



Maggie's Civics Corner

Lesson #43 – Electoral College

Maggie Says...

Our country elects a president every four years, including this past one. This is why it's important for everyone to understand how the election process works!

Today's lesson is about the Electoral College: Everyone likes to be heard and voting for the president is one of the best ways to do that! Even though I can't vote because I'm a dog, choosing the president is important for everyone in this country, including me. So, let's learn about exactly how we do that.

Even though we the people choose a president and vice president, we actually do not vote for them directly. Each state is given a different number of Electors based on how many people live in that state. After we vote, the leaders our state use our votes to pick our Electors based on which presidential candidates got the most votes. These Electors then vote for the president and vice president in the Electoral College, which decides who gets to be president and vice president. The Electors usually choose the president and vice president who got the most votes in their state. The president and vice president who get the most votes in the electoral college (at least 270) then become the next president and vice president of the United States!

Sticky Situation: Imagine that when all of the votes across the country are counted, one presidential candidate gets more Electoral College votes, and the other gets more votes from the people (the “popular vote”). Who becomes the president?

Why we have the Electoral College: The Electoral College is required by the Constitution and the rules come from the Constitution and laws passed by Congress. It is an example of how our country has a mixed system of government. While the Electoral College may seem confusing, or even unfair, there are many good arguments for and against using this system. But the Electoral College has worked well over our country's history, and there have only been 4 times in the history of the United States when the Electoral College did not select the same president as received the most votes overall.

Activity: Think about when you have to make a hard decision. Do you like making the decision by yourself? Or do you prefer to make the decision by working with others? Are there good things and bad things about both methods? By thinking about this problem, you can start to understand why the Electoral College exists and why there are people who like it and don't like it.

Civic Resources: To learn more about the Electoral College and how it works, check out: <https://why.pbslearningmedia.org/collection/how-voting-works/>