

To the Teacher:

Teacher discretion is advised in the use of the distraction cards that accompany this board game. What appeals to a child's sense of humor and is highly motivating to a pre-teen growing up in 21st century New York City may seem not merely inappropriate, but even offensive to a school board member who grew up in 20th century Wyoming. The teacher is urged to be sensitive to the needs of the community and to rewrite the distraction cards to meet those needs if necessary, or, better still, to help the children write their own.

The teacher also has the option of using the basic lesson plan without turning it into a game.

"Start where the child is," John Dewey urged. The child, too, must be taught to be sensitive to the needs of the community in which he or she lives.

Those children whose skills are sufficiently advanced or who can find older mentors to help might be encouraged to turn the board game into a Web-based game.

NS/PME 2008 Election Connection

A Game for Students in the Upper Elementary Grades and Higher

INTRODUCTION

This role-playing board game is designed for students in grades 5/6 and up to connect some of the election issues facing the U.S. in 2008. It is also designed to inject some humor into the process.

Open-ended questions are designed to promote critical thinking rather than "right" answers.

Questions are supplied only for the issues covered in NS/PME's Issues Guides -- Economy, Education, Energy, Health Care, and the Wars in Iraq and Afghanistan. Questions on other issues can be added if desired.

To simplify the game, electoral votes in all states are awarded on an all-or-nothing basis, although in reality some states have proportional voting.

For Obama and McCain positions on various issues, see:

Votegopher: <http://www.votegopher.com/HTH.php>

New York Times Election Guide 2008 at <http://elections.nytimes.com/2008/index.html>

U.S. State Dept. Guide to the 2008 Election

<http://uspolitics.america.gov/uspolitics/elections/issues.html>

For the web sites of other candidates, see <http://www.politics1.com/p2008.htm>

Also see Factcheck.com

DIRECTIONS

1) Materials Needed

Create a game board with spaces for each of the 50 states (and the District of Columbia), and three spaces for taking the following cards: Distraction Cards, Bonus Cards, and Fringe Candidate Cards (total 54 spaces). The board can be on a board, a table, the floor, etc, and the spaces can be arranged in any linear closed loop -- rectangular, circular, serpentine, etc.

One option is a rectangle with 13 spaces on each of two opposite sides and 14 spaces on each of the two other sides. The piles of Issues Cards, Distraction Cards, Bonus Cards, and Fringe Candidate Cards can go in the middle or any other convenient location.

States should be in random order, and the order can be changed for each game. The spaces for Distraction Cards, Bonus Cards, and Fringe Candidate Cards should be 13 - 14

spaces apart.

You will need a die, spinner, or other random number generator to determine how many spaces each player moves, from 1 to 6.

The states can be illustrated with cards printed and cut out from:
<http://www.nickjr.com/printables/50-state-fact-cards.jhtml>

Alternatives:

Illustrations of state quarters are available at:
<http://www.usmint.gov/kids/teachers/lessonPlans/50sq/2008/0203-r.pdf> (pdf file) or you can use actual state quarters

Illustrations of state stamps are available at:
<http://www.cnn.com/SPECIALS/2002/summertrips/interactive/stamps/frame.set.exclude.html>

State maps available at: <http://www.nationalatlas.gov/printable.html>

Jigsaw puzzle pieces

NOTE: You will need to add a labeled space for the District of Columbia to the cards, coins, stamps, etc.

You can note the electoral votes each state has on the state space, or use a separate map or table to look it up each time a player lands on a space.

Electoral vote maps are available at:
http://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/en/a/a3/US_Electoral_College_Map.PNG (State outlines only; no names)
http://www.netstate.com/states/maps/images/usa_electoral_votes04-08.gif (With state names)
<http://alabamamaps.ua.edu/contemporarymaps/usa/politics/electoralvotes.pdf> (PDF file with state names)

Print and cut out each group of cards: the Issues Cards, Distraction Cards, Bonus Cards, and Fringe Candidate Cards. Print each groups of cards on paper or cardstock with a different color.

The Issues Cards are listed by issue only for teacher review, and should be shuffled. A complete list of the issues cards is below. Add your own if you wish.

