news-O-matic

GRADE – 3rd, 4th, 5th	UNIT - Election 2020
Relevant Essential Question(s) *Content-based* -What is the electoral college? -How does the electoral college work? -Is the electoral college a good system for electing a president? Why or why not? *Skills-based* -What are relevant details? -Why does an author include examples?	
Focus Standard(s) R.I.3.1: Ask and answer questions to demonstrate understanding of a text, referring explicitly to the text as the basis for the answers. R.I.4.1: Refer to details and examples in a text when explaining what the text says explicitly and when drawing inferences from the text. R.I.5.1: Quote accurately from a text when explaining what the text says explicitly and when drawing inferences from the text.	
Learning Objective SWBAT: Students will be able to explain what the electoral college is and how it works. Students will be able to debate the merits of the electoral college system.	

	GENERAL GUIDELINE	DIFFERENTIATION
Materials and Resources	News-O-Matic article "Electoral College: The Race to 270," "Electoral College" note-taking handout, optional "Electoral College Debate" handout	

| Vocabulary | *Content-based*
-vote: make a choice
-electors: individuals who cast a vote for a group of people
-swing states: U.S. states where Democrats and Republicans have similar levels of support

Skills-based
-relevant: related to or connected to what is being discussed | |

	GENERAL GUIDELINE	**DIFFERENTIATION**
Do Now	Have students vote on one of the following questions: ● If we could choose, should our school colors be red and yellow or blue and white? ● For our next read aloud, should we read a comic book or a nonfiction text? *Note: You might want to adapt the question to include your school's actual colors or two books from your classroom.* After students vote, explain that in a simple election, the majority wins. In this case, our school colors would be _____ (or our next read aloud would be _____). This is simple, right? Connection: "In the United States, we're getting ready to vote for president. But the process for electing a president is not simple. In the United States, we use a system called the electoral college. Today, we'll read an article that will help us figure out what the electoral college is and how it works. You'll need to pay attention	

to the details and examples in the article to decide if you think it's a good system or not."

Mini-Lesson & Guided Practice (with think aloud and exemplar)	<u>Introduction/Accessing Prior Knowledge:</u> Ask students what they already know about electing a U.S. president. Record their responses so that all students can see them on a board, Smart Board, or screen share. Remind students that today, we're looking specifically for details and examples that explain what the electoral college is and how it works. Distribute *Note-Taking Guide for "Electoral College: The Race to 270."* Note-Taking Guide for "Electoral College: The Race to 270"	

	Important Information Relevant details or examples	Interesting Information
What is the electoral college?		
How does the electoral college work?		

	Suggestion: Create a classroom anchor chart similar to the one above. "If we're looking to find out 'What is the electoral college and how does it work?' we can separate our details and examples into two columns: those that are important and those that are interesting. Watch and listen as I place what we know into one of the two columns." Demonstrate moving a few examples into the appropriate columns (see example below in the Mini-Lesson for more clarification, if necessary). Mini-Lesson/Think Aloud: Using a Smart Board or screen share, think aloud with students how to place information from "Electoral College: The Race to 270" into the correct column — whether it's important to the question or just interesting. For example, *a candidate needs to earn at least 270 electoral votes* belongs in "Important." This is because it is a *relevant* detail. On the other hand, "*Most nations need only a few weeks to get a new leader*" belongs in "Interesting" because it doesn't directly answer one of the questions we're looking to answer. Make sure students understand what *relevant details* means. Guided Practice: "With a partner, take a moment to find a new detail or example that answers one of our essential questions for the day." Give students 3-5 minutes to turn & talk and come up with a response. Circulate to determine who might need additional support, who might be exemplary for a share-out, and any common misconceptions. Have a couple of students share their examples. Answer any questions about how to complete the note-taking sheet.	*Guided Practice: Provide fill-in-the-blank sentence:* A relevant detail or example is one that _____.

Student Practice	Students will read <u>"Electoral College: The Race to 270"</u> using the same steps as above to determine relevant details and examples. They should fill in their note-taking sheet as much as they can. Be sure to meet with students who struggled during the initial mini-lesson. Scaffold student understanding and note-taking with the following questions: ● What does the author mean when he says the electoral college system is complex? What makes it complex? ● Which details explain what the electoral college is? Are there any examples to support this? Why does the author include these examples? ● Which details support how the electoral college works? Can you find any examples to support this? What is so special about the number *270*? ● How does a person's vote work? ● What is an elector? Why do states have different numbers of electors? ● Are "swing states" important? Midway through the Student Practice, call attention to the three content-based vocabulary words for the lesson: -vote: make a choice -electors: individuals who cast a vote for a group of people -swing states: U.S. states where Democrats and Republicans have similar levels of support Find these words in the article and go over their definitions. If students haven't already done so, challenge them to include these words in their notes.	** Differentiation by process: The class could be split into three groups. Or, you could divide the class by ability: If a learning specialist is available, he/she could work with the lowest-level group while the teacher works with the mid-level group and checks in with the highest-level group. Alternatively, students can work in heterogeneous pairings or independently.* ** Differentiation by content: Assign students/student groups different elements of News-O-Matic to incorporate into their notes: the video, the slide show, the fact/act. You can also challenge some students to research beyond News-O-Matic with encyclopedias or by going to the official U.S. government page at <u>https://www.usa.gov/election</u>.*

	Provide a few more minutes for students to finish taking notes on the article. Let them know we'll review it as a class.	
Closure	Have students share their notes on the electoral college with the class. Students should add to their notes when they hear something they didn't include. "Now that you've read a little about the electoral college, it's time to decide if you think it's a good system or not." Allow students a few minutes to jot down their thoughts on the back of their note-taking sheet or on a separate sheet of paper. After students have made a "gut" decision, require them to back up their feelings with relevant details and examples from their note-taking sheet. Have students share their thoughts. If time permits, divide the class into three groups for a class debate: group one, "The electoral college is a great system for electing a president;" group two, "The electoral college is a terrible system;" and group three, judges. Distribute *The Electoral College Debate* handout. You can also visit other sites for more information on debates, such as https://www.edu.gov.mb.ca/k12/cur/socstud/frame_found_sr2/tns/tn-13.pdf.	

The Electoral College Debate

Issue: The electoral college is a great system for electing a president.

Opening Statement (2 minutes each team)
We believe the electoral college _____. We believe this because:
1. First, _____.
2. Second, _____.
3. Third, _____.
As you will see, _____.

Arguments (2 minutes each team)
As Russell Kahn shows in "Electoral College: The Race to 270,"
_____.
Further, _____.
Last, _____.

Rebuttal (2 minute each team)
While our opponents say _____, we can refute this claim. _____
_____
They also claimed _____. However, _____
_____

Closing Statement (1 minute each team)
In conclusion, we believe that the electoral college _____.
It is time to _____ about this system.

Ask student judges to determine the winner of the debate and explain why.

Assessment	Students can complete the multiple-choice and discussion questions provided in the *News-O-Matic Teacher's Guide.*	
Homework	<u>Optional:</u> Students may choose any one of the remaining News-O-Matic articles on the election and question sets to complete.	*Student choice of the articles allows for flexibility. Higher-level students may also read multiple remaining articles.*