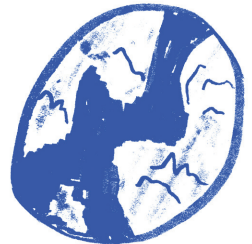


THE DECIDERS

Who picks the next President of the United States of America?



In the Spring of 2016, CUP collaborated with Teaching Artist Nicholas Weltyk and Brian Gilman's English class at the Brooklyn Community Arts and Media High School to identify who picks the next U.S. President.

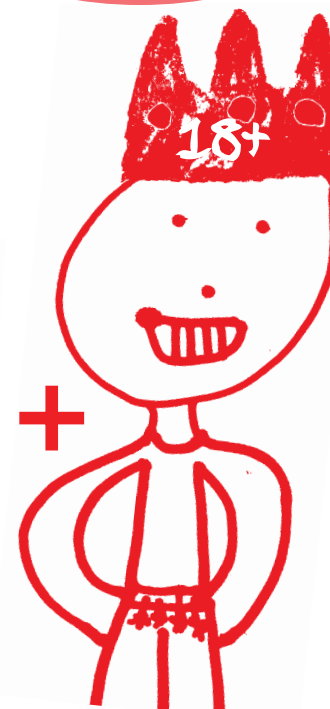
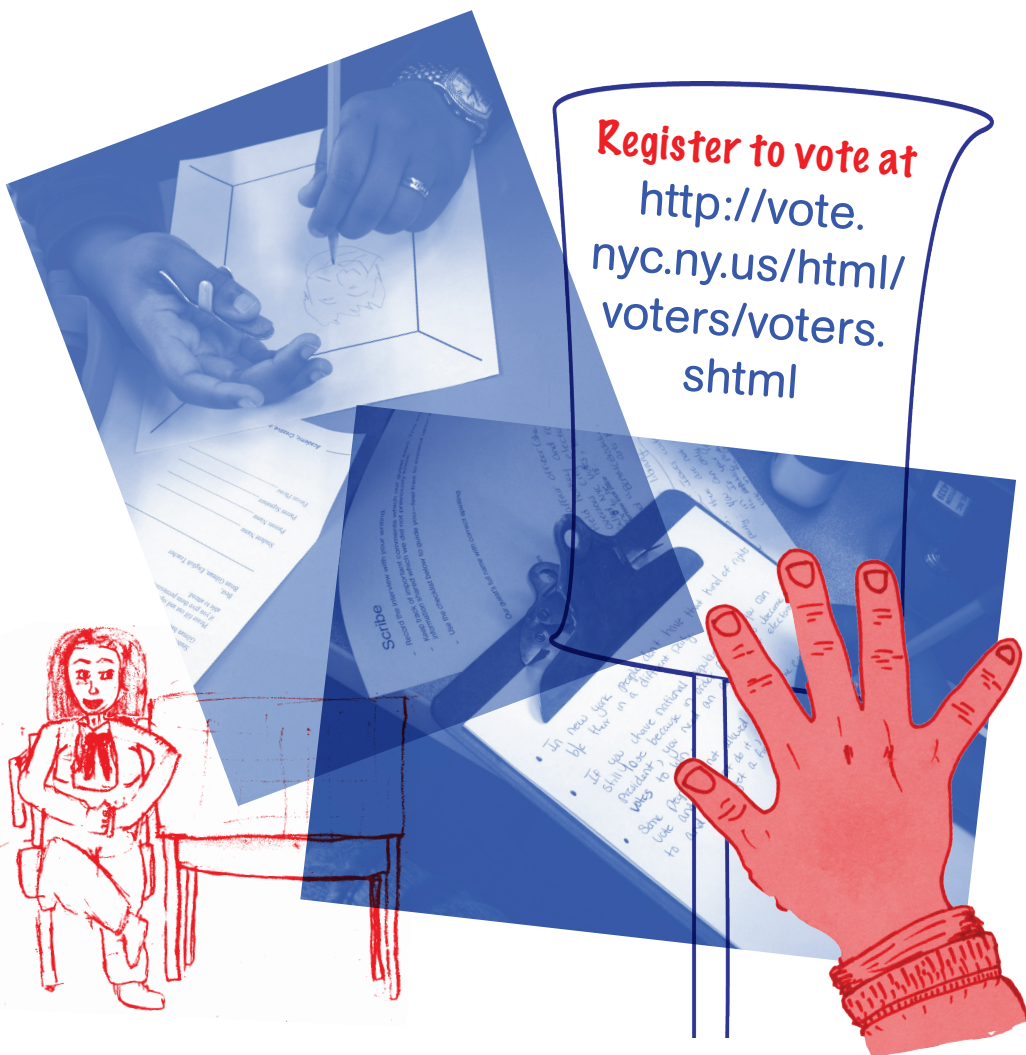
To investigate, students participated in a mock election, went into the neighborhood to survey community members on the voting process, and interviewed Amanda Melillo of the Campaign Finance Board (CFB). This booklet is a guide to what they discovered.



Who can vote?

In order to vote in New York, you must be:

- ✓ a U.S. citizen,
- ✓ a resident of the state of New York for at least 30 days,
- ✓ and 18-years-old or older on election day.



Why 18?

There are campaigns to lower the voting age to 16-years-old.

“The voting age used to be 21 and then was lowered to 18. That helped bring more people into the voting process. There are a lot of campaigns to push the voting age to 16 because what politicians do affects 16-year-olds a lot, so why shouldn't teens get a say in what politicians are doing?”

—Amanda Melillo, CFB

Learn more about the national campaign to lower the voting age at generationcitizen.org

Who are you voting for?



Each political party first holds a primary election so voters registered with that party can pick the party's candidate for the presidential general election.

- ✓ 43 states, including New York, have a write-in candidate system.
- ✓ On ballots with the write-in option, voters can decide to write the name of anyone for president.

When the primaries are over, there are usually two to three candidates left to run in the general election.



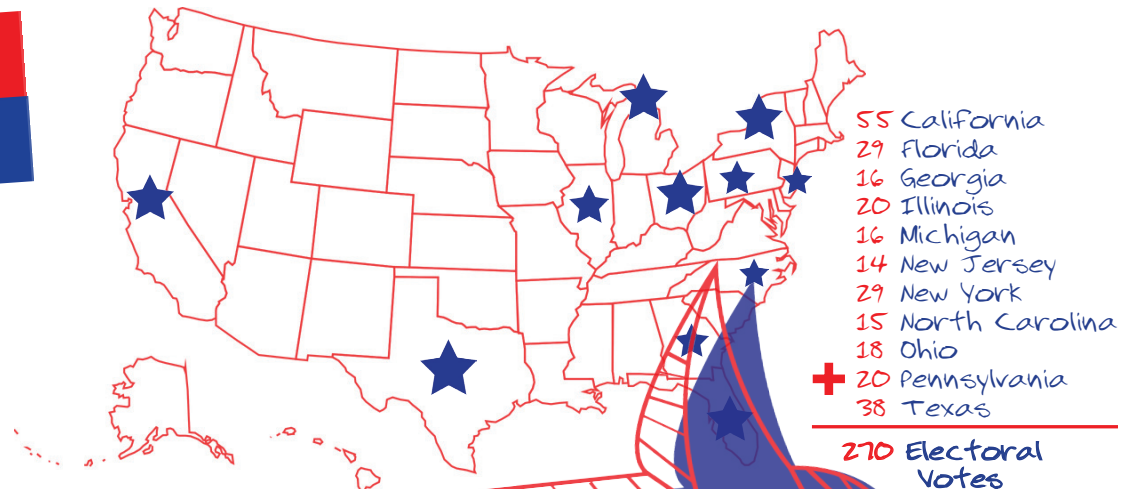
Find out how to vote at nyccfb.info/nyc-votes



What is the Electoral College?

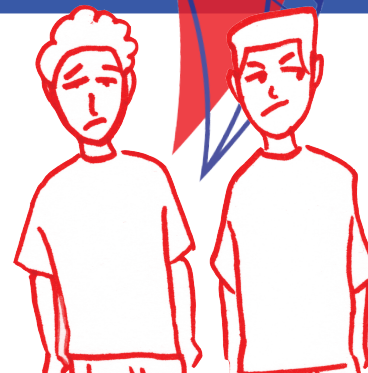
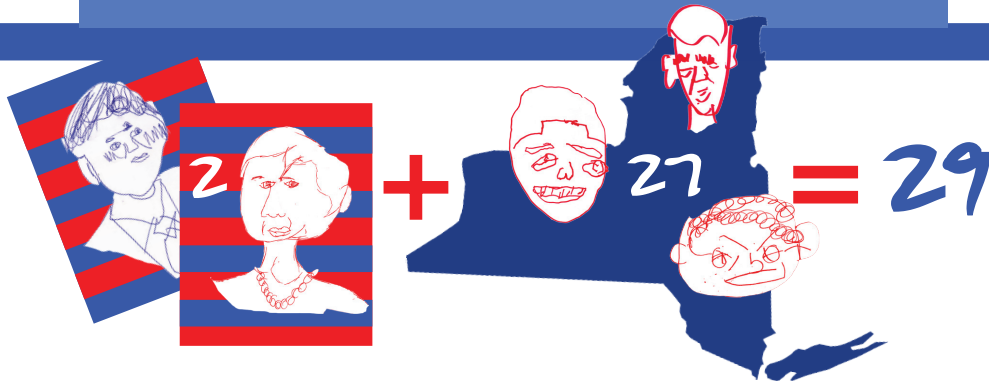
The Electoral College is an indirect voting system made up of a group of people called Electors. In the general election, each state holds an election, where voters can vote for anyone running for president.