Keep score of electoral votes gained and lost.

2) How to Play

Players are divided into candidates and voters. A minimum of 5 players is suggested; 2

presidential candidates and 3 voters. With more players, you can have presidential and vice-presidential candidates from multiple parties. Players can also rotate roles during the game to allow everyone to be a candidate.

The object of the game is to collect 270 electoral votes to win the election.

Candidates roll the die, spin the spinner, etc. to determine the number of spaces each moves. When a candidate lands on a state (or D.C.), an Issues Card is drawn, and the candidate answers the question on that card. The voters then determine (by vote of hands) whether the answer includes reasons good enough to convince some voters, not whether they agree or disagree with those reasons. If the voters approve of the answer, that candidate accumulates the electoral votes from that state, which is then excluded from the game. This can be done by removing the card, covering it with a post-it note, etc. The state spaces which are removed are no longer counted when players move afterward. Only one candidate can get the electoral votes of any state; however presidential and vice-presidential winnings (if any) for each party are combined.

Remind the candidates that If they want the federal government to help pay for something or do something, they have to pay more in taxes. If they don't want the federal government to help pay for or do something, they have to pay more personally, or they have to get something done another way, or not at all.

Optional: Candidates can be asked to answer the question in a way that will appeal to the voters of the state or region they have landed on.

If a candidate lands on the space for Distraction Cards or Bonus Cards, a card is drawn, and the candidate loses or gains the electoral votes shown to or from the opposite party. If there are more than two parties, apportion the gains or losses.

Draw a card if a candidate lands on the space for Fringe Candidate Cards; a voter temporarily becomes the fringe candidate. The die, spinner, etc. is used to select who will be the candidate by assigning voters numbers from 1 through 6 (for small groups voters can have multiple numbers). The fringe candidate then "answers" the question, with the voters voting on the performance and inventiveness of the answer, not whether it makes sense. If the voters are satisfied, the fringe candidate takes 10 electoral votes away from the candidate who landed on the space.

NOTE: The fringe candidate issues are taken from the "Mostly Official Campaign Platform" and other "positions" of genuine fringe candidate Vermin Supreme; see: <http://www.zerohits.com/vermin/supreme2.htm>

The home page of Vermin Supreme's Web site is at <http://www.verminsupreme.com/>

Caution: some pages of his Web site contain language inappropriate for schools.

Play continues until 270 electoral votes are accumulated by a candidate or party, going around the board as many times as necessary. In the unlikely event (with two parties) that all votes are taken and no candidate has 270 votes, the election is decided by the House of Representatives.

In case of disputed votes or election irregularities, the election is decided by the Supreme Court.

CARDS

Distraction Cards

Stock Market Loses 500 Points -- Lose 30 Votes
Hurricane Hits Washington, D.C. -- Lose 12 Votes
The Alaska Pipeline Is Shut Down by an Oil Spill; Gas Prices Rise -- Lose 30 Votes
Voters Protest in Chicago When They Are Told They Are Dead -- Lose 6 Votes
Nuclear Power Plant Accident -- Metropolis Is Evacuated -- Lose 18 Votes
Israel Attacks an Iranian A-Bomb Factory -- Lose 18 Votes
6 Congressmen from Your Party Are Arrested for Bribery -- Lose 30 Votes
Hackers Shut Down Your Party's Web Site -- Lose 6 Votes
You Are Caught Cursing at a Not-so-"dead" Microphone -- Lose 6 Votes
You Get Food Poisoning at a "Rubber Chicken" Fundraising Dinner -- Lose 12 Votes
Terrorists Firebomb a Gotham City Subway; the System is Shut Down -- Lose 12 Votes
L.A. Is Hit by a Major Earthquake -- Lose 18 Votes
A Skunk Climbs on Stage at a Presidential Debate -- Lose 6 Votes
Mississippi River Floods St. Louis -- Lose 12 Votes
Russia invades Ukraine -- Lose 30 Votes

