

Unraveling the Mystery of the Electoral College

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ELECTORAL COLLEGE

In eighth grade American History the students study the American Constitution, the Twenty-seven Amendments, and the election process. The teacher clarifies the clauses of the Constitution and each Amendment with interpretation and examples so that the student can grasp the relevance and application of these revered documents. Students can see how these wonderful documents affect their lives. Directly and indirectly the students study why and how these wonderful documents influence their lives. The students discover that one of these branches (the House of Representatives) has the ability to change elected officials every two years. The change takes place by holding federal elections throughout the United States every even year. The other half of the Legislative branch (The Senate) elects about one-third of its 100 members every two years for a six-year term. Every four years the United States holds elections to fill the office of President and Vice-president. The students find out that they do not directly vote for president like the election of a member of the House of Representatives or the Senate. The students discover that a group of citizens called the Electoral College will select the next president of the United States. This becomes the mystery.

They know that their parents vote for the president, yet they don't really vote for president directly. Why? They ask. Why is our executive election different from a legislative election? So the teacher directs the class to examine the Electoral College, but the students have a difficult time understanding this eighteenth century political invention. The students wonder why this institution is relevant in the twenty-first century. The election of 2000 brought added attention to the students about the perplexing contradiction in our democratic process. They ask how can President George W. Bush be President of the United States when in the 2000 election his opponent, Vice-President Al Gore had 500,000 more votes than the newly elected president. All elections, in the eyes of students, are won by plurality or by which candidate has the highest number of votes. The students want to know how members of the Electoral College are selected and gain the right to vote for the President of the United States. When students are confronted with the special way a president of the United States is chosen, the students find it difficult to grasp a concept that goes against their prior conception of how winners of elections are chosen. The students are confronted with the eighteenth century election compromise by our founding fathers for electing the chief executive of the United States. Students ask why the creators of the Constitution came up with this different form of selecting a leader. Students learn that the Electoral College is unique, because a candidate can receive the most votes cast by the voting population and yet lose the election. Students are baffled as to why the United States Founding Fathers invented this institution and why does the nation keep this confusing and controversial process. Students should know how the Electoral College works in electing their president and why the founding fathers put this system in the election process. Students will learn that the number of electors is equal to the amount of each state's number of Senators and Representatives. If Texas has thirty-two representatives and all states have two Senators then the number of Electoral votes Texas has would be thirty-four.

Students should know why our Founding Fathers invented this unusual institution to pick the chief executive of the United States. When students discover the historical arguments that conceived the Electoral College, they will be able to clear up this veil of ignorance. As they review each approach that the Constitutional Convention delegates argued to solve the question of how to select the chief executive, it will become clear as to why the choice was made for the establishment of the Electoral College. To teach this topic, students could research the different ideas that were laid on the table at the Constitutional Convention to solve the problem of electing the president. Students should discover why compromise was necessary and that the result of this compromise helped at the time to lay the problem and fears of the Founding Fathers to rest. Then the teacher can use this historical awareness of the students to view the Electoral College process in the twenty-first century:

No other constitutional provision gave them so much difficulty in its formulation. The subject of the method of electing a president was brought up in the Constitutional Convention on twenty-one different days and occasioned more than thirty distinct votes on various phases of the subject. Over the years, no other provision has drawn so much criticism or provoked so many constitutional amendments as has the Electoral College clause. Close to seven hundred proposals to amend the Electoral College scheme have been introduced into Congress since the Constitution was inaugurated in 1789. (Cronin 33)