- ✓ Electors pledge their votes to the presidential candidate who wins their state's popular vote.
- ✓ The number of Electors is different for every state.
- ✓ The number of Electors for that state = 2 Senators + Representatives based on state population size.
- ✓ New York has 29 Electors, while Alaska has only 3.



270 Electoral Votes are needed to win the presidential election. Since the number of Electors for each state is based on population size, a candidate can become president with the votes from only 11 states!

Did you know that the Electoral College can overturn the national popular vote? In the 2000 Presidential Election, candidate Al Gore won the national popular vote by over 500,000 votes but lost the election to George W. Bush, who won the Electoral College by 5 votes.



Learn more about the history of the Electoral College at fec.gov/pdf/electcoll.pdf

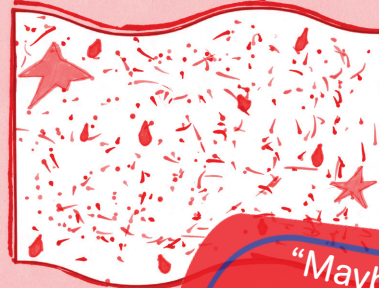
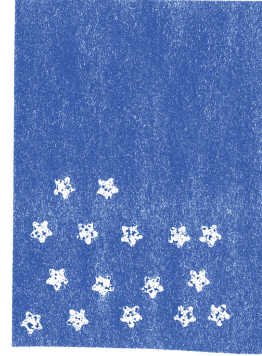


Why is it this way?

Article 2, Section 1, Clause 2 of the Constitution of the United States defines how to elect the President.

“This all started out with the Constitution. Over 200 years ago when the founding fathers were writing the constitution, they were worried about having a popular vote and allowing the people to directly elect the President. They were worried that the people would make the wrong choice.”

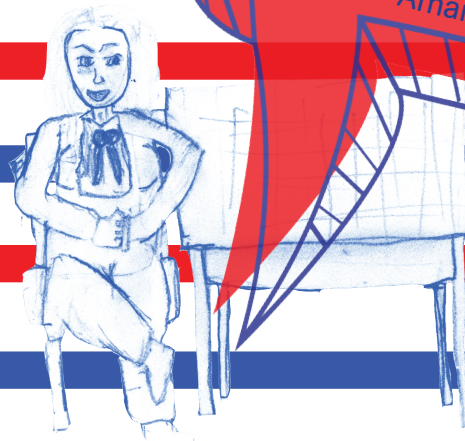
—Amanda Melillo, CFB



What qualities do you look for in a leader?

“Maybe the people would choose a candidate without the right experience, knowledge, or skills to lead the country. The Electoral College was created as a protection plan. People cast their votes for Electors. The Electors are a middle layer between the regular person voting and how the President is actually decided on.”

—Amanda Melillo, CFB



★ Who has the power?

Every layer of government is held accountable to voters, the checks and balances of our government.

★ How could things change?

“New York has made it a little harder to participate in an election than other states. I would like automatic registration. I want to be able to vote on a Saturday. I would really like to see election professionals who are experts that run the voting process...with a national popular vote, campaigns would be located in cities.”

-Amanda Melillo, CFB

“Each level of government is different in how much power it has. The federal government has grown a lot since it was first founded in 1789. Voting is a way to determine who has power and voting guides the future direction the country.”

-Amanda Melillo, CFB



Contact the Board of Elections in the City of New York at vote.nyc.ny.us/html/contact/offices.shtml

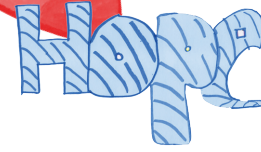
Power 2 the People



EVERYONE'S RIGHTS MATTER

Get involved in your local government at nyc.gov/html/cau/html/involved/get-involved.shtml

Everyone 4 = ity



The Center for Urban Pedagogy (CUP) is a nonprofit organization that uses the power of design and art to increase meaningful civic engagement, particularly among historically underrepresented communities. To learn more about CUP, visit welcometoCUP.org.

City Studies are CUP's project-based in-class and afterschool programs that use design and art as tools to research the city.

Brooklyn Community Arts and Media High School (BCAM) is a public school in Bedford-Stuyvesant with an art, media, and technology-enriched academic curriculum that emphasizes community collaboration. To learn more, visit bcamhs.org.

This project was made possible by the Bay and Paul Foundations, the New York State Council on the Arts with the support of Governor Andrew M. Cuomo and the New York State Legislature, and the New York City Department of Cultural Affairs in partnership with the City Council.



**Council on
the Arts**

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