

Name: _____

Lesson 17

Period: _____

The Electoral College Mystery

Directions. Read the *Handy Dandy Guide* and the mystery. Read the clues. Be careful.

While all the clues are correct, only some are *useful* in solving the mystery. Decide which clues are most relevant to solving the mystery. Use the clues and one or more of the ideas from the *Handy Dandy Guide* to figure out a solution to the mystery. Write your solution.

Handy Dandy Guide

1. People *choose*.
2. People's choices involve *costs*.
3. People respond to *incentives* in predictable ways.
4. People create *economic systems* that influence individual choices and incentives.
5. People gain when they *trade* voluntarily.
6. People's choices have consequences that lie in the *future*.

The Mystery

In the American system of government, majority rule is a fundamental principle of democracy. Yet in presidential elections we continue to use the Electoral College—an undemocratic institution. Under some circumstances, Electoral College procedures permit the election of a candidate who has not earned a majority of the national popular vote.

Why does the world's greatest democracy tolerate such an undemocratic institution?

The Clues

1. Amending the U.S. Constitution requires the approval of three fourths of the states.
2. The number of representatives a state may send to the U.S. House of Representatives is determined by the state's population. More people, more representatives.
3. Each state elects two U.S. senators, regardless of population.
4. The electors from each state who make up the Electoral College are usually selected in a "winner take all" manner. If the Vegetarian Party wins 51 percent of the vote in Texas, the Vegetarians get to cast all 29 of Texas's electoral votes.
5. In 1824, 1876, 1888, and 1992, the winner of the U.S. presidential election did not receive a majority of the popular vote.
6. A victorious president wishes to say that the election represents a mandate.
7. An incumbent is someone who already holds office.
8. Each state is allotted by the Constitution as many electoral votes as it has senators and representatives in Congress. Thus no state has fewer than three electoral votes.
9. A political action committee (PAC) is a legal committee used in presidential fund-raising.

Record your solution and explain it briefly here:
