Why California?

NAME _____

The electoral college is a group of citizen delegates who cast votes for the president of the United States. The candidate who gets the most electoral votes wins the election. The number of voters in the electoral college, or electors, varies from state to state. In this activity you will investigate both what these differences are and what they mean to a presidential candidate.

1. Gather data on the number of electoral college votes for each state. Record the state population and the number of electoral votes in the table. Calculate how many votes each state has out of the total. Record this as a decimal rounded to the nearest thousandth and a percentage rounded to the nearest tenth.

STATE	POPULATION	ELECTORS	DECIMAL	PERCENTAGE
Alabama				
Alaska				
Arizona				
Arkansas				
California				
Colorado				
Connecticut				
Delaware				
District of Columbia				
Florida				
Georgia				
Hawaii				
Idaho				
Illinois				
Indiana				
Iowa				
Kansas				
Kentucky				
Louisiana				

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STATE	POPULATION	ELECTORS	DECIMAL	PERCENTAGE
Maine				
Maryland				
Massachusetts				
Michigan				
Minnesota				
Mississippi				
Missouri				
Montana				
Nebraska				
Nevada				
New Hampshire				
New Jersey				
New Mexico				
New York				
North Carolina				
North Dakota				
Ohio				
Oklahoma				
Oregon				
Pennsylvania				
Rhode Island				
South Carolina				
South Dakota				
Tennessee				
Texas				
Utah				
Vermont				

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STATE	POPULATION	ELECTORS	DECIMAL	PERCENTAGE
Virginia				
Washington				
West Virginia				
Wisconsin				
Wyoming				
TOTAL				

2. Make two observations about the data in the table.

3. How many total electoral votes are there? A candidate must have more than half of the votes from the electoral college to win the presidency. Calculate how many votes the candidate must have to win. Show how you arrived at your solution**.**

4. Is it possible to have a tie between two candidates? When there are 3 candidates, can there be a 3-way tie? Explain your reasoning.

5. The 50 states and Washington, D.C. comprise 100% of the electoral votes. That means each state has an average of about 2% of the electoral votes. How many states have fewer than 2% of the electoral votes? How many have greater than 2% of the electoral votes? Make an observation about these results.

6. Find the mean number of electoral votes for all states.

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7. Find the median number of electoral votes for all states.

8. Find the mode number of electoral votes for all states.

9. The mean, median, and mode are all measures of central tendency. Which best represents this data? **Hint:** Imagine your answer to the question, "On average, how many electoral votes does each state have?" Explain your reasoning.

10. How many electoral votes does your state have? Is the number greater than or less than the *median* number of electoral votes? How far above or below the median is it? Is your state "average"? Explain.

11. Presidential candidates often spend a great deal of time campaigning in California. Why do you think this is? What other states do you think are popular campaign stops?

12. Do you think your state is a popular campaign stop? Do you think it should be? Explain.

13. Describe how a presidential candidate might use the information in this activity sheet and the conclusions you have made to plan a campaign.

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