

*American Government: Stories of a Nation for the AP® Course*

Guided Reading

Section 13.4: The Politics of Presidential Elections

Name \_\_\_\_\_  
Date \_\_\_\_\_ Class \_\_\_\_\_

 **Before you read**

Before reading this section, take a moment to read the Learning Target and vocabulary terms you will encounter.

**Learning Target:** Describe the purpose and role of the Electoral College in our constitutional system.

**AP® Key Concepts**

Electoral College  
winner-take-all system

battleground state  
swing state

 **While you read**

Use the following table to take notes as you read the section.

Characteristics of Presidential Elections	Characteristics of Electoral College	Impact on politics

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 **After you read**

**Once you've finished reading the section, answer the following questions.**

1. Who has most of the control over how a candidate becomes nominated?
  - A. the people
  - B. the state governments
  - C. the federal government
  - D. the political parties
  
2. What is the main function of the Electoral College?
  - A. to monitor the results of presidential elections
  - B. to cast votes in accordance with how their state has voted for a presidential nominee
  - C. to decide if their state voted for the correct candidate or not
  - D. to elect the vice president after the people have chosen the president
  
3. A system of elections in which the candidate who wins a plurality of votes within that state receives all of that state's votes within the Electoral College BEST summarizes the:
  - A. Electoral College system.
  - B. fair representation system.
  - C. pure democracy system.
  - D. winner-take-all system.
  
4. How are the number of electors per state determined for the Electoral College?
  - A. Each state receives five electors.
  - B. Each state receives a number of electors that is proportional to that state's population.
  - C. Each state receives ten electors.
  - D. Each state receives one elector per senator, and one for each member of the House of Representatives.
  
5. What is a main characteristic of a battleground state?
  - A. Polls indicate that there is a large gap in support for candidates.
  - B. Polls indicate that voter turnout will be relatively high.
  - C. Polls indicate that there is a close contest between candidates.
  - D. Polls indicate that voter turnout will be relatively low.
  
6. A swing state can be BEST described as:
  - A. a state where the vote is traditionally toward one party but makes an unprecedented switch
  - B. a state where the vote goes back and forth between Democratic and Republican
  - C. a state where voter turnout varies between presidential elections
  - D. a state where polls indicate a close contest between candidates