

Day Monday

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Date: 23-Dec-2024

Mock-6

CS5-2025

"History of USA"

Question No: 2

Introduction:-

The United States Presidential election system is unique and pivotal in shaping global and domestic policies. At its core lies the Electoral College, an institution created by the framers of the U.S. Constitution as a compromise between a direct popular vote and a congressional vote for the presidency. Understanding how this system functions, its advantages and disadvantages and its implications on democracy is critical to assessing its overall effectiveness.

How the U.S. Presidential Election System Works:-

The process of electing the President of

the United States is governed by both popular votes and the Electoral College:-

1. Primaries and Caucuses:-

These preliminary elections allow parties to select their nominees.

2. General Election:

Held every four years on the first Tuesday after the first Monday in November. Citizens vote for electors pledged to presidential candidates.

3. Electoral College:

Comprising 538 electors, the Electoral College casts the official votes for President and vice president. Each state has a number of electors equal to its representation in Congress (House + Senate). A candidate needs majority (270 votes) to win.

The Role of the Electoral College:

The electoral college's primary role is to formalize the selection of the President. However, its influence goes beyond this administrative task, shaping campaign strategies, voter participation and political representation.

Arguments in favour of the Electoral College:-

1) Protection of smaller states:-

By allocating a minimum of three electoral votes to even the populous states, the system ensures their voices are heard, preventing domination by populous states like California and Texas.

Example:- equal representation in Senate.

2) Promotion of a federalist system:-

The electoral college reflects the United States' federal nature by balancing state sovereignty and national unity. Since, the country is comprised of 50 states coming together to form the federal government, it is important that the system to elect the President fairly represent them.

3) Encouragement of a Broad Coalition:-

Candidates must campaign across diverse states rather than focusing solely on urban centers, fostering a wider appeal.

4) Historical Stability:-

The system has contributed to a generally stable transition of power, avoiding the volatility of purely direct democratic systems.

Criticism of the Electoral College:-

1. Disparity in Representation:-

The system can lead to unequal voting power. For instance, a voter in Wyoming has significantly more influence than one in California due to the disproportionate allocation of electors.

2. Possibility of Winning without the popular vote:-

Candidates can (and have) become President despite losing the nationwide popular vote.

Examples: George W. Bush (2000) and Donald Trump (2016), raising questions about the system's democratic legitimacy.

3) Focus on Swing States:-

Campaigns prioritize battleground states like Florida and Pennsylvania, often ignoring "safe" states, which reduces the incentive to address the concerns of the broader electorate.

4) Risk of Faithless Electors:-

While rare, electors can deviate from their pledged votes, potentially undermining the will of the people.

5) Potential to Discourage Voter Turnout:-

Voters in heavily partisan states may feel their votes carry little weight, leading to apathy and reduced participation.

Impact on the Democratic Process:-

The electoral college influences the democratic process in significant ways:

1) Representation vs. Equality:-

It emphasizes representation of states but at the expense of voter equality.

Day: _____

Date: _____

2) Voter engagement:-

By focusing on swing states, it creates a lopsided engagement with voters.

3) Erosion of majority rule:-

Allowing presidents to be elected without a majority of votes undermines democratic principles.

Conclusion:-

The electoral college remains a cornerstone of the U.S. presidential election system, balancing federalism and state interests. However, its disparities in representation, focus on swing states and potential to subvert the popular will present serious challenges. As the United States evolves, so does the need to critically assess whether this institution aligns with contemporary democratic ideals.

References:-

- 1) U.S. constitution, Article II, Section 1.
- 2) National U.S. Archives. "The electoral college".
- 3) Alexander Hamilton, Federalist paper No. 68.

Question No: 4

Introduction:-

Woodrow Wilson's foreign policy during the early 20th century was rooted in his vision of promoting democracy, peace and self-determination. At the outset of World War I in 1914, Wilson faced the immense challenge of maintaining American neutrality while navigating a rapidly polarizing global conflict. His approach was shaped by the idealistic principles of moral diplomacy, emphasizing the need for U.S. to serve as a moral leader on the international stage.

Day: _____

Date: _____

Despite Wilson's commitment to neutrality, maintaining this stance proved exceedingly difficult. Factors such as economic entanglements, cultural ties, unrestricted submarine warfare and the complexities of public opinion ultimately pressured the U.S. into abandoning neutrality and entering the war in 1917.

Wilson's Foreign Policy and its difficulties:-

1) Wilson's Vision of Neutrality:-

Moral diplomacy:-

Wilson believed in staying out of European conflicts, asserting that America should act as a beacon of democracy and peace rather than entangle in foreign wars.

Public declaration:-

Wilson's address to Congress in 1914 emphasized neutrality, urging Americans to remain impartial "in thought as well as action."

Example:-

Wilson consistently resisted calls to join the war despite provocations, reflecting his reluctance to compromise his vision.