The Founding Fathers were borrowing an untried French governmental concept that was conceived by Baron de Montesquieu during the Age of Enlightenment. This form of government called for balance of power among the three branches of government. To the people of the Age of Reason, it made sense if you did away with an absolute monarch, who had total power, and divest that power among three branches of government, so that no one branch is more powerful than either of the remaining two branches. The competition among the independent branches would ensure the limited government that was necessary to promote liberty and prevent tyranny. Since 1619 the Americans had enjoyed and used the legislative branch to have a voice in their government. The British monarch was across the ocean from the Colonial Fathers. This distance allowed the colonists to form a practical self-government made up of elected legislatures. A legislature was no stranger to colonial people and the executive branch was used in all colonies although in different forms. Some governors were appointed to govern the colonies by the British king, some were elected by the legislature and some governors were elected by the people to govern their colony. The convention leaders had almost no concept about a judicial branch. No person, on the western side of the Atlantic had a clue what Baron de Montesquieu had in mind, when he formulated a judicial branch in his three branches of government. The Constitutional Convention knew that they did not want a king or an all-powerful type of governor, president, or monarch. The big problem was how to pick an executive (president) without giving him too much power or making him subordinate to the group of people who would select him for the job.

The Founding Fathers had three distinctive issues to define before a chief executive could be chosen. The first problem was to agree on a method of election as to how the president should be chosen. Who would choose the leader? Since the convention supported limited democracy all agreed on election but discord was over what body should be conferred with this privilege. Some convention delegates wanted the legislature to have the honor of voting for the president. Then the issue became should it be up to only the Senate, just the House of Representatives, or both houses with each member having one vote or each state's legislators voting as a single state vote. How long would the term of office last? Then some delegates felt that to be a true democracy all the people which meant white males that owned property over the age of twenty-one should have the right to vote for the chief executive. This method of election was called popular election. A third consideration for the mode of selection was to have electors chosen by either the people or

the state legislatures. This republican assembly in 1787 vacillated on the problem for twenty-one days before they finally came to an agreement. The second issue confronting the convention was the right of the president to be re-elected. Could the president be re-elected? Some delegates were adamant for one term. Others felt that if the president has provided excellent public service, he should have the opportunities to be rewarded by being re-elected. Tied into this, but considered a totally separate issue, was the third problem, which asks the question of how long the length of a presidential term should be. If no re-election was possible, some members of the convention felt a term should be as long as seven to fourteen years. Both large states and small states felt that the president should be chosen by the legislature, but he would not be eligible for re-election because that would violate the separation of powers. Under this arrangement, an incumbent president seeking re-election would not be independent and would have perverse incentives to bribe the Congress. They felt that if the president could not have a second term then the single term should be longer. But how long should this one term be? Delegates argued that the length of the term should be seven to fourteen years. This should be sufficient time for a chief executive with no chance for re-election. If re-election were possible, the length of a single term should be from two years at the least to six years at the most. The delegates had to settle all three problems as one solution. Some delegates could agree on two issues but not on a third, and so it was finally sent to a committee to iron out the arguments and bring to the table of the convention a solution to their problem of selection of the chief executive for the United States.

June 2, 1787

George Mason proposed that the chief executive be chosen by the legislature for a seven-year term, but he could not be eligible to be re-elected. James Wilson from Pennsylvania advocated popular elections for the president such as Massachusetts and New York already used in selecting their governors. George Mason's proposal was endorsed over James Wilson's as the better way of selecting the president. This debate seemed to settle the executive selection problem. The large states and small states confronted each other with their Virginia Plan and the New Jersey Plan over representation in the legislative branch. Three weeks later the Connecticut Compromise evolved and the Convention realized that this composition of the legislature was not the same as they had visualized when confirming George Mason's plan for electing the president:

The upper house now represented the states. Further, as a result of the principle of equality of representation in the upper house, the smaller states would exercise willy-nilly an inordinate influence on the selection of a chief executive. It is perhaps not surprising, therefore, that no sooner had the convention adopted the Connecticut Compromise than the issue of the mode of electing the chief executive arose once again. (Cronin 37)

July 17, 1787

Gouverneur Morris and James Wilson supported the concept of popular election, and if no candidate got a majority of votes, the legislature would select the president from the leading contenders. This caused the small states to worry that the more populated states would dominate the selection of the presidency. George Mason, from Virginia, came to the defense of the small states but not for the same reasons. He felt that because the United States was so large and the population so scattered throughout the land and, at that time, poor and slow in communication, that the citizens of the United States would not be able to make a good choice for president. They would only be aware of local leaders from which they could choose:

Mason was not challenging the right of the people to choose but, rather, their ability to do so, given the size of the electoral district within which they would have to exercise that right. The vast expanse of the United States, the difficulty of communication, and the unfamiliarity of the general populace with national personalities—all militated against informed choice. (Cronin 38)

Another argument against popular vote was surprisingly from the biggest state, Virginia. Because of the Three-fifths Compromise, Virginia enjoyed a large population for the House of Representatives, but for direct election of president, slaves could not vote, so Virginia had a smaller electorate. With a smaller electorate they would have less influence in presidential elections. Thus the vote for popular election failed.

William Houston of Georgia presented the argument against a president only having one term of office. He said that if an executive knew he could not be re-elected, he could do damage knowing there was nothing anyone could do. However, if the executive knew that he could be re-elected, it would motivate him to be a better chief executive. William Houston's suggestion for more than one term passed. At this time, the criterion for a term of office was that the legislature elect the president for a seven year term and allow the president to be re-elected. Edmund Randolph of Virginia complained that if the legislature were to have the power to re-elect the chief executive, there could be no check on the legislature and presidential candidates would cater to large states ignoring smaller ones.

July 19, 1787

William Patterson of New Jersey and Rufus King of Massachusetts stubbornly wanted popular election but they wanted to elect electors who could exercise independent judgment in selecting the well-informed people that qualified for the position of chief executive. They knew this would be difficult. John C. Calhoun stated the following:

But there is another cause that has greatly contributed to place the control of the presidential elections in the hands of those who hold or seek control of the presidential elections in the hands of those who hold or seek office. I allude, to what is called, the general ticket system, which has become, with the exception of a single State, the universal mode of appointing electors to choose the President and Vice-President. It was adopted to prevent a division of the vote of the several States, in the choice of their highest officers; and to make the election more popular, by giving it, as was professed to be its object, to the people. The former of these ends it has effected, but it has utterly failed as to the latter. It professes to give the people, individually, a right which it was impossible to exercise, except in the very smallest class of States, and even in these, very imperfectly. To call on a hundred thousand voters, scattered over fifty or sixty thousand square miles, to make out a ticket of a dozen or more electors, is to ask them to do that which, individually, they cannot properly or successfully do. Very few citizens would have the information necessary to make a proper selection; and even if every voter had such information, the diversity of opinion and the want of concentration on the same persons, would be so great, that it would be a matter of mere accident, who would have the majority. To avoid this, a political ticket must be formed by each party. But the few of each, who form the ticket, actually make the appointment of the electors; for the people individually, have no choice, but to vote for the one or the other ticket—or otherwise, virtually, away their vote—for there would be no chance of success against the concentrated votes of the two parties. (Quoted in Lence 259)

July 20, 1787

James Madison of Virginia weighed in against the legislative branch having any role in the selection of the executive, because he thought that it would be an improper collaboration between the two branches of government. He felt that the two branches should be independent of each other. James Madison was not convinced whether direct elections or electors was the best way to decide on president of the United States, but he definitely wanted to keep the legislative branch of the government out of the process.

More delegates joined the electoral side of the debate in selecting the body to select the president of the United States. However, proponents of direct election for the president and proponents of having the legislature select the executive had not disappeared from the constitutional convention. The slave states joined the bandwagon for having the electors select the president because this would be good for slave states if the number of electors were chosen in relationship to the number of their representatives in the House rather than by popular vote. Slave states had fewer voters because they did not allow slaves to vote but they could count toward population for representation in the House of Representatives. Because of the Three-Fifths Compromise, slave states had a smaller voting population in relationship to the number of members that slave states had in the House of Representatives than states of the same population with no slaves. Slave states had a larger membership in the House of Representatives than were represented by their voter population. For every five slaves in a state, three counted toward representation in the House of Representative but none of the five slaves could vote in an election. In 1860 New Hampshire had a free population of 326,073, and South Carolina had a free population of 301,302. The voter population would be close in a popular election using these two states in 1860. South Carolina had a slave population of 402,406 that could not vote but could count toward representation in the House of Representatives. Two hundred forty-one thousand, four hundred forty-three slaves would count toward representation in the House, but none of the slaves could vote. The result of the census in 1860 toward representation in the House of Representatives was New Hampshire 326,073, South Carolina 542,745. Yet New Hampshire had a larger voter population. Slave states could have a larger influence over national presidential elections through electoral voting rather than the use of popular election:

