Lesson Title: Draw the Lines

ESSENTIAL QUESTION:
What do you believe a fair, representative voting map for Pennsylvania should look like?

I HAVE:
Two+ days

LEARNING OBJECTIVES:
Students will be able to:
1. Understand the many values that go into creating a voting map.
2. Analyze the difference between different maps.

In order to...
Use digital tools to draw their own congressional map.

TYPE OF ACTIVITIES:
1. Discussion of redistricting values
2. Introduction to Draw the Lines competition
3. Orientation to digital mapping platform
4. Map Pennsylvania's 18 congressional districts

MATERIALS:
• Flashes of Insight flashcards
• Computers for the class
• Handout on Draw the Lines competition.
• DistrictBuilder User Guide

STEP-BY-STEP:

Print the 9 flashcards available on drawthelinespa.org that discuss the many values that can be prioritized when a voting map is drawn. Project the PDF in front of the class and lead a brief class discussion to make sure everyone understands what each means. Have each student rank the values that they would prioritize when they draw their own map.

Then split the classroom into groups of four-five students apiece. Encourage a group discussion, with some of the following questions as lead-ins:
• Why did you select _____ as your top priority?
• How did you think about 'communities of interest' when ranking that value?
• Do you think it's important for a map to intentionally create districts that are competitive in elections?
• Do you remember what values are enshrined in the US and Pennsylvania Constitutions? How did you think about those in relation to others that are not enshrined?

These discussions could also be done as a political spectrum line-up activity. Example here.

Once the value discussion is complete, it's time to draw districts. Introduce the Draw the Lines competition. (see handout) The teacher should decide if they do one map as a group based on their discussion, or do they want to try it as individuals or in small groups? Note that the competition rewards drawing in groups.

Once the value discussion is complete, it's time to draw districts. Introduce the Draw the Lines competition. Pass out handout. It's helpful to emphasize that a student could win $5,000 with their map.

There are two ways to get oriented to the DistrictBuilder mapping tool. A written User Guide (printable here), and instructional videos.

There's no sugarcoating it; drawing districts requires time and effort. This platform was originally created in 2011, and so while Draw the Lines has spent a lot of money getting it ready for the competition, some of the operations are a tad dated. For example, it's not mobile or tablet-friendly. The platform is only effective on desktops or laptops.

Students can draw maps as individuals or in groups, though we encourage groups.

DTL recommends creating an email address (like Google) for each

STEP-BY-STEP (cont.):

classroom that will be drawing a map. That email address can be tied to multiple usernames and passwords if you are breaking the classroom into smaller teams.

DTL found that creating a valid map but without any fine-tuning usually takes 2-3 hours, depending on the individual. Fine-tuning is up to each individual mapper.

Once students have drawn their maps, they will then be prompted to complete a personal statement on their map, defending (1) what values they adopted to complete their map and why; (2) how they mapped other parts of the state that they aren't familiar with; and (3) how they took other opinions and viewpoints into account. These statements can take any format, from a written essay to a video to an audio recording. We encourage creativity. Students will be able to upload their statement in the Submit forum.

After completing their maps, have each group give a brief overview of their map to the class.

They can consider the following questions:

1. What redistricting values did they consider when drawing their map?
2. How did they learn about and map parts of the state that they aren't familiar with?
3. What disagreements did they have amongst each other about the values they wanted to put into place?
4. How did they use these values to help them map their districts?
5. Do they think their map is better than the map adopted by the state in 2011? Do they think it's better than the map adopted in 2018? Why?

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Here is a link to the 2011 map:
https://nationalmap.gov/small_scale/printable/images/pdf/congdist/pagecgd113_pa.pdf

And a link to the 2018 map:
https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pennsylvania%27s_congressional_districts#/media/File:Remedial_Plan_Statewide_Image.png

Have students load the scores for the 2011 map (using the template titled "Old Congressional" in DistrictBuilder), and have them compare to the 2018 map (using the template "New Congressional"). They can see how their maps compared to the maps created in 2011 by the legislature and 2018 by the State Supreme Court.
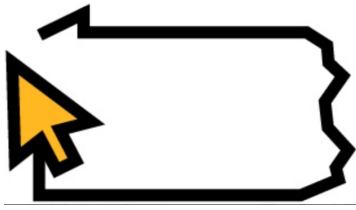
Draw the Lines

Build your resume.

Win cash.

Fix democracy.

Draw your own voting maps.

Enter our competition and win up to **$5,000** with your map. Enter as an individual or with a team.

TEACHERS AND STUDENTS:

Draw the Lines PA is especially for you!
Check out our curricular resources.