2) Economic and trade pressures:-

The US had strong economic ties to both Allied and central powers, but the British naval blockade and Allied orders for supplies increasingly aligned American trade with the Allies. By 1916, American industries were heavily invested in supplying France and Britain Undermined neutrality.

Example:-

American exports to allies surged during the war, making neutrality less feasible.

3) Cultural and Political Alignments:-

Cultural and historical ties to Britain and France, as well as shared democratic ideals, made it difficult for many Americans to remain impartial. The central powers, particularly Germany, faced criticism in American media due to their aggressive tactics, such as the invasion of Belgium.

Example:-

The sinking of Lusitania in 1915 by German U-boat pushed public opinion toward the Allies.

4) Unrestricted submarine warfare:-

Germany resumption of unrestricted submarine warfare in 1917 was a major catalyst for U.S. entry into

into the war. German U-boats targeted neutral and Allied vessels, threatening American lives and commerce.

Example:-

The interception of "Zimmermann Telegram", in which Germany proposed a military alliance with Mexico against U.S. inflamed tensions.

5) Shift in Public Opinion:-

Early in the war, public opinion in the U.S. was divided with isolationists opposing intervention and others advocating support for the Allies.

As the war progressed and German actions grew more aggressive, public opinion changed.

Example:-

By 1917, propaganda and reports of German atrocities solidified support for entering the war.

Conclusion:-

Woodrow Wilson's efforts to maintain American neutrality during the WWI were deeply rooted in his idealistic vision of moral diplomacy and nonintervention. However, economic dependencies, cultural affinities, and aggressive German tactics and

Shifting public opinion made neutrality untenable. By 1917, Wilson justified U.S. entry into the war as a necessary step to protect democracy and uphold international law.

References:-

- 1) Woodrow Wilson address to Congress on Neutrality (1914)
- 2) "The First World War and American Society" by David M. Kennedy.
- 3) "The Zimmermann Telegram" by Arthur Zimmermann in 1917.

Question No:- 5

Introduction:-

The Louisiana Purchase, finalized in 1803, stands as one of the most pivotal moments in American history, fundamentally altering the nation's geography, economy and politics. Negotiated during Thomas Jefferson's presidency, it involved the acquisition of approximately 828,000 sq miles of land from France for \$15 million.

This monumental purchase doubled the size of United States and showcased Jefferson's pragmatism as a leader. While it resolved immediate concerns over French control in North America it set the stage for westward expansion.

Role of Louisiana Purchase in Thomas Jefferson's Presidency:-

1) Geographical impact:-

The Louisiana Purchase transformed the geography of the United States by more than doubling its land area. It extended the western boundary of the country from the Mississippi River to the Rocky mountains and provided access to vital waterways such as the Mississippi River and port of New Orleans.

i) Territorial Expansion:-

The acquisition opened vast tracts of land for expansion and exploration. This paved way for expeditions like Lewis and Clark expedition (1804-1806) which mapped the new territory and established American claims over the land.

ii) Strategic Control :-

Securing control over the Mississippi River and New Orleans ensured economic stability for western farmers.

2) Economic Impact:-

Economically Louisiana Purchase was a boon for the rising U.S. It provided vast natural resources, fertile land and a platform for economic development.

i) Agricultural Expansion:-

The vast plains of the Louisiana territory were ideal for farming particularly for staple crops like wheat and cotton. This agricultural abundance contributed to the growth of economy.

ii) Trade opportunities:-

Access to Mississippi river and port of New Orleans was critical for domestic and international trade.

iii) Wealth resources:-

The territory was rich in minerals, forests and wildlife, laying the groundwork for future industries e.g. timber, mining and fur trading.

3) Political Impact:-

Politically, Louisiana Purchase had significant ramifications for both domestic and international relations. It understood the flexibility of Jefferson's leadership while sparking debates over constitutional interpretation and balance of power.

i) Federal power and constitutional debate:-

Jefferson, a staunch advocate of strict constitutional interpretation, faced criticism for the purchase, as the Constitution did not explicitly authorize land acquisition. This pragmatism highlighted his willingness to prioritize national interests over ideological purity.

ii) Strengthening the Presidency:-

The successful negotiation and ratification of the purchase strengthened the executive branch, demonstrating President's ability to make transformative decisions.

iii) Expansion of Slavery:-

The new territory raised contentious questions about the expansion of slavery, which would later intensify sectional tensions between North and South.

Conclusion:-

The Louisiana purchase was a defining moment of Jefferson's presidency and a turning point in American history. Geographically, it doubled the nation's size and provided strategic control of key waterways. Economically, it opened vast opportunities for agriculture and trade fueling prosperity. Politically, it underscored Jefferson's ability and elevated the role of presidency even as it sparked debates. The Louisiana purchase set the stage for US transformation into continental power.

References:-

- 1- Dumas Malone, Jefferson and the rights of man, little, brown and company, 1951.
- 2) Thomas Jefferson, "Letter to Albert Gallatin", 1803.