the user to the module, and has links to the three Electoral College topics, as well as the Debate Room, Learning Resources, and Register Your Opinion sections. These links will always be on the screen, so that the user can jump to from one topic to any other at any time. Next and Previous buttons will let the user page through the module. All pages will have links to global resources such as Help, Site Map, Technical Requirements/copyright, and email to the Webmaster.</p> <p>This module will include these topics:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• The constitutional origin of the electoral college</li><li>• The current electoral process</li><li>• Some suggested changes in the process</li><li>• Discussion questions and postings</li><li>• Follow-up resources and actions</li></ul>

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## Navigation Map and WBT Outline continued

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### Introduction Screen

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#### Detailed Content

This topic will include:

- Description of the Harrison/Cleveland election of 1888
  - Graphic of 1888 newspaper headlines and other period photos
  - Graphics of popular and electoral vote results
  - Pictures of Harrison and Cleveland
  - Audio recordings of candidate quotes
- 

#### Learner activities

Activities include:

- Reading
  - Listening (if user's computer is equipped with sound card)
  - Rollover of pictures to reveal quotes, in text and audio
- 

#### Assessment

- Multiple-choice question: Who do you think should win this election?

Possible answers:

- A. Cleveland won, because he won the popular vote.
  - B. Harrison won, because he won the electoral vote.
  - C. Cleveland was elected by the Senate since neither had a majority.
  - D. Harrison was elected by the House of Representatives since neither had a majority.
- 

#### Evaluation

- Feedback and remediation
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### Topic 1 – Why was the Electoral College created?

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#### Detailed Content

This topic will include:

- Constitutional definition of the Electoral College
  - Description of 12<sup>th</sup> Amendment
  - Description of 23<sup>rd</sup> Amendment
  - Graphic of Constitution text
  - Graphics of colonial political figures (Jefferson, Madison)
-

## Navigation Map and WBT Outline continued

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### Learner activities

Activities include:

- Reading
  - Clicking on hypertext to glossary
  - Clicking on hypertext to external links
  - Rollover of graphics to reveal historical quotes
- 

### Evaluation

- Comments about module (Level 1 Evaluation)
- 

### Topic 2 - How Does the Electoral College Work Today?

### Detailed Content

This topic will include:

- Description of current process
  - Graphic timeline of key dates in 2000
  - Information about current election
  - Graphic of elector
  - Graphic Maps of recent elections
- 

### Learning Activities

- Reading
  - Listening (if user's computer is equipped with sound card)
  - Rollover timeline to reveal chronological steps in electoral process
  - Clicking on hypertext to glossary
  - Clicking on hypertext to external links
  - Rollover elector graphic to read/listen about how someone becomes an elector, and what the responsibilities are
  - Play Electoral College Game (see Appendix B for a description)
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### Assessment

- Interactive electoral college simulation with feedback (not graded)
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### Evaluation

- Comments about module (Level 1 Evaluation)
-

## Navigation Map and WBT Outline continued

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### Topic 3 - Should Changes Be Made?

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#### Detailed Content

This topic will include:

- Descriptions of elections where the popular vote and electoral vote disagreed (Hayes-Tilden election of 1876, Harrison election of 1888)
  - Description of role of House of Representatives
  - Description of Elector defection
  - Photos of two representative American voters
- 

#### Learning Activities

- Reading
  - Listening (if user's computer is equipped with sound card)
  - Rollover the photos of voters to read/hear opposing viewpoints on possible change to the Electoral College
- 

#### Evaluation

- Comments about module (Level 1 Evaluation)
-

## Navigation Map and WBT Outline continued

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### Debate Room (Threaded discussion)

#### Detailed Content

This topic will include:

- Invitation to participate on an online debate room moderated by a national League member
  - Registration form (email address, name, state required)
  - Discussion question: Do you think we should continue to use the current Electoral System to elect the President of the United States?
  - Discussion postings and follow ups from other participants
- 

#### Learner activities

Activities include:

- Reading
  - Writing
- 

#### Evaluation

- Moderator feedback via threaded discussion and private email (League moderators should receive training on on-line collaboration learning techniques)
  - Follow-up emails from League volunteers after the election about participation in election and further action (Taking Action with League)
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## Navigation Map and WBT Outline continued

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### Register Your Opinion about this site

#### Detailed Content

This topic will include:

- Registration form (name, email address, state required)
- Posting form for comments
- Forwarding form to send site info to friend
- Short email from the director of the League sent to participant with thanks for participating in the web site

