



ELECTION TRIVIA

The sample trivia questions that follow may be used in a variety of ways to teach facts about the election. One such use is the question of the day. Hint: These are only a few examples of the type of questions possible as trivia questions. Ask the students to submit trivia questions and answers to add to your collection. They will learn more and your work will be easier. Questions could be written on file cards and put in a box for easy storage or kept in a notebook in the file with this unit.

Directions:

Write one to three trivia questions on the board before school. Assign a number of points to each set of questions corresponding to the number of students in the class. Sometime during the day, students should turn in their answers. For example, if there are twenty in the class and all twenty answer correctly, each receives one point. If only two answer correctly, those twenty points are evenly divided between the two. This discourages sharing answers. Give weekly awards to students with the highest number of earned points.

1. How many representatives are up for election this year? The term of U.S. Representatives is just two years, so all 435 members of the House are up for election.
2. How old do you have to be to vote? The 26th Amendment set a minimum voting age of 18 years or older for federal elections.
3. Can the right to vote be taken away? Yes. In most states convicted felons permanently lose their right to vote.
4. How many electoral votes are necessary to win the presidential election? A candidate must win an absolute majority of the electoral votes - 270.
5. Why is Election Day on the first Tuesday after the first Monday in November? At first there was no set day for national elections. Each state set its own time, as long as it was at least 34 days before the first Wednesday in December. In 1845 an act was passed setting the current day. Originally, the day was set to prevent elections from occurring on the first day of November which was a busy day for merchants. Mondays were not chosen because of the long distances some voters had to travel. Travel on Sunday, a day of rest, was discouraged.

6. What is a national party convention? Every four years, during the summer before Election Day, the two major political parties hold meetings of delegates to nominate their candidate for President. At the convention, candidates are nominated for President and Vice President; party platforms are adopted; rules governing the parties are adopted.
7. What is a primary? A primary is an election to choose delegates to the national party conventions.
8. What happens if a delegate is unable to attend the convention? The delegate's place may be taken by an alternate delegate who was elected in the same way and at the same time as the regular delegate.
9. Who chooses the vice presidential candidate? The choice is generally left to the presidential nominee.
10. What happens after the convention is over? This is generally a period of planning and regrouping. Campaign strategy is decided upon. The candidates go to states selected for their electoral strength or for their importance to the candidate's side.
11. How much may a candidate spend on a campaign? There is a limit only on those candidates who accept federal financial help. The law does not limit the amount spent by a candidate's supporters as long as the spending is not controlled by the candidate or his committee.
12. Why are third parties formed? There can be a number of reasons why they are formed. Perhaps a group breaks away from another party, a party wants to support a special-interest group, a group has very different social or philosophical ideas from those of other parties, or the group may have a very important goal in mind.
13. Has a third party candidate ever won? No.
14. How do we find out what the candidates believe? Watching television, listening to the radio, reading the newspaper, and visiting the candidate's headquarters are all good ways to find out where a candidate stands on the issues.
15. What happens if a candidate dies before the election? The party names a new candidate. The candidate would not necessarily be the running mate of the original candidate.
16. What is a "lame duck" President? A lame duck President is a President who continues to hold office during the period between the election and the inauguration of his successor.

17. What determines the number of electoral votes a state may have? A state may have a number of electoral votes equal to the number of Senators and Representatives. The exception is the District of Columbia which would have the number of Senators and Representatives it would be given if it were a state; however, the number may not be more than the smallest state.
18. Why must voters register to vote? This prevents anyone from voting twice.
19. Is it legal to write in the name of a person who is not listed on the ballot?
Yes.
20. What is the inauguration? The ceremony in which the President takes the oath of office is the inauguration.
21. Does the inauguration always take place on January 20 for the year following the election of a President? Yes; however, if the 20th falls on a Sunday, a private ceremony is held that day and the public swearing-in takes place the next day.
22. How many Senators will be elected in 2000?
23. How many Representatives are up for election? All 435 Representatives will be elected.
24. What are the symbols for the Democratic and Republican parties? The elephant stands for the Republican Party and the donkey for the Democratic Party.