Bonus Cards

During a Traffic Jam, You Help Deliver a Baby in a Taxi -- Gain 6 Votes
At a Presidential Debate You Have the Best Answers -- Gain 24 Votes
You Raise 20 Million Dollars for Your Campaign -- Gain 24 Votes
You Are Endorsed by the National Air Guitar Society -- Gain 6 Votes
The Toilets Clog at the Party Headquarters of the Opposition Candidate -- Gain 6 Votes
Your Party's Voter Registration Drive Enrolls 1 Million New Voters -- Gain 24 Votes
You Are a Hit on You Tube, Singing the "Star Spangled Banner" Off Key -- Gain 6 Votes
You Make a Political Promise You Can Keep -- Gain 18 Votes
You Are Opposed by the National Spider Lovers Society -- Gain 6 Votes
You Correctly Answer a Question About Which President Is on a \$10 Bill; Economists Are Pleased -- Gain 6 Votes
The Opposition Candidate Receives a Shipment of 100,000 Campaign Buttons with His Name Misspelled -- Gain 6 Votes
You Are Endorsed by 10 Hot Celebrities and Their Dogs -- Gain 6 Votes
You Explain How Automobile Engines Work; NASCAR Fans Are Impressed -- Gain 12 Votes
You Explain the Difference Between Loamy Clays and Clay Loams; Farmers Are Impressed -- Gain 12 Votes
You Convince Your Cousins to Vote for You -- Gain 0 Votes But Have a Family Party.

Fringe Candidate Cards

Explain Why You Support Time-travel Research

Explain Why You Support Mandatory Toothbrushing

Explain Why You Oppose Flying Monkey Tooth Fairies Enforcing Mandatory Toothbrushing Laws

Explain Why You Support Free Ponies for Everyone

Explain Why You Support Making Iraq the 51st state

Explain Why You Support Lowering the Voting Age to 6

Explain Why You Support Hannah Montana for Vice President

Explain Why You Support Deportation of Zombies

Explain Why You Support Carbonating All Drinks in America to Reduce Carbon Dioxide in the Atmosphere

Explain Why You Support Kicking Anyone Out of the Country Who Complains About the Weather

Explain Why You Support Nuclear Waste Dumps in our Backyards to Share the Burden of Disposal

Explain Why You Support Government Issued Toothpaste Containing Addictive Substances

Explain Why You Support Computer Chip Implants for All Americans

Explain Why You Support Paving Over Everything That Has Not Been Paved Over Yet

Issues Cards

ECONOMY

Explain how you would create more jobs for people.

Give your reasons why the federal government should or should not help people who can't pay their mortgage loans.

Give your reasons why the federal government should or should not help banks that are losing money because people can't pay their loans.

Explain why you do or don't want to cut federal taxes.

Explain why the U.S. should or should not allow more cheap products to be imported.

Explain why the U.S. should or should not increase Social Security payments to senior citizens.

Explain why the U.S. should or should not increase the federal minimum wage.

Explain why the federal government should or should not help pay for child care.

Explain why you believe the U.S. President can or can't change the direction of the U.S. economy.

Explain why the U.S. should or should not help U.S. farmers or fishermen.

Explain why the federal government should or should not make families earning over \$100,000 per year pay higher taxes.

Explain why the federal government should or should not allow rent deductions from income taxes, like deductible mortgage payments.

EDUCATION

Give your reasons why education should or should not be paid for by the federal government.

Explain why the U.S. should or should not give all students across the country the same tests for the No Child Left Behind law.

Explain why governments should or should not help pay for a college education.

Explain why governments should or should not help pay for private schooling.

Explain why governments should or should not help pay for preschools.

Explain why the federal or state government should or should not help pay for higher teacher salaries.

Explain why governments should or should not require all students to stay in school until age 18.

Explain why governments should or should not require schools to teach children how to be good workers for employers.

Explain why governments should or should not require schools to teach children how to think for themselves about issues like religion or sex.

Explain why governments should or should not require schools to have classes at night for the children of parents who work nights.

Explain why governments should or should not require schools to stay open all year.

Explain why governments should or should not require schools to provide a computer for every student.