#### Learner activities

Activities include:

- Reading
  - Writing
-

## Navigation Map and WBT Outline continued

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### Learn More

#### Detailed Content

This topic will include:

- Link to Glossary terms (see Appendix C for list of terms)
  - Search of League of Women Voters site
  - External links to additional electoral college on-line and book references
- 

#### Learner activities

Activities include:

- Reading
  - Writing
- 

### Help

#### Detailed Content

This topic will include:

- Link to Site map
  - Link to technical requirements (RealMedia plugin)
  - Copyright information
- 

#### Learner activities

Activities include:

- Reading
  - Clicking on site map to navigate to any topic or page
  - Clicking on RealMedia link to install RealAudio player
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# Resources

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## Design resources

### People

Project manager

Instructional designer

Subject matter expert

Programmer

### Equipment

Computers

Software to develop prototype  
(BBEdit, GoLive, Dreamweaver)

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## Development resources

### People

Project manager

Subject matter experts

Course developer

Instructional designer

Graphic artists

Programmers

Sound editor

Pilot subjects

### Equipment

Computers

Servers

Network access

Software to create:  
Text  
Audio  
Graphics

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## Resources continued

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**Delivery  
resources**

People

Webmaster

Moderators

Political consultant

System manager

Programmers

Course developer

Local installation support

Help desk personnel

Equipment

National server network

Computers

Network software

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## Program Management

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**Timeline:**

**Start date: May 1, 2000**

**End date: August 7, 2000**

<b>Activity</b>	<b>Resources</b>	<b>Start Date</b>	<b>End Date</b>
Project kick-off meeting	Client, project manager,	May 1	May 1
Develop course objectives	Instructional designer	May 2	May 8
Develop instructional analysis	Instructional designer	May 9	May 15
Develop design document	Instructional designer, project manager	May 16	May 30
Develop storyboard	Instructional designer, graphic artist	May 16	May 30
Develop flowchart	Instructional designer, graphic artist	May 16	May 30
Write content	Course developer	May 30	June 12
Create graphics	Graphic artists	May 30	June 12
Write programming	Programmers	May 30	June 12
Alpha version completed		June 15	
Client and SME review	Client, SME, project manager		June 19
Revise Alpha version	Programmers, course developer, graphic artists	June 19	June 26
Run Beta test	Project manager, pilot subjects	June 26	June 28
Review Beta test results	Client, project manager, course developer	June 31	August 2
Final revision	Programmers, course developer, graphic artist	August 3	August 6
Module on-line	Project manager, programmers, League IT group	August 7	

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## Program Management continued

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### Roles and Responsibilities

Team Members	Responsibilities
Client	Review and approve all content
Subject matter experts	Create subject outline, content, and review for accuracy
Project manager	Manage people, materials and budget
Instructional designers	Design instructional strategy, flowchart
Course developers	Create text content
Graphic artists	Create graphic elements
Programmers	Write HTML and Java code
Sound editor	Record, edit and compress sound bites
Pilot subjects	Review and critique module
Web master (League of Women Voters)	Manages installation of module in League web site
Moderators	Review email postings, post follow-up questions
Political consultant	Reviews content of moderators postings
Help desk support	Monitor user comments,
Installation personnel	Install code and graphics on server

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### Risks and Dependencies:

1. If the client does not meet the agreed upon review dates, the project may be delayed or go over initial budget.
  2. Only minimal content and programming changes can be made at the Beta step in order to meet the deadline.
  3. The League of Women Voter is responsible for hosting the site. Any IT or server problems that occur after the module has put on-line must be addressed by the IT group of the League. The League is responsible for any help desk support.
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# Deliverables

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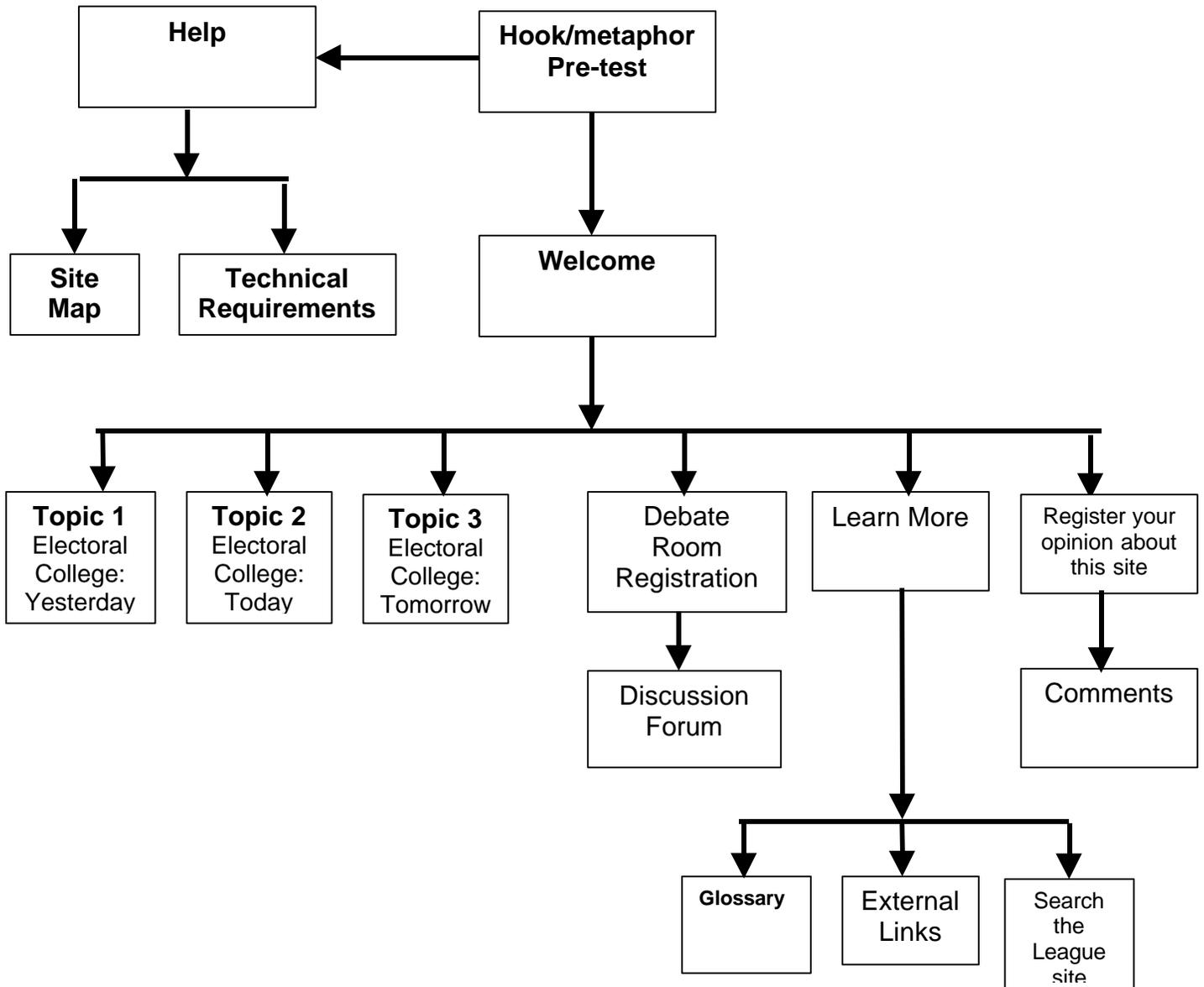
## Files

- HTML code – web page creation
  - Java code – map game
  - Graphic elements – graphics for web pages
- 

## Documents

- Completed Task Timeline and Log of Activity
  - Index of graphic elements created
  - List of Glossary Terms
  - Adult Learner Analysis
-

## Appendix A - Navigation Map



## Appendix B – Electoral College Game

### Topic 2 – Today

**Situation:** The player takes on the role of chief political strategist for candidate A. The polls have candidate A and candidate B neck-and-neck. The player’s job is to make sure that candidate A focuses his time and money on winning a slim majority in the least number of states to win the required electoral votes. Candidate needs to win the election with the smallest amount of popular vote.

**Game:** The US map shows the electoral count, and population of each state. As the player chooses states for his candidate A, the electoral tally and population count for each candidate changes. When the player is done, he clicks Submit, and checks his answer.

**Feedback:**

If the player clicks Submit before his candidate has enough electoral votes, feedback reminds him that a majority of the 538 votes is necessary.

If candidate A has enough electoral votes to win, but also has a large popular percentage, the player is asked to try again, since it is unlikely that in this election any candidate will win a large popular percentage.

When the player is close to the best answer, he is congratulated, and the best answer shown.

If the player doesn’t get close to the answer after three tries, the correct answer is shown.

## Appendix C – Glossary Terms

**Absentee Voting** – A way people can vote when they can't get to their polling place. They vote on a special form and mail it in.

