



## Paideia Seminar Lesson Plan



**2012 Presidential Election Electoral College Vote**

Grade/Subject

HS / Social Studies



Ideas, Values:

Authority, Responsibility, Wisdom, Government, Citizen



Pre-Seminar Content



Launch Activity:

Ask the students to finish this sentence, “I believe that the President of the United States of America should possess these five qualities...”

Read the supplemental text—Article II U. S. Constitution and Amendment XII, and have students:

- letter each paragraph (A, B, C, D, E)
- circle the title of Amendment XII that modified Article II and number each sentence
- read aloud the original text of Article II multiple times to help in gaining a greater understanding of the supplemental text
- summarize each original paragraph with the teacher’s guidance
- use the *Background Information* to set the stage for reading and summarizing Amendment XII.

## Inspectional Read:

Ask students to label the text as follows:

- Mark the cardinal directions on the map: N, S, E, W.
- Mark these locations: Canada, Mexico, Pacific Ocean, Atlantic Ocean, Gulf of Mexico.
- Read aloud the names of each of the states. Use the map on the reverse side showing the postal code abbreviations.
- Draw a line showing the Mississippi River (eastern boundary of Minnesota, Iowa, Missouri, Arkansas, and Louisiana).
- Count the number of states in the area west of the Mississippi River and the number of states east of the Mississippi River, and note these on the left and right sides of the map (West = 24 states, E = 26 not including D.C.)
- Total the number of electoral votes for each candidate (332 for Obama, 206 for Romney); 538 votes, 270 votes needed to win.

## Background Information:

During the Constitutional Convention, a compromise was reached as the rules were written for the election of President; this was Article II of the U.S. Constitution. Later, after the election of 1800 exposed flaws in the original Article, Amendment XII further defined the Electoral College process. Alexander Hamilton wrote a discussion of the reasons for the Electoral College in Federalist Paper #68. Amendment XX, set term limits on the President. As a side note, senators were elected by state legislatures until the 17<sup>th</sup> Amendment suspended those clauses in 1916 when 36 state legislatures ratified the amendment. Most states have a winner-take-all in the general election. Nebraska and Maine have proportional rules for selecting the electors.

## Vocabulary:





Mine students for (or provide) meanings of the terms *elector* and *Electoral College*, and arrive at comfort and familiarity with state names and locations.

## Analytical Read:

In pairs, place a star in the states that have electoral votes  $\geq 15$  (10 states), place a check mark in the states with electoral votes  $\geq 8 \leq 14$  (16 states), and a square in all the remaining voting areas (24 states and the District of Columbia). Total is 51



## Pre-Seminar Process

-  Define and state purpose for Paideia Seminar.
-  Describe the responsibilities of facilitator and participants.
-  Have participants set a Personal Goal.
-  Agree on a Group Goal.

## Seminar Questions

*Opening (Identify main ideas from the text.):*

- ❖ By show of hands, is the West or the East the section of the country that's most important to the Electoral College process of electing the President?
- ❖ Why did you make your choice? (spontaneous discussion)

*Core (Analyze textual details.):*

- ❖ Why are red and blue colors used?
- ❖ Which candidate received which votes?
- ❖ What patterns do you see in the electoral college map?
- ❖ Which states are most important in the Presidential election process? Why?
- ❖ What common elements do you see in this map?

*Closing (Personalize and apply the ideas.):*

- ❖ What state do you believe should have more or fewer electoral votes?

## Post-Seminar Process

- ★ Have participants do a written self-assessment of their personal participation goal.
- ★ Do a group assessment of the social and intellectual goals of seminar.
- ★ Note reminders for next seminar.



## Post-Seminar Content

### ★ Transition to Writing:

Ask students to look back to their responses in the *Launch*, in which they identified the qualities the President should have. Then in partner groups, or in groups of three, compose a statement (2-6 sentences) explaining how the Electoral College might help in ensuring that a President would be elected with those qualities.

### ★ Writing Task:

How does the Electoral College work in electing the President of the United States of America? After reading the 2012 Presidential Election Electoral College Vote map and Article II of the U.S. Constitution, write an essay in which you describe how the Electoral College votes elect the President. Support your discussion with evidence from the text(s). (Informational or Explanatory/ Description)

**Or** use this task to create a new map. Use a blank map and shade in the states. Create a key and label the names of the states and their electoral votes.