The use of electors on something less than a directly proportionate scale would help preserve the relative advantage of the South (and of the smaller states). In this spirit, Oliver Ellsworth of Connecticut moved that in place of “appointment” By the Natl. Legislature there be inserted “to be chosen by electors appointed by the Legislatures of the States in the following ratio”: each state with less than 100,000 population—one vote; between 100,000 and 300,000—two votes; and above 300,000—three votes. Since the ratio was 1:3, no southern or small state had cause to feel disadvantaged, and is not surprising, therefore, that the convention summarily proceeded to endorse the system of electors by a vote of 6 to 4. For the first time in the course of the deliberations, the legislature had been excluded from the process of selecting the executive. (Cronin 41)

Once the legislature had been removed from the selection process, this opened the ability for the president to be re-elected to his post and they like the idea of a six year term of office. The delegates agreed to not permit legislators the ability to serve as electors.

Then the problem came up as to where the electors should meet to cast their votes. Some delegates feared that states further from the point of selection would be reluctant to have people volunteer to serve as electors. Some delegates believed that if you had a single location for the convention of electors, they, as a group, could be influenced by force or could be bribed to select an unscrupulous candidate for the presidency.

July 25, 1787

The delegates had to balance three problems before they could reach a conclusion. One, they must agree on the length of the term of office for president. Two, they must agree on the question of whether the president should have more than one term of office. Three, the question of what body would select the chief executive needed to be addressed. Some convention delegates could agree on two of the three concepts, but that majority could not agree on all three problems facing the selection of the presidency. Then, it was felt that if each state had their electors meet, they would select only candidates from their own state, and the larger states could have the advantage

because they had a larger number of votes. This meant that the President of the United States would usually hail from a large state. This would put the small states at a distinct disadvantage. Gouverneur Morris then proposed to have each elector vote for two candidates, one not being from his state. That way an elector could not favor his home state nominee exclusively. In the election of 1832, the Vice-president John C. Calhoun was picked before the president, Andrew Jackson. In this case, the Vice-president had a winner with a clear majority while the presidency did not have a clear winner at first.

The convention in late July adopted the stance of having the legislature vote for the president with a seven-year term and ability for re-election. Then the question arose as to whether both houses should vote together or if each house should vote separately. Eight of the thirteen states elected their governors jointly. The other states chose their governors separately, but each house had the right to veto the other nominee. By the end of August, the convention was still at odds with each other, and could not make a decision as to whether the legislature should be joint or separate for voting for the executive. In August, again, a group tried to bring back direct election by the people or popular vote.

August 25, 1787

During the summer of 1787 in Philadelphia the arguments at the Constitutional Convention were divided by regional interest. Each section of the new nation was attempting to secure and retain as much power and influence as they could during the formative period of the Electoral College. Small states did not want to give up the weight that they enjoyed under the Articles of Confederation, the first government of the United States, each state enjoyed an equal vote in Congress. This meant that a small state like Delaware had the same power of vote as the largest states like Virginia. When the Founding Fathers were formulating a process for selecting the chief executive that could have considerable command the small states were reluctant to give up the power that they enjoyed under the Articles of Confederation.

Large states felt that the fair way to select the chief executive of the second government was to give the selection process to popular vote. The larger states felt that all voters should have the same vote to elect the leader of the government. They would have the ability to control who would become President of the United States and most likely the president would be chosen from the large states since they would have the most votes.