**Appropriation** – An act of Congress that enables Federal agencies to spend money for specific purposes.

**Baiting** – Tormenting or teasing by saying annoying or cruel things.

**Balanced Budget** – A balanced budget occurs when total revenues equal total outlays for a fiscal year.

**Bias** – A leaning in favor of or against something or someone; partiality or prejudice.

**Bills** – Denoted with HR in the House and S in the Senate and then followed by an assigned number. This is the most common form of legislation. Types of bills include:

*Private Bill* – A bill that deals only with specific private, personal, or local matters other than with general legislative affairs. The main kinds include immigration and naturalization bills (referring to particular individuals) and personal-claims bills.

*Public Bill* – A legislative bill that deals with matters of general concern. A bill involving defense expenditures is a public bill.

**Campaign** – A series of planned actions for getting someone elected.

**Candidate** – A person who seeks, or who has been suggested for an office or an award.

**Congressional Districts (CD)** – A political subdivision in which the nation is divided for the purposes of elected U.S. Representatives. Each district contains about 570,000 people.

**Constituency** – All of the voters in a particular district.

**Constituent** – Having the right to vote or elect; any of the voters represented by a particular official.

**Co-Sponsor** – Additional members (after the original sponsor) who join on to support a bill.

**Citizen** – A person who is a member of a country or state; citizens have certain duties and rights.

**Debate** – Face-to-face discussion of candidates' views on issues.

**Democracy** – Government by the people, through free and frequent elections.

**Editorial** – Expressed opinions intended to persuade viewers and listeners by taking a side.

**Election** – The process whereby eligible persons vote to determine who will hold a political office.

**Election Day** – The day reserved for people to vote. In general elections, it is by tradition the first Tuesday after the first Monday in November. Primary elections are also usually held on Tuesdays.

**Electoral College** – A group of persons called “electors,” selected by voters in each state, that officially elects the president and vice president. The number of electors in each state is equal to the number of representatives in both houses of Congress.

**Federal** – Of or describing a union of states having a central government or pertaining to that government.

**Franchise** – The constitutional right to vote.

**G.O.P.** – Letters that stand for Grand Old Party, the nickname of the Republican party.

**Grassroots** – The involvement of common citizens.

**Hype** – Slang for political ads, e.g. slick short TV commercials.

**Incumbent** – A person now holding an office.

**Initiative** – An electoral procedure whereby citizens can propose legislation or constitutional amendments and refer the decision to a popular vote by obtaining the required number of signatures on a petition.

**Issues** – Problems, ideas to be talked about, questions, decided upon and voted on.

**Landslide** – An election in which one candidate defeats the other by a very large margin.

**Law** – An act of Congress that has been signed by the President or passed over his veto by Congress. The two digits before the hyphen correspond to the Congress, and the use of one or more digits after the hyphen refer to the numerical sequence in which the bills were signed by the President during that Congress.

**Machine** – A hierarchically organized, centrally led state or local party organization that rewards members with material benefits (patronage).

**Mudslinging** – Negative, often personal, frequently inaccurate or exaggerated attacks of the opposition.

**Office-Block Ballot** – A ballot listing all candidates for a given office under the name of that office; also called a “Massachusetts” ballot.

**Nominee** – The person that a political party chooses to represent in a general election. This is called *nomination*.

**Non-partisan** – Not supporting or controlled by a group or a cause.

**Partisan** – A strong, often emotional supporter of a person or cause; can apply to a group as well as individuals.

**Party** – A group of people who join together because they share many ideas about what government should do.

**Party-Column Ballot** – A ballot listing all candidates of a given party together under the name of that party; also called an “Indiana” ballot.

**Platform** – A public statement of the principles, objectives, and policy of a political party, a plan.

**Political Action Committee (PAC)** – An organization of 50 or more people that is created to raise money for favored political candidates and is registered with the Federal Election Commission (FEC). A PAC may be formed by any group, including businesses, labor unions, and special interest bodies.

**Poll** - A place where votes are cast; also refers to a survey to assess public opinion or to forecast an election,

**Pollster** – A person or company that researches public opinion.

**Precinct** – A division of voters by neighborhood; smallest political unit in U.S. politics. Cities and counties are divided into precinct polling districts, each containing 200 to 1,000 voters and a polling place.