What is the fewest number of states needed to win the election? After reading the 2012 Presidential Election Electoral College Vote map and Article II of the U.S. Constitution, create a map that describes the fewest number of states and their electoral votes a

candidate needs to be elected the President. Support your discussion with evidence from the text(s). (Informational or Explanatory/ Description)

(LDC Task#: 14 )

### *Brainstorm:*

Assign students to work together in pairs to respond to the writing task. Invite participants to talk in their pairs for two minutes sharing thoughts about important characteristics of the 2012 Electoral College map, and how they might respond to the writing task.

### *Structure the Writing:*

Allow a few minutes for students to create an outline that presents the main description and the supporting details for their essay. Ask students to select the text references they will use.

### *First Draft:*

Challenge all the pairs to draft their essays by writing the paragraphs defined by their outlines. Refer to the 2012 Presidential Election Electoral College map and Article II of the Constitution in order to illustrate key points.

### *Collaborative Revision:*

Have each partner pair to read their first drafts aloud to each other with emphasis on reader as creator and editor. Listener says back one point heard clearly and asks one question for clarification. Switch roles. Give time for full revisions resulting in a second draft.

### *Edit:*

Once the second draft is complete, have participants again work in groups of four (two pairs) and this time take turns reading each other's second drafts slowly and silently, marking up to five spelling or grammar errors they find. (Have dictionaries and grammar handbooks available for reference.) Take this opportunity to clarify/reteach any specific grammar strategies you have identified your students needing. Give time for full revisions resulting in a third and final draft.



Publish:

Have students publish their essays by using email or other appropriate social media to send them to their state's senators and members of congress.

*This Paideia Lesson Plan was created by:*

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*Organization:* National Paideia Center



Article II of the U. S. Constitution (modified by Amendment XII)  
Section 1

The executive power shall be vested in a President of the United States of America. He shall hold his office during the term of four years, and, together with the Vice President, chosen for the same term, be elected, as follows:

Each state shall appoint, in such manner as the Legislature thereof may direct, a number of electors, equal to the whole number of Senators and Representatives to which the State may be entitled in the Congress: but no Senator or Representative, or person holding an office of trust or profit under the United States, shall be appointed an elector.

The Congress may determine the time of choosing the electors, and the day on which they shall give their votes; which day shall be the same throughout the United States.

No person except a natural born citizen, or a citizen of the United States, at the time of the adoption of this Constitution, shall be eligible to the office of President; neither shall any person be eligible to that office who shall not have attained to the age of thirty five years, and been fourteen Years a resident within the United States.

The President shall, at stated times, receive for his services, a compensation, which shall neither be increased nor diminished during the period for which he shall have been elected, and he shall not receive within that period any other emolument from the United States, or any of them.

Before he enter on the execution of his office, he shall take the following oath or affirmation:--"I do solemnly swear (or affirm) that I will faithfully execute the office of President of the United States, and will to the best of my ability, preserve, protect and defend the Constitution of the United States."