HEALTH CARE

Explain why the federal government should or should not provide health care for everyone.

Explain why the federal government should or should not provide dental care for everyone.

Explain why the federal government should or should not allow importing prescription drugs.

Explain why the federal government should or should not require all employers to help pay for health care for their workers.

Explain why the federal government should or should not make all medical and health insurance costs tax-deductible for everyone.

Explain why the federal government should or should not require health insurers to cover everyone who applies and pays for insurance.

Explain why the federal government should or should not require health insurers to cover experimental treatments.

Explain why the federal government should or should not test all children for lead poisoning.

Explain why the federal government should or should not require all teachers to be trained in first aid and CPR.

Explain why the federal government should or should not provide health care for pets.

Explain why the federal government should or should not require schools to serve only healthy foods.

Explain why the federal government should or should not require health clinics in elementary schools.

THE WARS IN IRAQ AND AFGHANISTAN

Explain your plan for getting the U.S. out of Iraq and Afghanistan.

Explain why you do or don't believe the U.S. should have invaded Iraq and Afghanistan instead of other countries with dictators.

Explain why you do or don't believe the U.S. invasion of Iraq has helped to fight al-Qaeda.

Explain why you do or don't believe the U.S. President should be able to invade another country without a declaration of war from Congress.

Explain why you do or don't believe the U.S. should give answers in the World Court to charges of violations of international law and war crimes.

Explain why the federal government should or should not be allowed to spy on U.S. citizens without a warrant in cases of suspected terrorism.

Explain why you do or don't believe the federal government is keeping you safe.

Explain why the federal government should or should not draft everyone into the military at 18.

Explain why you do or don't think Americans who support the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan are more patriotic than those who don't.

Explain why the federal government should or should not allow the military to arrest civilians in the U.S.

Explain why the federal government should or should not arrest people protesting the wars in front of military facilities.

Explain when you believe the U.S. President should be allowed to use nuclear weapons.

ENERGY

Explain why drilling for oil in Alaska will or won't lower oil and gasoline prices.

Explain why drilling for oil offshore is or is not worth the environmental risk and the risk to fisheries.

Explain why the federal government should or should not help pay for electric cars.

Explain why the federal government should or should not pay more for new railroads and less for new roads.

Explain why the federal government should or should not help pay for a solar power system on your house.

Explain why the federal government should or should not release oil from the National Petroleum Reserve when the price goes over \$100/barrel.

Explain why you believe drilling for more oil or energy conservation is more important.

Explain why the federal government should or should not help pay for new nuclear power plants.

Explain why governments should or should not require oil companies to drill in areas they have already leased before they can lease new ones.

Explain why the federal government should or should not sign treaties about global warming.

Explain why the federal government should or should not tax oil companies more when their prices are high.

Explain why the federal government should or should not help pay for biofuels like corn

ethanol.

Explain why the federal government should or should not pay companies for research on cleaner fuels or cars.

Explain why the federal government should or should not charge high taxes on incandescent light bulbs.

Issues Cards

<p>Explain how you would create more jobs for people.</p>	<p>Give your reasons why the federal government should or should not help people who can't pay their mortgage loans.</p>
<p>Give your reasons why the federal government should or should not help banks that are losing money because people can't pay their loans.</p>	<p>Explain why you do or don't want to cut federal taxes.</p>
<p>Explain why the U.S. should or should not allow more cheap products to be imported.</p>	<p>Explain why the U.S. should or should not increase social security payments to senior citizens.</p>
<p>Explain why the U.S. should or should not increase the federal minimum wage.</p>	<p>Explain why the federal government should or should not help pay for child care.</p>

<p>Explain why you believe the U.S. President can or can't change the direction of the U.S. economy.</p>	<p>Explain why the U.S. should or should not help U.S. farmers or fishermen.</p>
<p>Explain why the federal government should or should not make families earning over \$100,000 per year pay higher taxes.</p>	<p>Explain why the federal government should or should not allow rent deductions from income taxes, like deductible mortgage payments.</p>
<p>Give your reasons why education should or should not be paid for by the federal government.</p>	<p>Explain why the U.S. should or should not give all students across the country the same tests for the No Child Left Behind law.</p>
<p>Explain why governments should or should not help pay for a college education.</p>	<p>Explain why governments should or should not help pay for private schooling.</p>
<p>Explain why governments should or should not help pay for preschools.</p>	<p>Explain why the federal or state government should or should not help pay for higher teacher salaries.</p>

