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Introduction

About This Book

The activities provided in this booklet are created to enrich government classes. They provide hands-on activities and lessons that engage students in exploring the politics of government, which is covered in all government curriculums.

This volume introduces the basic concepts of political parties, interest groups, and voting. These activities clarify the terms, concepts, and procedures that students learn about through class lectures and readings.

These government activities were created during the development of a reformatted government course at the high school level. The suggestions provided in textbooks and other supplemental material did not offer complete hands-on approaches sought by the course instructor. As the class was to be taught in a school utilizing block scheduling (ninety and seventy-five minute classes), lessons that kept students active and interested while demonstrating the key components of government were developed. The classroom lessons and materials were used and refined over a two-year period during which six sections of the new government course were taught.

The essential goals for each activity were to make them easy to use, to involve and engage the students, and to clarify key government concepts.

The topics covered in this booklet, and other *Government Activities* volumes, parallel general government textbooks and should be used as a supplemental aid. The activities and demonstrations clarify basic government concepts and allow students to work with material in ways that interest them.

All lessons were created with the teacher and student in mind. The purpose for each lesson is clearly stated and a specific list of materials required for each lesson is provided. Procedures are written in a step-by-step format to allow for easy implementation into a block or typical schedule format. Hints or tips are offered throughout the booklet to assist teachers in adapting lessons to fit their needs or the ability level of students. The Glossary, which concludes each booklet, defines government terms used throughout the lessons. Student handouts include all necessary instructions and directions as well as material to assist in grading. Finally, the material is organized in such a way that incorporating the lessons into an existing curriculum is easy and enjoyable.

Current research indicates that students who are actively engaged in the learning process retain information better than those who are passive participants in the

classroom. *Government Activities* was created with this concept in mind. The hands on approach to Government that this booklet offers will spark and maintain student interest. Being involved in the lessons allows students to become an active part of their own learning. Participation in these activities also provides students with an episodic memory of a classroom experience, strengthening the concepts being taught and therefore improving learning. Most importantly, when students are actively engaged, they have more fun. These activities make the study of government an enjoyable experience for everyone!

About the Author

Kathleen M. Glusick graduated from the University of Wisconsin – Madison with a Bachelor’s degree in Broad Field Social Studies and a minor in Psychology. She completed her Master’s of Education through Cardinal Stritch University in Milwaukee, Wisconsin. She taught World Cultures, Citizenship, Sociology, Experimental Psychology, and Government during her high school teaching career. After completing her thesis, *The Impact of Brain-Compatible Physical Structures on Classroom Learning*, Peanut Publishing was created to enhance involvement in the classroom by providing teachers with student centered activities.

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Questions or comments regarding this material are welcome. Please contact:

Kathleen M. Glusick
Peanut Publishing, LLC
N113 W15130 Montgomery Dr. #4
Germantown WI 53022

(262) 502-0342
email: dglusick@execpc.com

Kathleen M. Glusick
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LESSON 7: ELECTORAL COLLEGE SIMULATION

PURPOSE:

- Illustrate how the electoral college system works
- Actively engage students by participating in voting