Southerners were afraid that if the method for selecting the chief executive were by popular vote they would lose out because a large part of their population, the slaves, were disenfranchised. This would mean that their vote and ability to win leadership for their state would be to a smaller extent than if they were to vote for chief executive in the newly proposed Congress. In the newly proposed Congress three out of every five disenfranchised slaves counted toward their power in the House of Representatives. This gave them an advantage in Congress because a non-voting population counted toward their voting population when counted for the House of Representatives.

Large northern states felt that the criteria for the ability to elect a chief executive should be based on popular vote. All voters should have an equal vote. This would give them an advantage over the large states of the south and the small states. They would dominate in the selection of President of the United States.

The Convention then flip-flopped to decide to let both houses of the legislature elect the president. In August, the convention voted for a joint ballot of both houses. The Founding Fathers felt that this would be good for the small states and the slave states. The objection to allowing the legislature to choose the president was that the chief executive could never be independent if he was subordinate to the Congress for his election even if the president had a

seven- year term and could not be re-elected to another term. Gouverneur Morris argued afterwards that if the legislature had the ability to select the president, then the elected president would be subordinate to them, and could never be truly independent. As long as a discussion was not made final, in the re-election of the president, the vote of joint legislative balloting could be overturned.

August 31, 1787

The problem was handed to the Brearkey Committee on Unfinished Parts and within four days the committee brought to the table the suggestion that the Electoral College was the best idea. Small states could enjoy a larger ratio of voting parts if the representation for electors were the same as each state's number of Congressmen rather than based on population. Slave states could enjoy the same privilege of having a larger number of votes by use of electors rather than popular election. They proposed that an independent body of men, called the Electoral College, be elected by each state, for choice of the President and Vice-president of the United States. This body's only job would be to elect the president and vice-president. They would not have one large meeting of all electors, but the electors would meet on the same day in their individual states, to cast their ballots. This would present cabal and corruption out of the picture, because of the distance between each group of electors.

In mathematical terms the advantage in the first Congress (with sixty-five members in the House of Representatives and twenty-six in the Senate) was as follows:

Delaware (smallest state)

$$\frac{1+2=3}{65+26=91}$$

Virginia (largest state)

$$\frac{10+2=12}{65+26=91}$$

Thus, as a result of the Electoral College, the ratio was 1:4 rather than 1:10 as it would have been had size of population been the sole criterion.

(Cronin 50)

Delaware was the smallest state, and had only one member in the House of Representatives, and two senators, thus it gave Delaware three electoral votes. While Virginia was the largest state that enjoyed ten members in the House of Representatives, and also two senators, thus giving Virginia twelve electoral votes. If you take the three electoral votes of Delaware in ratio to the twelve electoral votes of Virginia, you come up with one to four or twenty-five percent of the largest state's value. Whereas, if it were based solely on the population, Delaware would have one representative, compared to Virginia's ten representatives, which ratio would be one to ten or ten percent. So, using the whole number of members, of both houses of Congress as the formula for the make-up of the Electoral College would make it advantageous to the small states and by not using just voter population, the large slave states enjoyed an advantage also. This brought the small states together with the slave states to vote as a block for this method of selecting the way the Electoral College comprised. The committee agreed to have each elector vote for two men, for the office of chief executive in which both had to be from different states. This way every state could not choose a favorite son from their own state thus producing thirteen separate individuals. They could choose a favorite son but they had to choose an individual from another state both for President or they could choose two different candidates both from states other than their own. Large states could not dominate the presidential office. The electors would meet only in their states and disband immediately after they had cast their ballots. This way the electors

would not be congregated in one location thus allowing the ability for one person on a special interest group to bribe or to intimidate the decision of the President of the United States. The committee added that if no candidate received a majority the Senate would choose from the five top candidates. With the choice removed from the Congress now the Committee decide that the president could be re-elected and they shortened the length of an executive term to four years. The committee approved the idea that the chief executive could be re-elected.