**Primary Elections** – an election prior to the general election in which voters select the candidates who will run on each party’s ticket. Primaries are also used to choose convention delegates and party leaders, and may be open or closed.

a. *Open Primary* – an election that permits voters to choose on election day the party primary in which they choose on election day the party primary in which they wish to vote. They may vote for candidates of only one party. A blanket or “free love” primary is a type of open primary. In the voting booth you mark a a

ballot that lists the candidates for nomination of all parties, and thus you can help select the Democratic candidate for one office and the Republican candidate for another.

b. *Closed Primary* – the selection of a party's candidates in an election limited to registered party members. Prevents members of other parties from "crossing over" to influence the nomination of an opposing party's candidate.

c. *Runoff Primary* – If no candidate gets a majority of votes, a runoff is held to decide who should win.

d. *Presidential Primary* – a primary used to pick delegates to the presidential nominating conventions of the major parties.

**Public** – Of or having to do with the people as a whole.

**Ratified** – Formal approval by voters or other persons.

**Referendum** – The legal process of submitting to the voters for their approval or rejection of proposed state or rejection of proposed state of local laws or constitutional amendments.

**Rhetoric** – The ability to use language effectively. The undue use of exaggeration or display. The art of influencing others through use of words.

**Split-Ticket Voting** – Voting for candidates of different parties for various offices in the same election. For example, voting for a Republican for senator and a Democrat for president.

**Straight-Ticket Voting** – Voting candidates who are all of the same party. For example, voting for Republican candidates for senator, representative, and president.

**Unbiased** – Without favor or blame, objective.

## Appendix D – Sample Electoral College Websites

<http://www.nara.gov/fedreg/elctcoll/index.html>

The National Archives and Records Administration's Electoral College Home Page. There is a variety of information and statistics on presidential elections past and present:

### Electoral Results

- Electoral College Box Scores, 1789 – 1996 including Candidates, Electoral Votes, Popular Votes, and Elections Notes
- Electoral Votes, By State, 1789 – 1996
- Electoral Votes, by State, listing individual electors: 1992, 1996

### General Information

- Frequently Asked Questions
- Procedural Guide to the Electoral College
- Relevant Provisions of the U.S. Constitution and Federal Law
- The Electoral College and the National Archives and Records Administration
- List of States and Votes

### Selected Links

- Nara's Treasures of Congress Exhibit "The Election of 1800 – Tally of Electoral Votes"
- Nara's Presidential Libraries Home Page
- U.S. House of Representatives, see "Election Statistics"
- Federal Election Commission
- Federalist Papers
- National Association of Secretaries of State
- Council of State Governments
- American Presidents Life Portraits

<http://www.state.ma.us/sec/ele/elecoll/collhist.htm>

This site is published by William Francis Galvin, Secretary of the Commonwealth, Elections Division

- Electoral College History
- Election Process of the Electoral College in Massachusetts
- The Electoral College Proceedings in Massachusetts
- Counting Electoral Votes on January 6
- Electoral Votes by State

- Selected Readings on the Electoral College
- 1996 Massachusetts Electoral College Members

<http://www.fec.gov/pages/ecworks.htm>

This site describes the current workings of the Electoral College.

<http://www.newamericans.com/citizen/classes/electoral.htm>

This is a site created by the New Americans of Washington Professional Immigration and Naturalization Assistance Service based in Redmond, Washington and serves the Seattle and Western Washington areas. Topics include:

- 1 Page graphic depicting steps of how a President is elected
- Table of How U.S. States Choose Presidential Electors (state/nominated by party, primary or convention/Names on ballot/Legally bound)
- Electoral Calculator to let you plot your own electoral college strategy
- 1888 Election plays a “star role” in any discussion of the Electoral College (the Electoral College prevented Cleaveland from winning the White House based on the lopsided electoral vote tallies in the South)
- 1876 Election results (one vote victory of Hayes over Tilden in the Electoral College) confirms the electoral system’s very slight bias in favor of small states. It is the only election where the popular vote was close enough and the small states voted nearly unanimously.
- The Election of 1824 in which John Quincy Adams won over Andrew Jackson.

[www.state.mt.us/sos/Elections/2000 Election/Electoral College/electoral\\_college.html](http://www.state.mt.us/sos/Elections/2000_Election/Electoral_College/electoral_college.html)

Montana Secretary of State: Elections: Electoral College

[www.vote-smart.org](http://www.vote-smart.org)

Selected by the American Political Science Association as the “Best Political Web Site”. A comprehensive source for information on candidates and issues.

- Vocabulary listing
- U.S. Election Sources include: The Democracy Network, Election Connection, Election Watch, ElectNet, Federal Election Commission, The National Elections Studies
- Free publications and reports
- American Electoral Politics, Lobbyists, and Political Party Resources