



Draw the Lines

Lesson Title: Redistricting in the United States

ESSENTIAL QUESTION:

What is redistricting?

I HAVE:

One Hour

LEARNING OBJECTIVES:

1. Explain how shifts in population determine how representation is apportioned.
2. Explain how voters are apportioned in voting districts.

TYPE OF ACTIVITIES:

1. Watch a video introduction to redistricting.
2. Complete Mission 1 in The Redistricting Game.

MATERIALS:

- Projector or smartboard for video
- Computers for class

STEP-BY-STEP:

Watch the Citizen Genius video titled Congressional Redistricting (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RYL28mO8lNI>), and students can complete the enclosed worksheet for discussion or grading. Due to the fast pace of the videos, it will be best for students to wait until after the video to complete. Or if available, they can use their own computers, so that they can rewind and replay at-will. Teachers can vary the questions, grading methods, and grade weights to suit their own purposes and student groups.

Next, you can use a web tool called *The Redistricting Game*. It was created in 2007 by a professor at USC to help teach users about redistricting and gerrymandering. Although it's graphics are outdated, it has a series of missions that are very effective in showing different ways a voting map can be gerrymandered. For purposes of this lesson, we'll only look at the first mission, population equality. We'll return to missions 2-4 in the lesson on gerrymandering.

Have students go to *The Redistricting Game* (<http://redistrictinggame.org/game/launchgame.php>) on their computer. Click continue. Under "Mission 1: Population Equality", have them select "Basic". They can choose whichever party they wish to represent. They should read the instructions telling them that they have to create districts that are equal in population. Click "Begin Mission One." To reshape districts, click on a current district you wish to expand and drag into the district where you are selecting population. Then watch each politician's population totals change.

Give students 10 minutes to shape their districts. Once each district's population is within the accepted range, select "Get Feedback" and then "Submit for Approval". See if their maps were accepted. After complete, open for class discussion.

1. Why did the original lines need to be redrawn? (because a lot of people had moved to the city in the SE corner of Jefferson, and District 1 and 2 both had way more people than District 3 and District 4).
2. Why would it be unfair if we didn't redistrict lines every ten years? (because the people who lived in Districts 3 and 4 would have double the value in their vote as those who lived in Districts 1 and 2 - 400,000 people versus 800,000. With fewer people in a voting district, your vote becomes that much more valuable. With more people in a voting district, your vote is more diluted.)
3. Did they think it was easy to make districts that fit within that range? What tactics did they use?



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Congressional Redistricting by Citizen Genius

1. What process does the United States use to determine how many people will represent voters in a specific district in the U.S. Congress and state legislatures?
 - a. Annual elections
 - b. Passing a law through Congress
 - c. Census and reapportionment
 - d. A Supreme Court case
2. Regardless of how state populations change, there are always _____ seats in the United States House of Representatives.
3. Every voter belongs to a _____, which is a defined territory with boundaries that determines who people vote for in local, state, and federal elections.
 - a. district
 - b. precinct
 - c. house
 - d. map
4. Why is redistricting necessary every 10 years? (choose all that apply)
 - a. Population changes in different states mean that the country has to rebalance how many representatives a state receives.
 - b. Because term limits require new leaders to be elected
 - c. Within a state, population movement may make the old districts unbalanced
 - d. A new president requires new elected officials
5. Who is in charge of redistricting? (choose all that apply)
 - a. The President of the United States
 - b. State legislatures, some with approval from the governor
 - c. The school board
 - d. Politician or independent commissions



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 - a. Annual elections
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 - d. A Supreme Court case
2. Regardless of how state populations change, there are always 435 seats in the United States House of Representatives.
3. Every voter belongs to a _____, which is a defined territory with boundaries that determines who people vote for in local, state, and federal elections.
 - a. district
 - b. precinct
 - c. house
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