If no presidential candidate received a majority in the Electoral College, the Senate would make the choice from the top five names of candidates listed. George Mason argued passionately that the Senate already had so much power and this would give them even more. Mason suggested that plurality could elect a president. During the debate Roger Sherman proposed that instead of the Senate selecting the run-off President, let the House of Representatives have the honor and let them have one vote per state and not have each representative cast one vote. If the Senate were allowed the right to select the president in a run-off, this would give the small states a double advantage. For many states, this was going too far in giving in to the small states.

At this time it was proposed that the office of vice-president, the candidate that was the electors' second choice, would preside over the Senate. Some delegates voiced opposition to the creation of the office, and others protested that the vice-president's appointment as ex-officio president of the Senate would violate the principle of the separation of powers. But once again the cast majority wished to preserve the electoral-college plan intact, and the office of vice-president and his role in the Senate were overwhelmingly confirmed:

In response, the Committee on Unfinished Parts invented the Electoral College—an ingenious means of preserving the built-in advantages of those states while removing the choice from the legislature. The Electoral College represented a congress away from home for the express and limited purpose of choosing the nation's chief magistrate. The institution of the Electoral College represented the first, indeed the primary, compromise in the arrangements for selecting an executive. National and federal elements were neatly balanced therein. But it was only part of the package. In the event that the Electoral College should fail to come up with a sufficiently national choice, the Senate (ultimately the House of Representatives), as the constitutive body for the states, would choose. In effect, therefore, in the event that the Electoral College should become a mere nominating body under the domination of the large states, the smaller and the slave states would be well placed to exercise a controlling voice over the final election in the Senate (House of Representatives). (Although the three-fifths rule did not operate at this point, the slave states retained influence by virtue of the number of southern states present.) (Cronin 54)

Students will observe that the Founding Fathers compromised and debated over the problem of the method to select the head of the executive department. All governments were monarchies in the late 1700s. There were no democratic governments that could be used as models for the newly formed United States. The Revolutionaries had formed a first government called the Articles of Confederation. One of the most detrimental weaknesses of this experimental was the lack of a chief executive. The second government needed this element to compensate for the Article of Confederations weakness. The problem came to the Constitutional Convention as to how the Chief Executive should be chosen and how much power should be conferred on this individual.

The students will be confronted in these lessons on how The Founding Fathers established a criterion for selecting this chief executive. The convention was fearful of cabal and corruption. They wanted the ability to select a chief executive in the most democratic manner without electing dictators or demagogues.

This problem was debated from July 25, 1787, until a compromise was reached on September 4, 1787.

Students will understand that three problems emerged for the method to select a chief executive. One was who should have the ability to elect this leader of the United States? How should this body be restricted to keep bribery and intimidation from occurring? How long should a presidential term last? Should a chief executive have the ability to be re-elected?

After having much debate the problem was conferred to a committee called The Brearkey Committee on Unfinished Parts. This committee drew up a method for selecting the President and Vice President of the United States. The committee chose an electoral process called the Electoral College. The Electoral College consisted of citizens selected in each state commensurate to the whole number of Senators and representatives each individual state has in Congress. Electors were to be chosen in a manner designated by each state legislature. These electors would vote as a group in their respective state capitals. Each elector would vote for two individuals for chief executive. One candidate could be chosen from the elector's own state but the other candidate must be from another state. Both candidates selected by the electors could be from two different states not including the elector's home state. All electors met in their individual states at the same time and vote. The method of selecting the state electors would be the right of each individual state. The vote would be sent to the head of the Senate, the vice president, to be counted with the Senate as a witness.

It was decided that the president could be re-elected. They hoped this would ensure good government or the chief executive would not have a second term. Since the chief executive had the ability for re-election the committee felt that a short term was appropriate. They selected four years as adequate. This would enable the president enough time to develop programs and policy to determine favorable or unfavorable opinions of his effectiveness in office. After this lesson the students will have a thorough understanding of a difficult process for election of their President of the United States. The student would have the ability to enlighten their parents who vote but do not understand the mystery of the Electoral College process.

