

They Were Born Where?

Grades 9 and 10



OBJECTIVES

Students will identify where the presidents of the United States were born and examine the role of geography in determining the outcome of presidential elections. The class will create graphs representing the birth and home states of the presidents and will also analyze the results of every election for President of the United States.



CLASS TIME

Three 45- to 60-minute sessions



NATIONAL STANDARDS

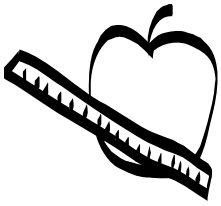
This lesson plan reflects some of the national standards of learning as defined by the National Standards for History (NSH), the National Council of Social Studies (NCSS), the National Geography Standards (NGS), and the National Council for the Teaching of Mathematics (NCTM). These standards are listed below:

- History: The institutions and practices of government created during the Revolution and how they were revised between 1787 and 1815 to create the foundation of the American political system based on the US Constitution and the Bill of Rights
- Social Studies: People, Places, and Environments
- Social Studies: Power, Authority, and Governance
- Geography: How to Analyze the Spatial Organization of People, Places, and Environments on Earth's Surface
- Geography: How to apply geography to interpret the past
- Mathematics: Use representations to model and interpret physical, social, and mathematical phenomena
- Mathematics: Recognize and apply mathematics in contexts outside of mathematics
- Mathematics: Understand patterns, relations, and functions



Materials

- 1 overhead projector
- 1 overhead transparency of each of the following:
 - “State Distribution” worksheet
 - “Presidents’ Birth States” worksheet
 - “Presidents’ Home States” worksheet
 - “They Were Born Where?” worksheet
 - “Geography’s Influence” worksheet



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- Copies of the worksheets attached to this lesson plan
- Colored pencils
- Computer lab with Internet access
- Texts for student research containing statistics about presidential elections. For example:
 - *Hammond's Atlas of United States History*
 - *Geography of Presidential Elections in the United States 1868–2004* by Albert Menendez
 - *The Encyclopedia of U.S. Presidential Elections* edited by David Saffell
 - *Presidential Elections 1789–2000* by Jerome Levin
- Graphing software



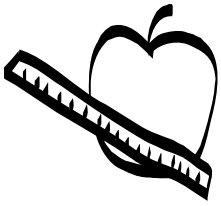
PREPARATIONS

- Make overhead transparencies of each of the following:
 - “State Distribution” worksheet
 - “Presidents’ Birth States” worksheet
 - “Presidents’ Home States” worksheet
 - “They Were Born Where?” worksheet
 - “They Were Born Where?” modelling examples sheet
 - “Geography’s Influence” worksheet
- Make copies of each of the following:
 - “State Distribution” worksheet (1 per pair)
 - “Presidents’ Birth States” worksheet (1 per student)
 - “Presidents’ Home States” worksheet (1 per student)
 - “They Were Born Where?” worksheet (5 per pair or an amount appropriate to the class)
 - “Geography’s Influence” worksheet (1 per student)
- Bookmark Internet sites that contain information on Presidential elections.
- Arrange to use the computer lab for sessions 2 and 3.



GROUPINGS

- Whole Group
- Pairs
- Independent Work



They Were Born Where?



TERMS AND CONCEPTS

- Obverse (front)
- Distribution
- President-elect
- Birth state vs. home state
- Candidate



BACKGROUND KNOWLEDGE

Students should have a basic knowledge of:

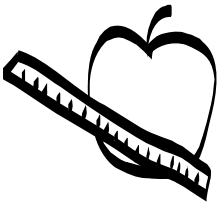
- Electoral College and its role in the election process
- President of the United States
- Vice-president of the United States
- Presidential elections
- Graphing software (optional)



STEPS

Session 1

1. Display a map of the United States that the students can see upon entering the room.
2. Ask the students whether they think the size of the state a candidate is from influences their ability to be elected as President. Allow time for discussion.
3. Display the transparency of the obverse of any United States presidential \$1 coin. Ask the students to examine it and tell you what they know about this picture. The students should be able to identify this as the front of a coin and that it depicts a particular president. Tell the students that the Presidential \$1 Coin Program began in 2007 to commemorate each of our nation's presidents. The program calls for four new dollar coin designs to be released per year in the order the presidents served the country. Point out to the students that each obverse in the series depicts a different president and shows the years the president served in office and the number of that presidency.
4. Tell the students that many textbooks provide the state where the president was born or the state from which they ran for office. Ask the students if they think that the state a president was born in or runs from affects that president's ability to get elected.
5. Explain to the students the difference between the president's "birth state" and "home state."
6. Divide the class into pairs and distribute the following to each pair:
 - "State Distribution" map
 - "Presidents' Birth States" worksheet
 - "Presidents' Home States" worksheet



They Were Born Where?

