<table>
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<th>ESSENTIAL QUESTION:</th>
<th>What is the purpose of the Electoral College and is it still an effective way to decide the President?</th>
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| PROCEDURES:         | **Day One** - Please read the article titled “Steps to Becoming President”. Then answer the questions that follow in the box labeled “Assignment #1”.  
|                     | **Day Two** - Please read the article titled “Electoral College Explained”. Then answer the 8 questions that follow in the box labeled “Assignment #2”  
|                     | **Day Three** - Using the electoral map and knowledge gained from the other assignments complete the written response question. |
| WORK TO BE RETURNED:| **Assignment #1** - Responses to 6 matching questions, 4 fill in the blanks questions, and 6 numbering responses.  
|                     | **Assignment #2** - Response to the 8 questions.  
|                     | **Assignment #3** - Written Response question |
| RESOURCES:          | Assignment #1- iCivics adapted reading  
|                     | Assignment #2- USA.gov reading and “It’s time to Abolish the Electoral College” Brookings publication  
|                     | https://www.usa.gov/election  
|                     | Assignment #3- Image from  
|                     | http://www.educationworld.com/tools_templates/FINAL_template_set2_electoral_college_map.doc |
| TIME ALLOCATED:     | Assignment #1 - 20 minutes  
|                     | Assignment #2 - 20 minutes  
|                     | Assignment #3 - 20 minutes |
Every four years, our country holds a presidential election. The candidates debate, hit the road talking to voters, and put advertisements on television, radio, and the internet. All this hard work actually starts months or even years before Election Day in November. So what does it take to go from a hopeful candidate to a victorious president? The first public step a candidate has to take is to declare to the nation that he or she wants to be the president. Then candidates must get support for their campaign, raise money, and get the attention of the leaders of his or her political party.

Candidates for the larger political parties are chosen at party meetings called conventions. The parties hold conventions at the local, state and national levels. There are two main ways the states send people to the national convention: the caucus and the primary. Both methods result in a set of delegates who will attend the national conventions. The delegates pledge that when they attend the convention, they will vote for the candidate the state political party supports.

Each party holds its national conventions in huge arenas with balloons, confetti, funny looking hats, and lots of media coverage. Delegates chosen from each state discuss and debate the candidates, listen to speeches, and help create the party platform. Near the end of the multi-day convention, the delegates cast their votes for the party’s nominee who will run in the national election. The presidential and vice presidential nominees each make an acceptance speech that is meant to bring the party together to support the nominees and forget about the months of debate and arguments that led up to their nomination. This is the first major step in getting the national campaign for president up and running.

Millions of dollars are spent in the months leading up to the national conventions, but that is just the beginning! Once the field is narrowed to the two main party candidates, fundraising becomes even more important. There are only a few months before the general election, and each candidate needs to get his or her message out to the American public. The parties in each state help the candidates with paying the bills and organizing support. A political campaign is the process of gathering public support for a candidate. The goal of a campaign is to deliver as much information about the candidate and the party’s platform to as many people as possible.

Candidates campaign in a variety of ways.

All of these efforts lead up to Election Day in November. People across the nation go to the polls and select which candidate they want for the next president. As polls close from state to state, the news media reports who is getting the most votes. The next morning, the media announces a winner of the popular vote, which is a tally of all the votes cast. But that is just one step in the process of electing the president…

The U.S. Constitution requires an extra step in the process of electing the president. This step is called the Electoral College. Each state has a group of people called electors who cast the actual votes for president. When you vote for a presidential candidate, you’re really voting to decide which candidate the electors in your state will vote for. In December after the election, the electors meet in their state capitals and cast their ballots. Even though you cast one vote for a president/vice-president team, electors cast two votes—one for each office. After the electors vote, president of the Senate collects the votes and counts them. There are 538 electors, and in order to win, the presidential and vice-presidential candidates must have an absolute majority of votes. That means more than half the votes—at least 270. Then, on January 20, the President-elect and Vice President-elect take the oath of office and are inaugurated. But what if there’s a tie? Or what if no candidate gets 270 votes? In that case, the House of Representatives votes to decide which candidate will become president. If they haven’t done that by the time Inauguration Day rolls around, then the vice president-elect acts as president. The Senate decides who that will be by voting to choose one of the vice-presidential candidates. And if that’s a tie, too? Then the current Speaker of the House becomes president. That’s never happened, but the elections of 1800 and 1824 both had to be resolved by Congress.
**Assignment #1**

**Matching Directions:** Match the definitions to the words they describe by placing the correct letter on the line before the number.