STUDENT ACTIVITIES

Lesson One

Length of time: three class periods

Materials: teacher prepared text on the Constitutional Convention between the dates of June 1, 1787 and September 4, 1787

To have a thorough knowledge and insight into the creation of the Electoral College, students should be aware that many different men were involved in the conception of the Electoral College process. During the debates, trying to develop process for selecting a chief executive, it became evident that there were many different views of what type of process would be best for the United States. Both individuals and region preferred different forms of selection processes for election of the president. This lesson will involve individuals and their beliefs or arguments for developing the process of selecting the chief executive.

First Class Meeting

The teacher will prepare a brief but thorough account of the Constitutional Convention between the dates of June 1, 1787 and September 4, 1787 describing the major arguments that led to the formation of the Electoral College. The paper will include the arguments for the selection of the President of the United States. The instructor will incorporate the ideas and debates of the following:

1. James Wilson of Pennsylvania
2. George Mason of Virginia
3. Gouverneur Morris of Pennsylvania
4. William Houston of Georgia
5. William Patterson of New Jersey
6. James Madison of Virginia
7. Roger Sherman of Connecticut

The educator will hand out this paper for the students to read and make notes on each conventioneer's arguments.

Second Class Meeting

The instructor will lead a discussion chronologically on the development of the final decision for the method of selecting a president for the new formed second government. Students will be asked, during the discourse, which of the seven selected Founding Fathers got their ideas incorporated in the final conception of the Electoral College. Students will discuss why some ideas were not acceptable in the final draft of the Constitution. Students should be led to an exchange of ideas on the relevance of viewpoints in today's society. Would these Founding Fathers have come up with the same conclusions today as they did in 1787? Students will take notes on the discussion of the seven Constitutional Convention debaters for a quiz given at the third class meeting.

Third Class Meeting

Regular students will be given a list of the seven Constitutional Convention delegates that had been discussed in the previous two class periods. Alongside the list of men's names will be arguments or statements proffered by the seven Founding Fathers. The students will match the arguments or statements with the correct Founding Fathers.

Honor students will be given a list of the seven Founding Fathers that were presented in the student dramas and teacher prepared text. The students will write a few sentences beside each man's name discussing the Founding Fathers stand at the Constitutional Convention of 1787.

Gifted and Talented students will write an essay that will incorporate all seven Founding Fathers and their debater concerning the formation of the Electoral College.

Lesson Two

Length of time: four days

Materials: one teacher, list of the seven selected Founding Fathers, 2 student-generated script

To have a thorough knowledge and insight into the creation of the Electoral College, students should be aware that many different men were involved in the conception of the Electoral College process. During the debates, trying to develop process for selecting a chief executive, it became evident that there were many different views of what type of process would be best for the United States. Both individuals and region preferred different forms of selection processes for election of the president. This lesson will involve individuals and their beliefs or arguments for developing the process of selecting the chief executive.

Day One

The teacher will hand out the teacher prepared paper on the Constitutional Convention between the dates of June 1, 1787 and September 4, 1787. The paper will describe the major points of debate that led to the formation of the Electoral College. Students will pick one of the seven Founding Fathers to research that individual.

1. James Wilson of Pennsylvania
2. George Mason of Virginia
3. Gouverneur Morris of Pennsylvania
4. William Houston of Georgia
5. William Patterson of New Jersey
6. James Madison of Virginia
7. Roger Sherman of Connecticut

The student study will give the learner an understanding of why the subject argued his case as he did. The instructor will make sure that all seven Founding Fathers are evenly distributed to the class members.

Each group of seven students will write a scenario of the convention to dramatize the arguments for coming to the conclusion of the election process that became the Electoral College. Through this drama, students will visualize and hear the individual arguments for coming to the conclusion of an Electoral College.

Day Two

Students will be divided into two groups where at least one of the seven Founding Fathers that was researched will be represented. If there is more than one Founding Father represented in the student group, it will allow a more thorough understanding of the selected men.

Day Three

The two groups will select seven of their members to act out their play or scenario. The rest of the class will be the learner audience. At the conclusion of the first drama, the second group will present their drama. Students will be encouraged to take notes on the drama for a quiz to be given the next class meeting.

