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### Election Day



Election Day occurs every two years, in even numbered years, on the first Tuesday after the first Monday in November. United States senators and congressmen are elected every two years. The presidential election occurs every four years in years divisible by four (2000, 2004, 2008, etc.).

The Tuesday after the first Monday in November was initially established in 1845 ([US Code Title 3, Chapter 1](#)) for the appointment of Presidential electors in every fourth year. [US Code Title 2, Chapter 1, Section 7](#) established this date for electing U.S. Representatives in every even numbered year in 1875. Finally, [US Code Title 2, Chapter 1](#) established this date as the time for electing U.S. Senators in 1914.

Americans observed the first uniform election day on November 4, 1845 in accordance with Congressional legislation passed earlier that year. The law, which ensured the simultaneous selection of presidential electors in each state, increased the power of political parties and reflected the democratization of presidential politics which had taken place since 1820.

As late as 1816, the citizens of nine states did not vote in presidential elections. Instead, previously elected state legislators chose the presidential electors who then determined the outcome of the contest.

The current workings of the Electoral College are the result of both design and experience. As it now operates:

- Each State is allocated a number of Electors equal to the number of its U.S. Senators (always 2) plus the number of its U.S. Representatives (which may change each decade according to the size of each State's population as determined in the Census).
- The political parties (or independent candidates) in each State submit to the State's chief election official a list of individuals pledged to their candidate for president and equal in number to the State's electoral vote. Usually, the major political parties select these individuals either in their State party conventions or through appointment by their State party leaders while third parties and independent candidates merely designate theirs.

### United States Holidays

[Admin. Professional Day](#)

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[All Soul's Day](#)

[April Fool's Day](#)

[Arbor Day](#)

[Ash Wednesday](#)

[Autumn](#)

[National Boss Day](#)

[Christmas Day](#)

[Christmas Eve](#)

[Cinco de Mayo](#)

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- Members of Congress and employees of the federal government are prohibited from serving as an Elector in order to maintain the balance between the legislative and executive branches of the federal government.
- After their caucuses and primaries, the major parties nominate their candidates for president and vice president in their national conventions traditionally held in the summer preceding the election. (Third parties and independent candidates follow different procedures according to the individual State laws). The names of the duly nominated candidates are then officially submitted to each State's chief election official so that they might appear on the general election ballot.
- On the Tuesday following the first Monday of November in years divisible by four, the people in each State cast their ballots for the party slate of Electors representing their choice for president and vice president (although as a matter of practice, general election ballots normally say "Electors for" each set of candidates rather than list the individual Electors on each slate).
- Whichever party slate wins the most popular votes in the State becomes that State's Electors-so that, in effect, whichever presidential ticket gets the most popular votes in a State wins all the Electors of that State. [The two exceptions to this are Maine and Nebraska where two Electors are chosen by statewide popular vote and the remainder by the popular vote within each Congressional district].
- On the Monday following the second Wednesday of December (as established in federal law) each State's Electors meet in their respective State capitals and cast their electoral votes-one for president and one for vice president.
- In order to prevent Electors from voting only for "favorite sons" of their home State, at least one of their votes must be for a person from outside their State (though this is seldom a problem since the parties have consistently nominated presidential and vice presidential candidates from different States).
- The electoral votes are then sealed and transmitted from each State to the President of the Senate who, on the following January 6, opens and reads them before both houses of the Congress.
- The candidate for president with the most electoral votes, provided that it is an absolute majority (one over half of the total), is declared president. Similarly, the vice presidential candidate with the absolute majority of electoral votes is declared vice president.
- In the event no one obtains an absolute majority of electoral votes for president, the U.S. House of Representatives (as the chamber closest to the people) selects the president from among the top three contenders with each State casting only one vote and an absolute majority of the States being required to elect. Similarly, if no one obtains an absolute majority for vice president, then the U. S. Senate makes the selection from among the top two contenders for that office.
- At noon on January 20, the duly elected president and vice president are sworn into office, unless this is a Sunday in which case the ceremony is held on Monday, January 21.

Good Friday

Grandparents Day

Groundhog Day

Halloween

Hanukkah

Independence Day

Kwanzaa

Labor Day

Lincoln's Birthday

Mardi Gras

Memorial Day

Martin Luther King Day

Mother's Day

New Year's Day

New Year's Eve

Palm Sunday

Passover

Patriot Day

Presidents' Day

Spring

St. Joseph's Day

St. Patrick's Day

Summer



Other Resources:



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Links:

- [Elections... the American Way](#) - The Library of Congress
- [A Brief History of the Electoral College](#) (PDF format)
- [Federal Election Commission](#)

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[Three Kings Day](#)

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