

American Government & Politics: A Christian Worldview.

The Big-City Problem (15–20 Minutes)

TEACHER INSTRUCTIONS

Goal

Students see how large pockets of population in big cities in the U.S. could dominate the rest of the nation if presidential elections were decided simply by the popular vote.

Instructions

1. Put students into pairs or groups of three, and set them to answering the handout's questions.
2. Give students 8–10 minutes to answer each question as a pair/small group.
3. Review the scenarios as a class.

Key

Scenario 1:

Popular Vote Totals:	Adams 25,300; Baker 44,700
Popular Vote Winner:	Baker
Electoral Vote Totals:	15 to 15 (tie)

Scenario 2:

Popular Vote Totals:	Adams 25,300; Baker 44,700
Popular Vote Winner:	Baker
Electoral Vote Totals:	24 to 12 (Adams wins)

Debrief/Discussion

1. In Scenario 1, which state had the biggest influence on the election?
2. In Scenario 2, how did the smaller states affect the outcome?
3. Why might supporters of the Electoral College say it encourages candidates to pay attention to more than just large population centers?
4. How does the Electoral College system seem more just than simply counting the number of votes and awarding the presidency to the winner? *(On this one, AWV, but students should say something like “It more accurately represents the wishes of different residents of states, rather than just the will of a majority of one state that is larger.”)*

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The scenarios below describe presidential elections between two candidates, Adams and Baker. For each scenario, fill in the blanks:

SCENARIO 1:

State	Electoral Votes	Adams	Baker
Small State A	5	5,100	4,900
Small State B	5	5,100	4,900
Small State C	5	5,100	4,900
Metro State	15	10,000	30,000

Popular Vote Totals: Adams: _____ Baker: _____

Popular Vote Winner: _____

State	Winner	Electoral Votes
Small State A		
Small State B		
Small State C		
Metro State		

Adams Electoral Votes: _____ Baker Electoral Votes: _____

Electoral College Winner: _____

SCENARIO 2:

State	Electoral Votes	Adams	Baker
Small State A	8	5,100	4,900
Small State B	8	5,100	4,900
Small State C	8	5,100	4,900
Metro State	12	10,000	30,000

Popular Vote Totals: Adams: _____ Baker: _____

Popular Vote Winner: _____

State	Winner	Electoral Votes
Small State A		
Small State B		
Small State C		
Metro State		

Adams Electoral Votes: _____ Baker Electoral Votes: _____

Electoral College Winner: _____