Day Four

The instructor will review the seven selected Founding Fathers arguments for developing the Electoral College. After the review, regular students will be given a list of the seven Founding Fathers that was presented in the dramas. Along the side of the list of men will be their arguments. The students will match the men to their statements.

If the student population in the classroom is smaller, the teacher will divide the students into four groups:

1. Southerners
2. Northerners
3. Large populated states
4. Small populated states

Each student will develop arguments for their selected area of inquiry. The teacher will divide the class again into groups of four so that each student in the group will reflect one of the four alliances. The selected groups of four will write a drama using each student to expound on his selected topic to dramatize the arguments for his special interest. This drama will allow the rest of the class to visualize and hear the arguments for each of the four groups. Southerners had a slave population that counted toward population in the House of Representatives but the slaves could not vote. The voter population in South was smaller than it represented in Congress. Northerners had a higher voter population than Southerners. The students will be able to visualize and hear the arguments for the small states. Small states had a disproportional amount of power under the first government—Articles of Confederation and did not want to lose this advantage to the large states that felt that the larger population should have the larger influence in the ability to choose a President of the United States.

Lesson Three

Length of time: three class periods

Materials: the teacher prepared text on the Constitutional Convention between June 1, 1787 and September 4, 1787

Day One

The instructor will distribute to the students the teacher prepared text on the Constitutional Convention between the dates of June 1, 1787 and September 4, 1787. The class will be divided equally into four groups

1. Southerners
2. Northerners
3. Large populated states
4. Small populated states

Each student will develop arguments for their selected area of inquiry. The teacher will divide the class again into groups of four so that each student in the group will reflect on of the four alliances. The selected groups of four will write a drama using each student to expound on his selected top to dramatize the arguments for his special interest.

Day Two and Three

Each group of four students will orally present their drama to the class. The rest of the class will listen and learn points of the Convention as researched by different groups. Some will have similar arguments but some will have different viewpoints.

Day Four

For the regular students the instructor will give them a matching test. On one column will be the four divisions: Southerners, Northerners, large populated states and small-populated states. The other column will have arguments that their four divisions preferred for the selection of a chief executive.

The honor students will be given a list of the four divisions: Southerners, Northerners, large populated states and small-populated states. The students will write a few sentences beside each of the four divisions to demonstrate his mastery of the arguments for the method of selecting a chief executive for the United States.

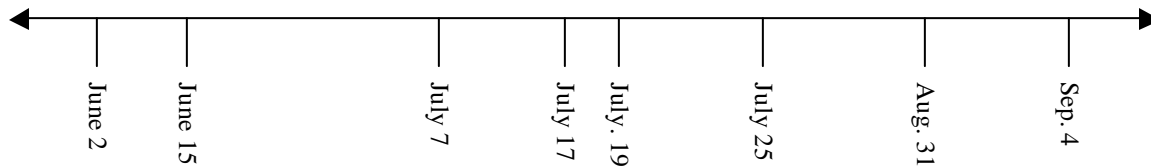
The gifted and talented students will write an essay that will incorporate all four of the divisions of the United States in 1787 and their arguments for a method of selecting a chief executive that would allow them to keep as much power as they could.

Teacher Handout to Students

Gestation period for the Electoral College

Time line for the Electoral College

65 days in summer of 1787



- July 25 Arguments heard for more than one term for president
- Sep 4 The Brearkey Committee on unfinished past brings the Convention of the Electoral College.
- Aug. 31 The problem of electing a President of the United States gave to the Brearkey Committee on unfinished past argument.
- July 19 Election to elect the President instead of popular election
- July 17 Popular elections debate in convention.
- July 7 Connecticut Compromise (a Senate and a House of Representatives).
- June 15 New Jersey plan permitted to convention.
- June 2 First debate on how to elicit the executive.
- June 1 Virginia Plan for the election of the executive.

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Good resource. Very detailed with lots of primary source quotes.

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This presents a day-by-day progression of how the founding fathers compromised to end up with the Electoral College.

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