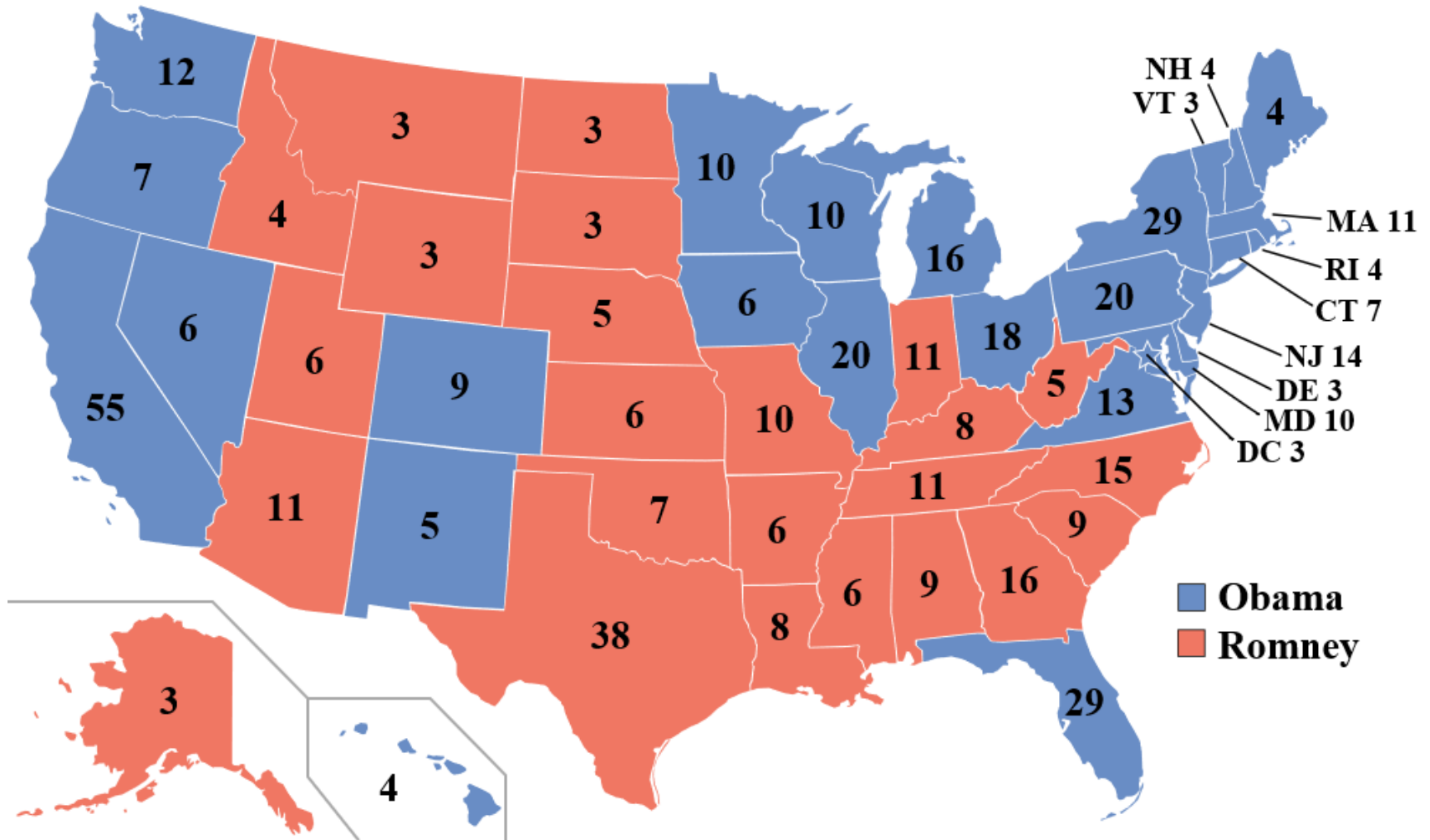
Amendment XII modifications (ratified 1804)

*The electors shall meet in their respective states, and vote by ballot for two persons, of whom one at least shall not be an inhabitant of the same state with themselves. And they shall make a list of all the persons voted for, and of the number of votes for each; which list they shall sign and certify, and transmit sealed to the seat of the government of the United States, directed to the President of the Senate. The President of the Senate shall, in the presence of the Senate and House of Representatives, open all the certificates, and the votes shall then be counted. The person having the greatest number of votes shall be the President, if such number be a majority of the whole number of electors appointed; and if there be more than one who have such majority, and have an equal number of votes, then the House of Representatives shall immediately choose by ballot one of them for President; and if no person have a*

*majority, then from the five highest on the list the said House shall in like manner choose the President. But in choosing the President, the votes shall be taken by States, the representation from each state having one vote; A quorum for this purpose shall consist of a member or members from two thirds of the states, and a majority of all the states shall be necessary to a choice. In every case, after the choice of the President, the person having the greatest number of votes of the electors shall be the Vice President. But if there should remain two or more who have equal votes, the Senate shall choose from them by ballot the Vice President.*



2012 United States Presidential Election Electoral College Votes



**Article II (excerpt)—  
United States  
Constitution,  
changed by  
Amendment 12**

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