- “Geography’s Influence” worksheet
 - Colored pencils
7. Working chronologically, have the students use a colored pencil to numerically plot the United States presidents’ birth states on the map. For example, write the number “1” in Virginia to represent George Washington, and the number “2” in Massachusetts to represent John Adams. The students should record all the presidents.
 8. Working chronologically, have the students use a different colored pencil to numerically plot the presidents’ home states on the map. For example, again write the number “1” in Virginia for George Washington, “2” in Massachusetts for John Adams. The students should notice that some of the presidents (such as Andrew Jackson and Abraham Lincoln) ran for president from states other than the one in which they were born.
 9. Ask the students which state has the most presidential birthplaces and which state has the most presidents elected from it. Note that these statistics change when adjusted for the presidents who were never elected as president.
 10. Have the students respond to the questions on the “Geography’s Influence” worksheet.
 11. Review student responses as a class.
 12. Collect the worksheets.

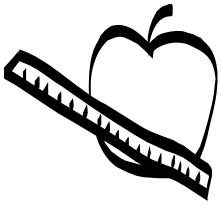
Session 2

1. Bring the students to the computer lab if they are to create their graphs on the computer. As a class, review the information from Session 1.
2. Have the students create two distribution tables. The first table should list the states in which the presidents were born and the second the states from which the presidents ran.
3. From these tables have the students create (on computer or by hand) graphs that display the distribution of presidents according to states. The graphs can include pie, column, area, and line graphs.
4. Have the students print out and analyze their work in pairs.
5. Redistribute the “Geography’s Influence” worksheet from Session 1.
6. As a class, revisit and discuss the worksheet.

Note: Decide before Session 3 how to best incorporate the modeling example.

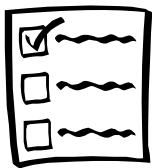
Session 3

1. Bring the students to the computer lab. Have them work in the same pairs as in the previous session. Explain that they will analyze the birth and home states of the presidents, this time considering whether or not the candidate’s state affected the election win.
2. Distribute 5 copies of the “They Were Born Where?” worksheet to each pair.



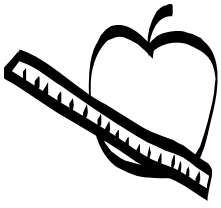
They Were Born Where?

3. Have the students search terms on the Internet such as “United States presidential election results” or use bookmarked sites to find statistics about the elections.
4. Assign each pair a certain number of elections so that each pair analyzes the results of at least five elections (as of 2004, there were 55 presidential elections). Each pair should be assigned a chronological group of elections, with the whole class covering all the elections. For example, if you have 10 pairs of students, each pair could analyze six elections. Elections may overlap between groups.
5. Tell each pair to look at the results of each presidential election in their group and determine whether or not the size of the president’s birth or home state directly affected the election. This will involve ascertaining specifics of the Electoral College vote in each election.
6. Allow time for the students to do their research and complete the “They Were Born Where?” worksheets.
7. After the students have analyzed their set of elections, ask the class if they found any elections that might have been influenced by the candidates’ birth or home states. Note that they will probably identify very close presidential elections in which one state’s electoral votes truly made a difference. Record the student responses about the elections on an overhead transparency or on a piece of chart paper.
8. Revisit the question about whether they think the size of the state a candidate is from influences their ability to be elected as President. Discuss this question as a class based on the completed activities.
9. Display the following essay questions on chart paper, overhead transparency, or board and have the students write an essay that answers them:
 - Does the state a person is born in or runs from influence their ability to be elected as President?
 - Is the Electoral College system still the best way to elect a president?
10. Collect the essays.



ASSESSMENT

- Evaluate the accuracy of the student research on the “They Were Born Where?” worksheet and student-generated graphs.
- Review the essay questions to evaluate whether the students met the lesson objectives.