<p>Explain why governments should or should not require schools to teach children how to think for themselves about issues like religion or sex.</p>	<p>Explain why governments should or should not require schools to have classes at night for the children of parents who work nights.</p>
<p>Explain why governments should or should not require schools to stay open all year.</p>	<p>Explain why governments should or should not require schools to provide a computer for every student.</p>
<p>Explain why the federal government should or should not provide health care for everyone.</p>	<p>Explain why the federal government should or should not provide dental care for everyone.</p>
<p>Explain why the federal government should or should not allow importing prescription drugs.</p>	<p>Explain why the federal government should or should not require all employers to help pay for health care for their workers.</p>

Explain why the federal government should or should not make all medical and health insurance costs tax-deductible for everyone.	Explain why the federal government should or should not require health insurers to cover everyone who applies and pays for insurance.
---	--

Explain why the federal government should or should not require health insurers to cover experimental treatments.	Explain why the federal government should or should not test all children for lead poisoning.
--	--

Explain why the federal government should or should not require all teachers to be trained in first aid and CPR.	Explain why the federal government should or should not provide health care for pets.
---	--

Explain why the federal government should or should not require schools to serve only healthy foods.	Explain why the federal government should or should not require health clinics in elementary schools.
---	--

<p>Explain your plan for getting the U.S. out of Iraq and Afghanistan.</p>	<p>Explain why you do or don't believe the U.S. should have invaded Iraq and Afghanistan instead of other countries with dictators.</p>
<p>Explain why you do or don't believe the U.S. invasion of Iraq has helped to fight al-Qaeda.</p>	<p>Explain why you do or don't believe the U.S. President should be able to invade another country without a declaration of war from Congress.</p>
<p>Explain why you do or don't believe the U.S should give answers in the World Court to charges of violations of international law and war crimes.</p>	<p>Explain why the federal government should or should not be allowed to spy on U.S. citizens without a warrant in cases of suspected terrorism.</p>
<p>Explain why you do or don't believe the federal government is keeping you safe.</p>	<p>Explain why the federal government should or should not draft everyone into the military at age 18.</p>

Explain why you do or don't think Americans who support the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan are more patriotic than those who don't.	Explain why the federal government should or should not allow the military to arrest civilians in the U.S.
Explain why the federal government should or should not arrest people protesting the wars in front of military facilities.	Explain when you believe the U.S. President should be allowed to use nuclear weapons.
Explain why drilling for oil in Alaska will or won't lower oil and gasoline prices.	Explain why drilling for oil offshore is or is not worth the environmental risk and the risk to fisheries.
Explain why the federal government should or should not help pay for electric cars.	Explain why the federal government should or should not pay more for new railroads and less for new roads.
Explain why the federal government should or should not help pay for a solar power system on your house.	Explain why the federal government should or should not release oil from the National Petroleum Reserve when the price goes over \$100/barrel.

<p>Explain why you believe drilling for more oil or energy conservation is more important.</p>	<p>Explain why the federal government should or should not help pay for new nuclear power plants.</p>
<p>Explain why governments should or should not require oil companies to drill in areas they have already leased before they can lease new ones.</p>	<p>Explain why the federal government should or should not sign world treaties about global warming.</p>
<p>Explain why the federal government should or should not tax oil companies more when their prices are high.</p>	<p>Explain why the federal government should or should not help pay for biofuels like ethanol from corn.</p>
<p>Explain why the federal government should or should not pay companies for research on cleaner fuels or cars.</p>	<p>Explain why the federal government should or should not charge high taxes on incandescent light bulbs.</p>