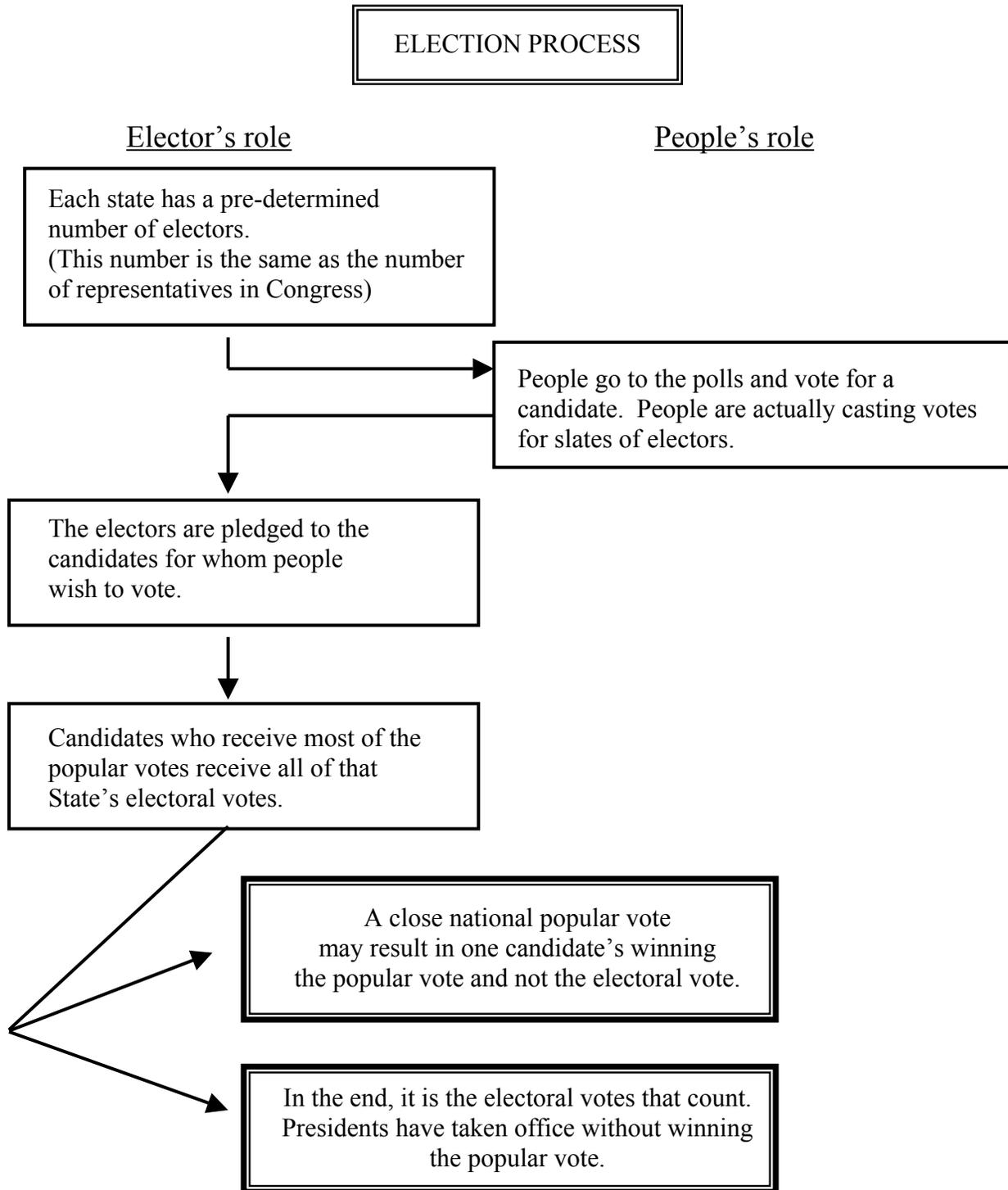
MATERIALS:

- Copies of “Student Handout: Electoral College,” page 17
- Overhead of election tally, page 18
- Copies of voting slips, page 19

PROCEDURE:

- Distribute the student handout, “Electoral College,” (p. 18) and review the electoral process.
- Explain to students that they will be simulating two elections by casting individual votes and electoral votes.
- Divide the students into four states, having them sit together and identify themselves in some way as a separate state. This activity is set up for a class with 24 students, you can adjust the numbers carefully to fit your class size.
 - State A: 9 students, 4 electoral votes
 - State B: 6 students, 2 electoral votes
 - State C: 5 students, 2 electoral votes
 - State D: 4 students, 1 electoral vote
- The first simulated election will show how the electoral process is intended to work with the popular choice also being the electoral choice. Distribute the following votes to each state:
 - State A: 7 Blue votes, 2 Red votes
 - State B: 5 Blue votes, 1 Red vote
 - State C: 2 Blue votes, 3 Red votes
 - State D: 1 Blue vote, 3 Red votes
- Going state by state, have students verbally give their vote, keeping track on the tally sheet overhead. Award electoral votes after all votes have been tallied. Determine the popular winner and the winner of the electoral vote.
- In the second simulation, the popular vote will not match the electoral vote. Repeat the process with the following votes given to each state:
 - State A: 5 Blue votes, 4 Red votes
 - State B: 1 Blue votes, 5 Red votes
 - State C: 3 Blue votes, 2 Red votes
 - State D: 1 Blue vote, 3 Red votes
- Discuss how it is possible for the popular vote not to be represented by the electoral vote.

STUDENT HANDOUT: ELECTORAL COLLEGE



ELECTION TALLY

ELECTION #1

STATE	POPULAR VOTE			ELECTORAL VOTE		
	# POSSIBLE	BLUE	RED	# POSSIBLE	BLUE	RED
A	9			4		
B	6			2		
C	5			2		
D	4			1		
TOTALS	24			9		

POPULAR WINNER:	ELECTORAL WINNER:
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ELECTION #2

STATE	POPULAR VOTE			ELECTORAL VOTE		
	# POSSIBLE	BLUE	RED	# POSSIBLE	BLUE	RED
A	9			4		
B	6			2		
C	5			2		
D	4			1		
TOTALS	24			9		

POPULAR WINNER:	ELECTORAL WINNER:
------------------------	--------------------------

VOTING TICKETS

BLUE VOTE

RED VOTE