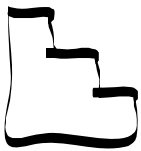


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ENRICHMENT/EXTENSIONS

- Have students create a presentation or chart called “Top 10 Presidential Elections That Were Influenced by Geography.”
- Expand the mathematics exercises by having students chart other information about the presidents. For example:
 - Occupations before being elected (such as soldier, teacher, business person)
 - Number of terms served
- Have students identify the most critical states for a presidential hopeful by visiting the Electoral College Calculator on the National Archives Web site at www.archives.gov/federal-register/electoral-college/calculator.html.
- Have students test their knowledge of the Electoral College process by searching on terms like “electoral college quiz.”

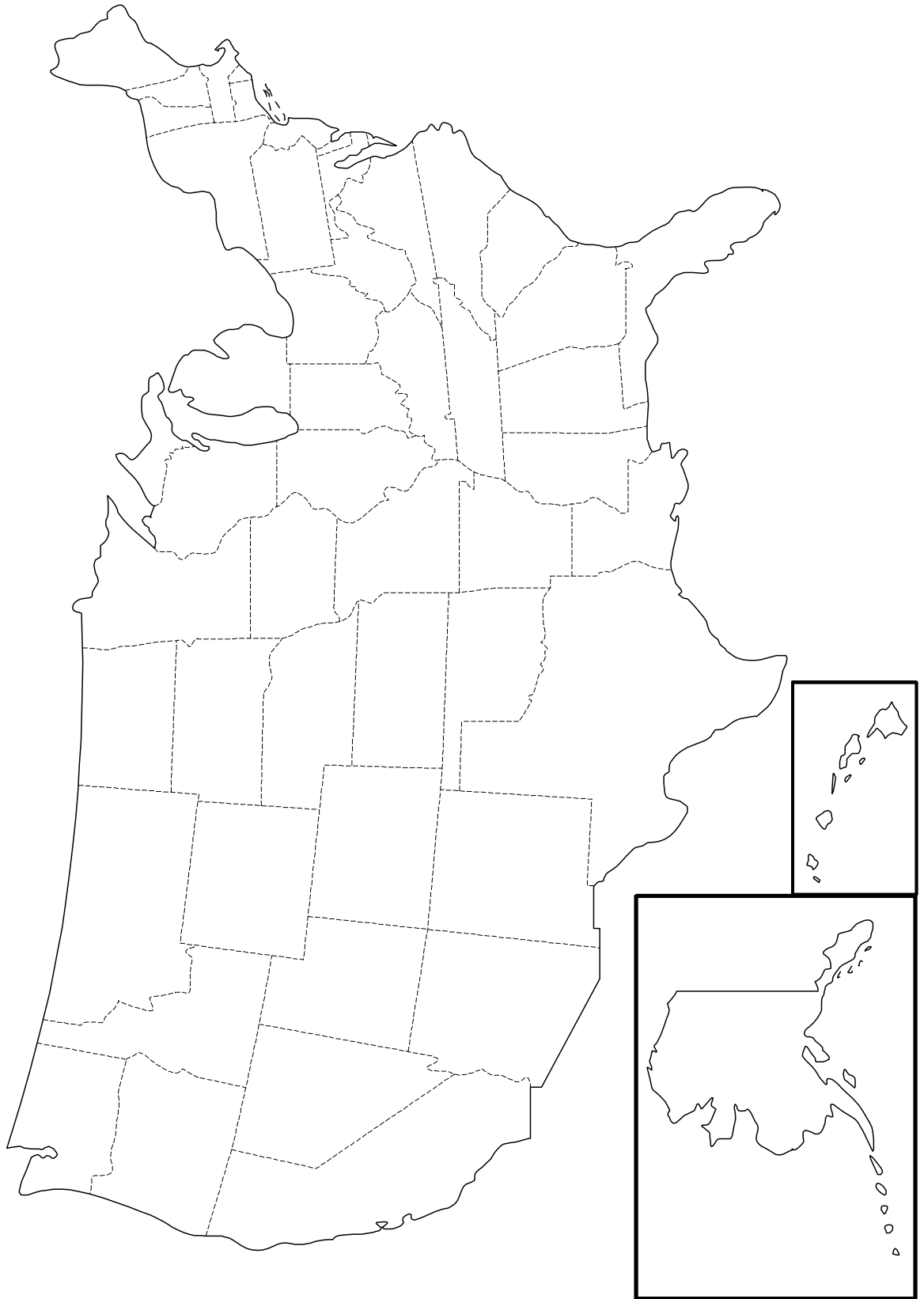


DIFFERENTIATED LEARNING OPTIONS

- Have students research presidential birth and home states independently.
- Have students work in groups of three.
- Distribute a completed map to students.
- Allow the use of a scribe for the essay questions.
- Limit the amount of elections that the students research.
- Provide extended time to complete Sessions 2 and 3.