Fringe Candidate Cards

<p>Explain Why You Support Time-travel Research</p>	<p>Explain Why You Support Mandatory Toothbrushing</p>
<p>Explain Why You Oppose Flying Monkey Tooth Fairies Enforcing Mandatory Toothbrushing Laws</p>	<p>Explain Why You Support Free Ponies for Everyone</p>
<p>Explain Why You Support Making Iraq the 51st state</p>	<p>Explain Why You Support Lowering the Voting Age to 6</p>
<p>Explain Why You Support Hannah Montana for Vice President</p>	<p>Explain Why You Support Deportation of Zombies</p>
<p>Explain Why You Support Carbonating All Drinks in America to Reduce Carbon Dioxide in the Atmosphere</p>	<p>Explain Why You Support Kicking Anyone Out of the Country Who Complains About the Weather</p>

<p>Explain Why You Support Nuclear Waste Dumps in our Backyards to Share the Burden of Disposal</p>	<p>Explain Why You Support Government Issued Toothpaste Containing Addictive Substances</p>
<p>Explain Why You Support Computer Chip Implants for All Americans</p>	
<p>Explain Why You Support Paving Over Everything That Has Not Been Paved Over Yet</p>	

Bonus Cards

<p>During a Traffic Jam, You Help Deliver a Baby in a Taxi -- Gain 6 Votes</p>	<p>At a Presidential Debate You Have the Best Answers -- Gain 24 Votes</p>
<p>You Raise 20 Million Dollars for Your Campaign -- Gain 24 Votes</p>	<p>You Are Endorsed by the National Air Guitar Society -- Gain 6 Votes</p>
<p>The Toilets Clog at the Party Headquarters of the Opposition Candidate -- Gain 6 Votes</p>	<p>Your Party's Voter Registration Drive Enrolls 1 Million New Voters -- Gain 24 Votes</p>
<p>You Are a Hit on You Tube, Singing the "Star Spangled Banner" Off Key -- Gain 6 Votes</p>	<p>You Make a Political Promise You Can Actually Keep -- Gain 18 Votes</p>
<p>You Are Opposed by the National Spider Lovers Society -- Gain 6 Votes</p>	<p>You Correctly Answer a Question About Which President Is on a \$10 Bill; Economists Are Pleased -- Gain 6 Votes</p>

<p>The Opposition Candidate Receives a Shipment of 100,000 Campaign Buttons with His Name Misspelled -- Gain 6 Votes</p>	<p>You Are Endorsed by 10 Hot Celebrities and Their Dogs -- Gain 6 Votes</p>
<p>You Explain How Automobile Engines Work; NASCAR Fans Are Impressed -- Gain 12 Votes</p>	<p>You Explain the Difference Between Loamy Clays and Clay Loams; Farmers Are Impressed -- Gain 12 Votes</p>
<p>You Convince Your Cousins to Vote for You -- Gain 0 Votes But Have a Family Party.</p>	

Distraction Cards

Stock Market Loses 500 Points -- Lose 30 Votes	Hurricane Hits Washington, D.C. -- Lose 12 Votes
The Alaska Pipeline Is Shut Down by an Oil Spill; Gas Prices Rise -- Lose 30 Votes	Voters Protest in Chicago When They Are Told They Are Dead -- Lose 6 Votes
Nuclear Power Plant Accident -- Metropolis Is Evacuated -- Lose 18 Votes	Israel Attacks an Iranian A-Bomb Factory -- Lose 18 Votes
6 Congressmen from Your Party Are Arrested for Bribery -- Lose 30 Votes	Hackers Shut Down Your Party's Web Site -- Lose 6 Votes
You Are Caught Cursing at a Not-so-"dead" Microphone -- Lose 6 Votes	You Get Food Poisoning at a "Rubber Chicken" Fundraising Dinner -- Lose 12 Votes

Terrorists Firebomb a Gotham City Subway; the System is Shut Down -- Lose 12 Votes	L.A. Is Hit by a Major Earthquake -- Lose 18 Votes
A Skunk Climbs on Stage at a Presidential Debate -- Lose 6 Votes	Mississippi River Floods St. Louis -- Lose 12 Votes
Russia invades Ukraine -- Lose 30 Votes	