

## Student Worksheet

### DIRECTIONS

Read the following news story and answer the reading comprehension and discussion questions. Use additional paper if necessary.

### STORY

#### **Electoral College Turns Presidential Election into State-to-State Combat**

10/14/08

[http://www.pbs.org/newshour/extra/features/us/july-dec08/electoral\\_college\\_10-14.html](http://www.pbs.org/newshour/extra/features/us/july-dec08/electoral_college_10-14.html)

### READING COMPREHENSION QUESTIONS – [Student Worksheet](#)

**1. When was the Electoral College formed? How many votes are there in total? Why that number?**

**2. How many Electoral College votes does a candidate have to receive to win the Presidency?**

**3. What are “red” and “blue” states?**

**4. What is a swing state? A battleground state?**

**5. Name at least four battleground states? Are any near you?**

**6. What major change has been made to the Electoral College?**

**7. Why do some people criticize the Electoral College?**

### DISCUSSION QUESTIONS (more research might be needed)

**1. Do you think the Electoral College is a fair system? How would you change and improve it?**

**2. Why do you think people who argue for direct popular vote have had such a hard time changing the system?**

**3. Look at the current swing states. Is your state one of them? Do you see any similarities? Why do you think those states are swing this election?**

**4. What issues do you care about this election? Are the candidates talking about those issues? Why or why not?**

**Extension Activity**

Have students write a 300-500 word essay on this topic providing clear examples. Send your completed editorial to NewsHour Extra ([extra@newshour.org](mailto:extra@newshour.org)). Exceptional essays might be published on our Web site.