

## Electing a President

Article II of the Constitution outlines how a president will be elected. When the United States first began, the presidential candidate (person running for that office) who had the most votes became the president. In the first presidential election, George Washington was elected unanimously (all votes were for him). He is the only president ever to be elected unanimously. The candidate with the second-most votes became the vice president. This did not work very well because sometimes the president and vice president could not agree on issues or work together well. Now the presidential candidate selects the vice presidential candidate, and the nation votes for both at the same time.

Every four years in the United States, the citizens elect their new president through a system that is called the **Electoral College**. This is not a college but is more of a **process** of electing the president indirectly. In the Electoral College, voters in each state choose **electors** (people who will elect the president) to represent them. Each state has the same number of electors as it has members of Congress. All 435 of the electors, together, are called the Electoral College. The Electoral College usually votes according to how their **constituents** (people they represent) voted. Whichever candidate wins more than half the electoral votes wins the presidency.

In addition to earning electoral votes, presidential candidates also win **popular votes**. The popular vote represents the vote of each person in the United States. Because the Electoral College usually votes the way constituents vote, the candidate who becomes president almost always wins both the popular vote and the electoral vote. A president may serve only two terms.

In order to run for president, a candidate must be at least thirty-five years old, must be a citizen who was born in the United States, and must have lived in the United States for fourteen consecutive years. Once these qualifications are met, a candidate must get his or her name on the "ticket." The ticket is another name for the **slate** (the list of candidates for nomination). The presidential candidate is usually **nominated** (chosen) by a political party. In the United States, the two most powerful political parties are the Democrats and the Republicans.

"Impeachment" is a way to "fire" a president. If a president is accused of treason, bribery, or any other high crime, then the House of Representatives may **impeach** (accuse) the president. The trial is held in the Senate, and two-thirds of the Senate must vote to convict the president in order to remove him or her from office. Two presidents have been impeached, but no president has ever been convicted. Richard Nixon resigned from the presidency in order to avoid impeachment.

### Answer the Following

1. What is the Electoral College? \_\_\_\_\_  
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2. What are the two types of votes a presidential candidate can win? \_\_\_\_\_  
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3. What does "impeach" mean? \_\_\_\_\_  
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