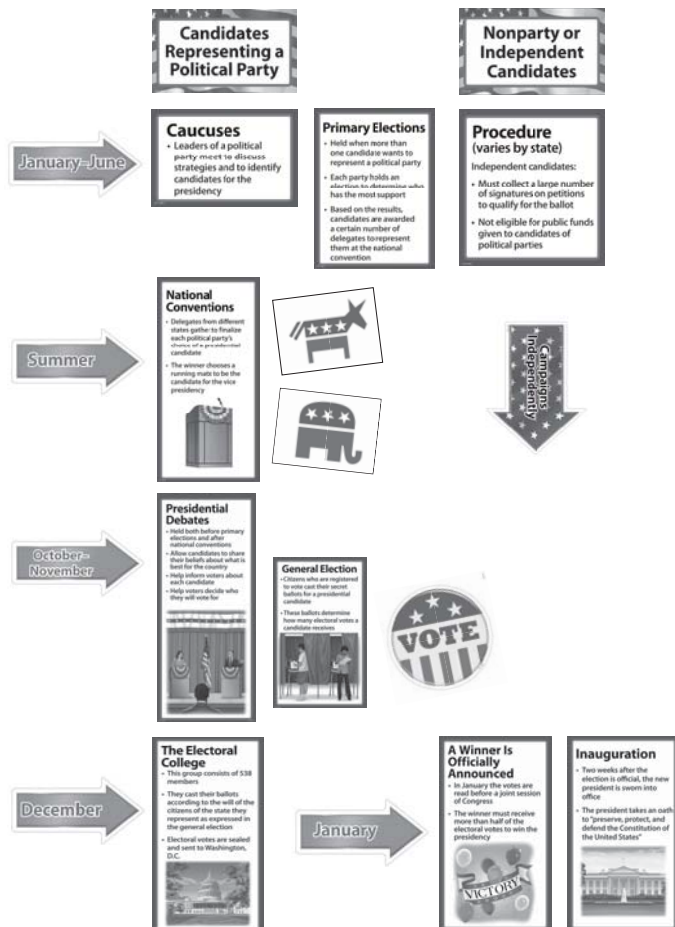


# The Presidential Election Process

The Presidential Election Process is an interactive bulletin board set designed to help teach students in grades 3–5 how United States presidents are elected to office. Use the content-rich panels to reinforce standards set forth by the National Council for the Social Studies listed on the following page.



partial set shown

## National Social Studies Standards

- Understand the interactions among people, places, and environments.
- Understand interactions among individuals, groups, and institutions.
- Understand how people create and change structures of power, authority, and governance.
- Understand the ideals, principles, and practices of citizenship in a democratic republic.

### Display

Separate the pieces, and laminate them for durability. Display the pieces of the set on a bulletin board, magnetic whiteboard (magnets required), or in a pocket chart.

### Instruction

Use the pieces for small-group work, class instruction, or at a learning center to preview each step in the presidential electoral process.

- Have students learn the vocabulary words included on the last page of this insert (i.e., *political party*, *candidate*, *delegate*, etc.) and describe what each term means.
- Shuffle the bulletin board pieces. Then have students use the pieces to construct a “flow chart” that shows the order of each step in the electoral process (see front page of insert for example).
- Display the bulletin board pieces in the form of a flow chart, and stress to students that the complete electoral process takes a full year—it officially begins in January and ends the following January.

### English Language Development

Use the pieces to introduce grade-level social studies content and academic language with pictorial input.

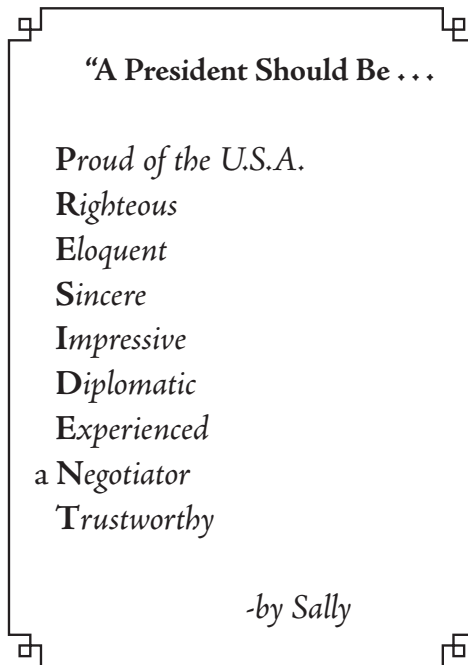
- Hold up a card and have students discuss the stage of the presidential electoral process represented. For unknown vocabulary, have students repeat after you. Follow the same process with each card.
- Ask students to verbalize the purpose of the secret ballot.

- Make a list of questions about the electoral process in the style of a *Jeopardy* game. Students must answer in the form of a question. For example, you might say, *This is a meeting where political strategies are planned and potential presidential candidates are identified.* The student will reply, *What is a caucus?*

## **Integrating the Curriculum**

Use the pieces in the set for the following activities:

**Language Arts:** Have students write an acrostic poem that denotes characteristics they expect a president to have.



**Math:** Have students research how many electoral votes each state is assigned. Talk about how many total electoral votes there are and how many a candidate needs to become the president. Discuss how it is possible for a president to lose the popular vote but still win the election and vice versa.

## Teacher Background

The framers of the United States Constitution did not provide specific methods for nominating presidential candidates. At that time, the political parties that dominate the process today did not exist.

There is much debate about the Electoral College. The framers of the Constitution applied the system to ensure that a smaller group of knowledgeable citizens actually elect the president. Some people believe the Electoral College system is unfair because this process makes it possible for a presidential candidate to lose the popular vote but win the election. This has happened three times in the nation's history. The victories of Rutherford B. Hayes in 1876, Benjamin Harrison in 1888, and George W. Bush in 2000 were all decided by the Electoral College vote.

If no candidate receives a majority of the electoral vote, the House of Representatives is charged with deciding the presidency. This has happened twice in United States history. In 1800 the House of Representatives elected Thomas Jefferson, and in 1824, it elected Andrew Jackson.

## Vocabulary

**ballot**—a ticket that registers a vote

**candidate**—a person running for public office

**delegate**—a person sent to speak and act on behalf of others

**oath**—a solemn promise

**petition**—to collect signatures for the support of a cause

**political party**—an organized group of people whose political beliefs are similar