Name _____

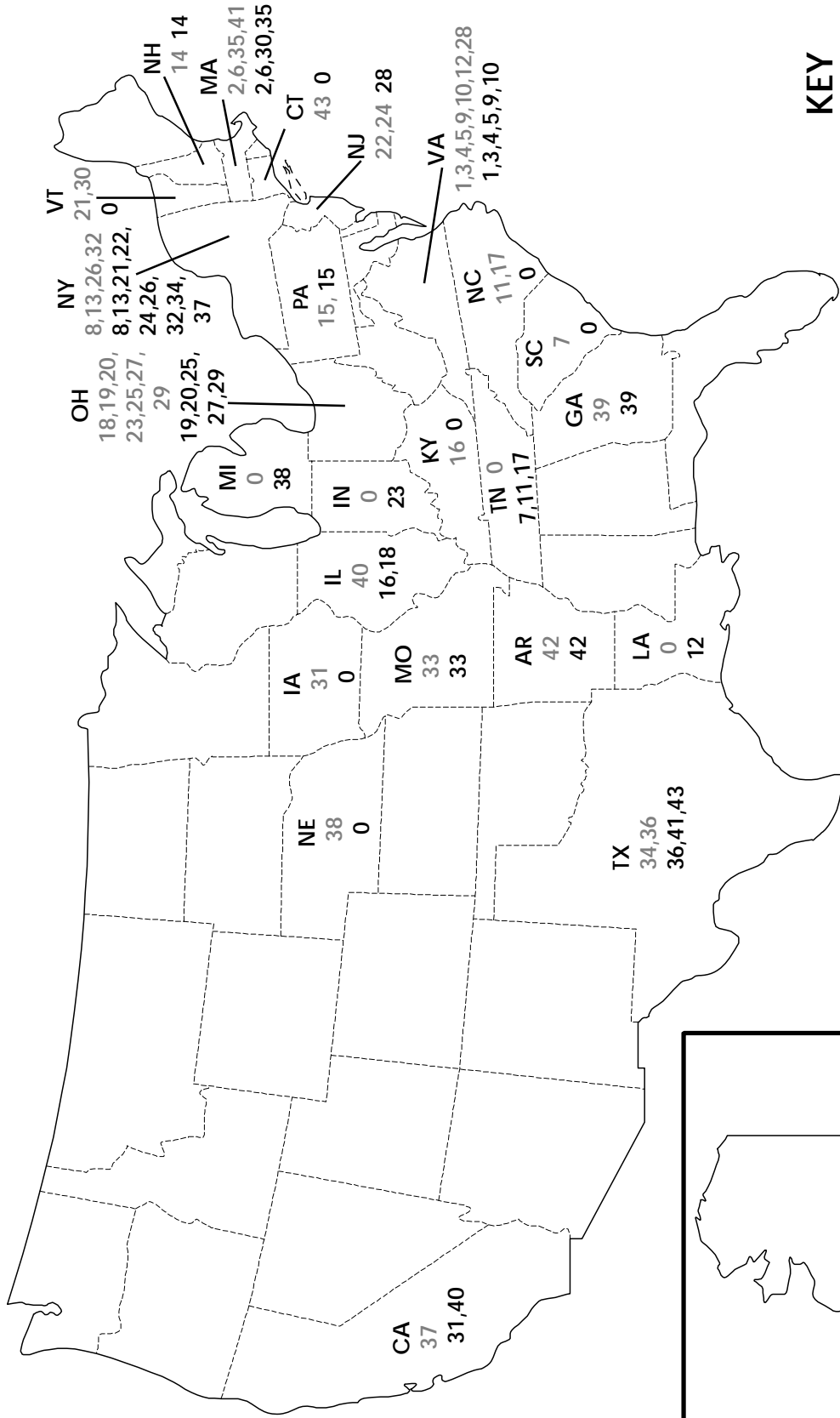
State Distribution



Name _____

State Distribution

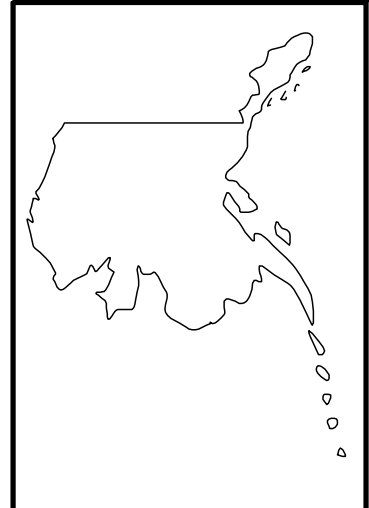
Key



KEY

Birth State

Home State





Name _____

Presidents' Birth States

A president's birth state may not be the same state from which the president ran ("home state").

President	Birth State	President	Birth State
1. George Washington	Virginia	23. Benjamin Harrison	Ohio
2. John Adams	Massachusetts	24. Grover Cleveland	New Jersey
3. Thomas Jefferson	Virginia	25. William McKinley	Ohio
4. James Madison	Virginia	26. Theodore Roosevelt	New York
5. James Monroe	Virginia	27. William H. Taft	Ohio
6. John Quincy Adams	Massachusetts	28. Woodrow Wilson	Virginia
7. Andrew Jackson	South Carolina	29. Warren G. Harding	Ohio
8. Martin Van Buren	New York	30. Calvin Coolidge	Vermont
9. William H. Harrison	Virginia	31. Herbert Hoover	Iowa
10. John Tyler*	Virginia	32. Franklin D. Roosevelt	New York
11. James Knox Polk	North Carolina	33. Harry S. Truman	Missouri
12. Zachary Taylor	Virginia	34. Dwight D. Eisenhower	Texas
13. Millard Fillmore*	New York	35. John F. Kennedy	Massachusetts
14. Franklin Pierce	New Hampshire	36. Lyndon B. Johnson	Texas
15. James Buchanan	Pennsylvania	37. Richard M. Nixon	California
16. Abraham Lincoln	Kentucky	38. Gerald R. Ford*	Nebraska
17. Andrew Johnson*	North Carolina	39. James E. Carter	Georgia
18. Ulysses S. Grant	Ohio	40. Ronald W. Reagan	Illinois
19. Rutherford B. Hayes	Ohio	41. George H.W. Bush	Massachusetts
20. James A. Garfield	Ohio	42. William J. Clinton	Arkansas
21. Chester A. Arthur*	Vermont	43. George W. Bush	Connecticut
