

NEWS BREAK

Wednesday's News Break selects an article from the Tuesday, December 13, 2016 print replica of The Seattle Times for an in-depth reading of the news. Read the selected article and answer the attached study questions. Please remember to always preview the content of the article before sharing with your students.

Article: Two Washington state electors sue over law on election results (NW Tuesday, B1)

Objective:

Students will examine the role of the electoral college in past and present presidential elections.

Standard:

Social Studies EALR 1: CIVICS

The student understands and applies knowledge of government, law, politics, and the nation's fundamental documents to make decisions about local, national, and international issues and to demonstrate thoughtful, participatory citizenship.

Pre-Reading and Vocabulary

- 1) Display a map of the results of the 1996 (or election year of your choice) without electoral college numbers (you might also want to conceal what year it is). You can use this map or any other similar map:
https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:1996_Presidential_Election_Results_by_Congressional_District.png. Respond to the following questions:
 - *Based on what you can tell from this map, who do you think won this election – the republican candidate (red) or democratic candidate (blue)? Why do you think this?*
 - *Do you notice any pattern in how people voted (or how the colors are arranged)? Why do you think that is?*

- 2) Review what the electoral college is by reading¹ the excerpt titled 'What is the electoral college?' on page 4 of the Newspapers In Education special section, *Election 2016: Your Critical Role in the Election Process*, which is available at:
<https://ad.seattletimes.com/FlippingBook/NIE/2016/LeagueofWomenVoters/>
 - *Does this change your initial prediction about who won the election? How so?*

¹ There are also a number of videos explaining the electoral college available online, it might be helpful to show one of these in addition to reading the NIE excerpt in order to give students multiple entries to access.

3) Now display a map of the same election results, but with the electoral college numbers clearly displayed. For 1996 you can use this map:

<https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:ElectoralCollege1996.svg>

- *Based on the electoral college results, which candidate won the election?*
- *Is the result different or the same as your predictions? How so?*
- *What do you notice about the electoral college numbers? Which states have the most electoral votes? Which states have least electoral votes? How do you think this might affect the election?*
- *Do you see any new patterns about how the vote is distributed?*

Vocabulary: Match the words to the numbered definitions in the chart below.

A. ascendant	1. make legally null and void; invalidate
B. column	2. come between so as to prevent or alter a result or course of events
C. consciences	3. a member of the US electoral college
D. corrupt	4. not in accordance with a political constitution, especially the US Constitution, or with procedural rules
E. electors	5. a supporting pillar
F. injunction	6. rising in power or influence
G. intervene	7. the quality of being particularly good or worthy
H. merits	8. having or showing a willingness to act dishonestly in return for money or personal gain
I. nullify	9. A court order by which an individual is required to perform, or is restrained from performing, a particular act
J. unconstitutional	10. an inner feeling or voice viewed as acting as a guide to the rightness or wrongness of one's behavior

Comprehension

- 1) How much would each elector be fined for disregarding the state popular vote?
- 2) When will the electoral college meet?
- 3) When is the hearing on the injunction request?

- 4) The request is part of a longshot effort by some electors across the country to do what?
- 5) The movement has gained more attention after what?
- 6) Trump's Attorney's argued what about the case?"
- 7) How many electoral votes does Washington have?
- 8) How many electoral votes are needed to win the election?
- 9) How many electors would need to withhold their vote in order to deny Trump an electoral college victory?
- 10) In which other states have similar lawsuits been filed?
- 11) How many electoral votes did each candidate win in the November 8th election? How does this compare to the popular vote?
- 12) What are "faithless electors"?

Group Discussion Questions or Extension Activity:

- Explore the electoral map from the 2016 election, as well as other historical elections by visiting: <http://www.270towin.com/>. Use what you find to answer the following questions:
 - By winning one additional state, Hillary Clinton could have won the electoral vote. Which state is this?
 - Are there any differences between how the electoral college was distributed in the presidential election 2016, and how the electoral college was distributed in the presidential election closest to when you were born (you will likely have to round up or down)? What are the differences?
 - What was the first presidential election that the state where you live voted in?
 - How was the vice-president chosen in the first presidential election (1789)? When did this method of choosing the vice-president change? Why?
 - How was the 1824 presidential election unique?
 - Describe the map from the 1972 presidential election. How does this compare to the other election maps you have seen?
 - In 2000 Al Gore lost the presidential election, despite winning the popular vote. Other than 2016, in which other presidential elections has happened? (Hint: there are three others)
- Read and discuss the article "2016 results put new focus on Electoral College", published on November 10, 2016, available online at: <http://www.seattletimes.com/nation-world/2016-results-put-new-focus-on-electoral-college/>
 - Do you think that the electoral still serves the initial purpose for which it was created by America's founding fathers? Why or why not? Explain your reasoning in an essay, using citations from reputable courses to support your claims.

For more information about elections, check out the NIE supplement, “Election 2016: Your Critical Role in the Election Process” available online at:
<https://ad.seattletimes.com/FlippingBook/NIE/2016/LeagueofWomenVoters/>

News Break is posted to the Web on Monday and Wednesday. Please share this NIE News Break program with other teachers. To sign-up for the electronic edition for your class, please [register on-line](#) or call 206/652-6290 or toll-free 1-888/775-2655.

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Newsbreak Answer Key: December 13, 2016

Vocabulary

- A. 6
- B. 5
- C. 10
- D. 8
- E. 3
- F. 9
- G. 2
- H. 7
- I. 1
- J. 4

Comprehension Answers

- 1) \$1000 each
- 2) December 19th
- 3) On Wednesday in U.S. District Court in Seattle
- 4) To deny President-elect Donald Trump the White House
- 5) Reports that the CIA has concluded that Russia interfered in the election to aid Trump
- 6) That it “threatens to undermine the many laws in other states that sensibly bind their electors’ vote to represent the will of the citizens, undermining the Electoral College”
- 7) 12
- 8) 270
- 9) 37
- 10) In Colorado and California

- 11) Trump won enough states to receive 306 Electoral College votes, compared with 232 for Clinton, despite her lead of more than 2.6 million in the national popular vote
- 12) Electors that do not vote for the candidate that their state popular vote has chosen