1. When a candidate states that he or she is planning to run for office

2. Party meetings where candidates are selected and the platform is created

3. Someone who represents the party views of a state at a national convention

4. The person who is chosen to run as a party’s candidate in the national election

5. Given by the people selected to run for President and Vice President at the end of a national convention

6. A collection of all the efforts a candidate makes to win an election

   - A) delegate
   - B) nominee
   - C) campaign
   - D) declare
   - E) convention
   - F) acceptance speech

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**Fill in the Blanks Directions:** Fill in the paragraphs with the correct terms.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Electoral College</th>
<th>popular vote</th>
<th>absolute majority</th>
<th>electors</th>
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Every four years on Election Day, the American public elects the president of the United States. The first set of election results tallies the ____________, a count of every vote cast. These results determine whom each state’s ____________ will support when they meet and participate in the ____________. In order to win, a candidate must have 270 out of a total of 538 electoral votes. This number is half of 538 (269) plus one, which is considered a(n) _________________.

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**Numbering Directions:** A candidate made a to-do list for his run for the presidency. Place them in the correct order by placing a “1” next to the event that should come first.

1. Attend the national convention for my party! Hopefully, I will be nominated
2. I’m the nominee! As part of my national campaign, I’ll make speeches, show up on tv, send out mailings, and attend rallies.
3. Wait for the results of the Electoral College and prepare my acceptance speech for inauguration!
4. Declare my candidacy! I want to be the President, and I hope my party will support me!
5. Hang out with family and friends to await the results of the popular vote on Election Day.
6. Campaign for the primary and caucus season by making speeches and talking to voters.

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**Reading #2 - The Electoral College Explained**

The Electoral College was a compromise created by the Framers of the Constitution to ensure that the president was chosen intelligently and with the input of each of the states. The number of electors is determined by the
federal representation for each state. For example, California has 53 members of the House of Representatives and 2 Senators, which = 55 electoral votes.

There are a total of 538 electoral votes (535 members of Congress and 3 for the District of Columbia). A majority of 270 electoral votes wins the presidency. It is possible to win the Electoral College but lose the popular vote. Just as Donald Trump did in 2016, a candidate can win a majority of electoral votes with a minority of popular votes and still be elected to the office. This also happened in 2000, and three times in the 1800s. However, in most cases, if a candidate wins the popular vote in a state (your vote) he or she will win all of that state's electoral votes. This concept is called “winner takes all.”

When a candidate does not win a majority of Electoral Votes (at least 270) it is up to the United States House of Representative to decide on the fate of the election. The top three contenders for winning the election will be voted on by all 438 members of the House of Representatives. This does not include the 100 members from the U.S. Senate. This becomes a huge popularity contest as the candidates try to win the support from all the Representatives. Some candidates will even promise Representative powerful jobs in the government if they vote for them!

While it is clearly important to win the states with larger numbers of electoral votes, states that are traditionally “close” (meaning someone wins/loses by only a few percentage points) are referred to as swing states, because they could “swing” to either candidate. These states are crucial! Some examples of swing states are New Hampshire (NH), Pennsylvania (PA), Florida (FL), Virginia (VA), Missouri (MO), Iowa (IA), Ohio (OH), Colorado (CO), Nevada (NV), and New Mexico (NM).

Issues with the Electoral College

In most elections, the Electoral College has operated smoothly. State voters have cast their ballots and the presidential candidate with the most votes in a particular state has received all the Electoral College votes of that state, except for Maine and Nebraska which allocate votes at the congressional district level within their states. However, the electoral college is viewed as highly controversial and calls to abolish it are becoming more prevalent.

The latest controversy arose when Donald Trump lost the popular vote by almost three million ballots yet won the Electoral College by 74 votes. That made him the fifth U.S. chief executive to become president without winning the popular vote. This discrepancy between the Electoral College and the popular vote created considerable contentiousness about the electoral system.

The Electoral College suffers from another difficulty known as the “faithless elector” issue in which electors cast their ballot in opposition to the winner of their state’s popular vote. Throughout American history, 157 electors have voted contrary to their state’s chosen winner. Some of these individuals dissented for idiosyncratic reasons, but others did so because they preferred the losing party’s candidate. The precedent set by these people creates uncertainty about how future Electoral College votes could proceed.

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Assignment #2

Directions: Complete the following questions below using Reading #2 on the previous page.

1. What was the Framer’s purpose in creating the Electoral College?
2. How is the number of electoral votes determined for each state?

3. How many electoral votes must a candidate win to become President?

4. Explain the concept of “winner take all” as the main feature of the Electoral College.

5. What happens if a candidate does not win a majority of electoral votes after the popular vote has been counted?

6. What is a swing state? Why are they important in a close election?

7. How many times in history has the President won the presidency without winning the popular vote?

8. What is a “faithless elector”?
Assignment #3
Directions: Using the map above, the knowledge gained from assignments 1 and 2, and your own knowledge please complete the following written response question by responding to the bulleted questions in at least 8 sentences.

- What is the Electoral College?
- Which state do you think are most important for a candidate to campaign in? Name specific states and explain why those states are important.
- In your opinion, do you think the Electoral College is still a fair way to choose the President? Explain.