22. Grover Cleveland	New Jersey	44.	

* These presidents took over for the previous president without being elected as president themselves.



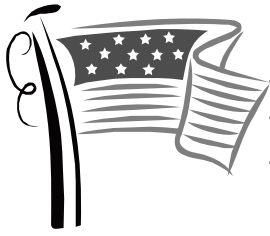
Name _____

Presidents' Home States

A president's birth state may not be the same state from which the president ran ("home state").

President	Home State	President	Home State
1. George Washington	Virginia	23. Benjamin Harrison	Indiana
2. John Adams	Massachusetts	24. Grover Cleveland	New York
3. Thomas Jefferson	Virginia	25. William McKinley	Ohio
4. James Madison	Virginia	26. Theodore Roosevelt	New York
5. James Monroe	Virginia	27. William H. Taft	Ohio
6. John Quincy Adams	Massachusetts	28. Woodrow Wilson	New Jersey
7. Andrew Jackson	Tennessee	29. Warren G. Harding	Ohio
8. Martin Van Buren	New York	30. Calvin Coolidge	Massachusetts
9. William H. Harrison	Virginia	31. Herbert Hoover	California
10. John Tyler*	Virginia	32. Franklin D. Roosevelt	New York
11. James Knox Polk	Tennessee	33. Harry S. Truman	Missouri
12. Zachary Taylor	Louisiana	34. Dwight D. Eisenhower	New York
13. Millard Fillmore*	New York	35. John F. Kennedy	Massachusetts
14. Franklin Pierce	New Hampshire	36. Lyndon B. Johnson	Texas
15. James Buchanan	Pennsylvania	37. Richard M. Nixon	New York
16. Abraham Lincoln	Illinois	38. Gerald R. Ford*	Michigan
17. Andrew Johnson*	Tennessee	39. James E. Carter	Georgia
18. Ulysses S. Grant	Illinois	40. Ronald W. Reagan	California
19. Rutherford B. Hayes	Ohio	41. George H.W. Bush	Texas
20. James A. Garfield	Ohio	42. William J. Clinton	Arkansas
21. Chester A. Arthur*	New York	43. George W. Bush	Texas
22. Grover Cleveland	New York	44.	

