BALLOT BOXING

How do the rules of an election affect who wins?
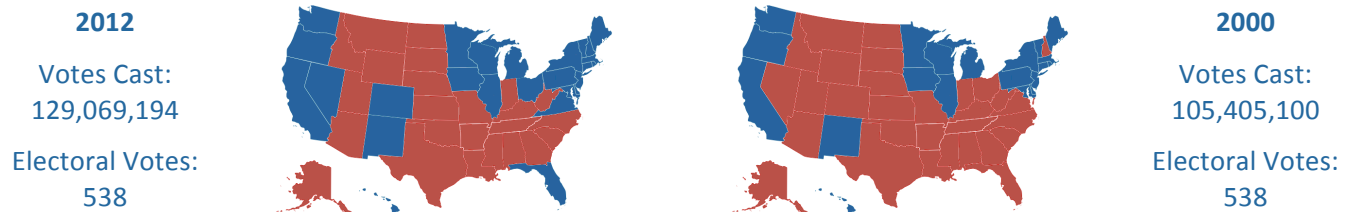
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Act One: Rock the Vote!

1   In the United States, voters elect a president every four years. The winner is the person who receives the most **electoral votes**, which are votes given to states based on their populations. In almost every state, whichever candidate receives the most votes receives *all* of the state's electoral votes.

For the 2012 and 2000 elections, calculate the percent of the electoral and popular vote that each candidate won, and circle the winner. Then, what are some potential pitfalls of the Electoral College system?

2012

Votes Cast:
129,069,194

Electoral Votes:
538

2000

Votes Cast:
105,405,100

Electoral Votes:
538

Year	Candidate	Electoral Votes	Electoral Percent	Popular Votes	Popular Percent
2012	Barack Obama (D)	332		65,899,660	
	Mitt Romney (R)	206		60,932,152	
2000	Al Gore (D)	267		50,999,897	
	George Bush (R)	271		50,456,002	

2   In the 2000 election, Florida had 25 electoral votes. Republican George Bush received 2,912,790 popular votes. Democrat Al Gore received 2,912,253 votes. And Green Party candidate **Ralph Nader** received 97,488 votes.

Nader was the most liberal of the three candidates, and most people who voted for him probably preferred Gore over the more conservative Bush. How do you think Ralph Nader affected the outcome of the 2000 election?

Act Two: Change the Vote?

3 Imagine there are three candidates running for office – a **conservative (C)**, a **moderate (M)**, and a **liberal (L)** – and that voters fall into one of the groups below. If you were an outside observer, which candidate would you say deserves to win the election and why?

Group	Description	Number of Voters
I	Likes **L**, dislikes **C**, feels neutral towards **M**	30 voters
II	Likes **C**, prefers **M** to **L** but feels neutral towards both	50 voters
III	Likes **M**, prefers **L** to **C** but feels neutral towards both	20 voters

4 Let's explore what would happen if we used a different rule to determine the winner of an election. For each voting system below, calculate how many votes/points each candidate would receive and circle the winner. Then, which voting system do you think is the best and why?

"One Vote"	Voters can vote for a single candidate.
"Score Voting"	Voters give +1 point to any candidate they like, -1 point to any candidate they dislike, and 0 points to any candidate towards whom they're neutral.
"Borda Count"	Voters rank their candidates from first to third. First place votes are worth 3 points, second place votes are worth 2 points, and third place votes are worth 1 point.

	Group I			Group II			Group III			TOTAL VOTES		
	C	M	L	C	M	L	C	M	L	C	M	L
Votes, One Vote												
Points, Score Voting												
Points, Borda												