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Name _____

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Directions: Provide the following information about individual presidential elections.

1. Election year that you are analyzing: _____
2. How many electoral votes the birth and home states were worth:

Birth state: _____

Home state: _____

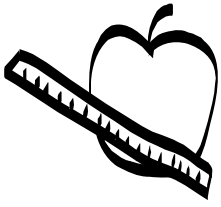
3. Did the president-elect win those states? _____
4. Would the president-elect have won the election if the home and/or birth states had voted differently? _____

Explain: _____

5. Did the President-elect take a number of states in the same region of the country as their birth/home state? What might have caused this?

6. Did the size of the vice-president-elect's birth or home state seem to have any impact on the election?

7. In this particular election, do you think that geography influenced the selection of the president? Why or why not?



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Modelling Examples

ELECTION OF 1796

Election of John Adams as our 2nd President

1. 1796.
2. Adams was born in and ran from Massachusetts (worth 16 electoral votes in 1796), 16 and 16.
3. Adams carried Massachusetts.
4. Had Adams lost Massachusetts AND Jefferson had won it, then Jefferson would have become president (notice the regional voting patterns in this election).
5. The people of the Northeast had similar views of government.
6. No, because the runner-up in the presidential election was named as vice-president in elections before 1804.
7. Yes, sectionalism was quite evident.

ELECTION OF 1860

Election of Abraham Lincoln as our 16th President

1. 1860.
2. Lincoln was born in Kentucky (worth 12 electoral votes in 1860) and ran from the state of Illinois (worth 11 electoral votes in 1860).
3. Lincoln carried Illinois, but lost Kentucky.
4. Yes.
5. Yes, Lincoln took all of the Northern states as the election of 1860 was very focused on the existence and expansion of slavery.
6. No.
7. In this case Lincoln did not need to win Illinois or Kentucky, as he had a substantial Electoral College win (180-72-39-12).



Name _____

Geography's Influence

1. Why did some presidents run from states other than those in which they were born?

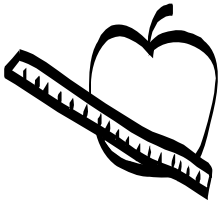
2. How many presidents ran from states other than the one in which they were born?

3. How might it benefit someone to run for office from a state other than the one in which they were born?

4. Why were there no presidents associated with California until the election of Herbert Hoover in 1928?

5. Why are there so many presidents from Virginia?

6. Why is it important that the two presidents born in Vermont ran for office from other states? Why or why not?



Geography's Influence

Key

1. Why did some presidents run from states other than those in which they were born?

Some possible reasons: they moved as young children; they became famous in other states; they ran for lesser offices (such as governor) in other states; or they intentionally ran from states more populated than their own.

2. How many presidents ran from states other than the one in which they were born?

19.

3. Does it benefit candidates to run for this office from states other than their birth states?

Not always. For example, President Nixon was born in California but ran for office from New York in 1968. Both were highly populated states.

4. Why were there no presidents associated with California until the election of Herbert Hoover in 1928?

California didn't become a state until 1850 and it is far removed from the politics of the east coast.

5. Why are there so many presidents from Virginia?

Virginia is one of the original 13 colonies; has a large population; used to encompass both Virginia and West Virginia.

6. Is it important that the two presidents born in Vermont ran for office from other states? Why or why not?

Probably, because the other states (New York and Massachusetts) had more electoral votes.

Note: Students might also notice trends such as three presidents in a row from the state of Ohio.