LEARN about government by participating yourself.

USE your digital skills to teach older generations how to draw voting maps.

**SHARE** your voice to your elected officials.

Draw the Lines

WE WANT TO HEAR FROM YOU!

- YOUR VOTING MAP

- YOUR "CITIZEN STORY"

- YOUR VIEWS ON WHAT'S GONE WRONG AND HOW TO FIX IT

- YOUR "HOMETOWN PORTRAIT"

HOW TO CONNECT WITH US:

- VISIT DRAWTHELINESPA.ORG FOR WAYS TO PARTICIPATE

- FOLLOW US ON SOCIAL MEDIA, @DRAWTHELINESPA

- SIGN UP FOR OUR NEWSLETTER

- EMAIL US AT INFO@DRAWTHELINES.ORG

Draw the Lines PA is a statewide civic education and engagement project of the Committee of Seventy, a non-partisan good government non-profit based in Pennsylvania.
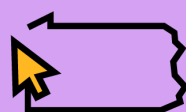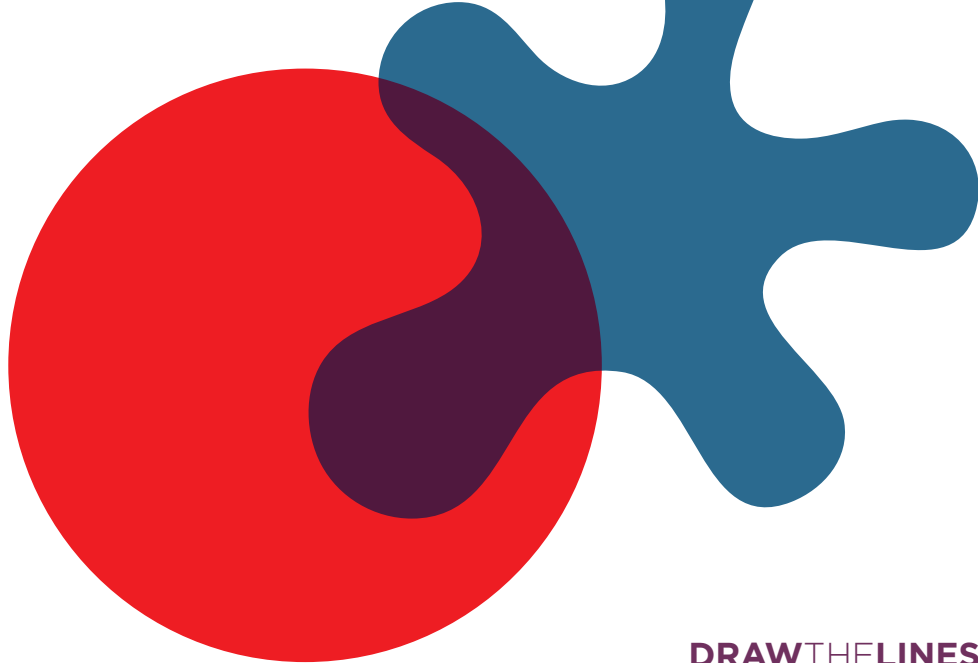
Draw the Lines

COMMUNITIES
OF INTEREST

COMMUNITIES OF INTEREST

I want maps to take into account important historic identities (e.g. Lehigh Valley, Main Line, "coal country") even if those identities don't fit neatly with county or municipal boundaries. I think maps may also take into account a region's shared policy interests (e.g. fracking, watersheds).

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COMPACTNESS

COMPACTNESS

I want districts that spread as little as possible from their center, with borders that are smooth, not jagged or contorted.

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COMPETITIVE ELECTIONS

COMPETITIVE ELECTIONS

I want maps to take into account political data (e.g. party registrations, recent election results), in order to maximize the number of "swing" districts where each party has a relatively equal chance.

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CONTIGUITY

CONTIGUITY

I want districts where no one part is disconnected from the rest, and no connections strike me as minimal or absurd (e.g. the width of an interstate highway).

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EQUAL POPULATION

EQUAL POPULATION

I want all election districts to be as close as possible in population, to uphold the constitutional principle of "one person, one vote."

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JURISDICTIONAL SPLITS

JURISDICTIONAL SPLITS

I want maps to limit to the greatest degree possible the number of times that either counties or municipalities are split among multiple districts.

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MINORITY
REPRESENTATION

MINORITY REPRESENTATION

I want maps that ensure communities of color have regular and meaningful opportunities to elect a candidate of their choice.

PARTY
ADVANTAGE

PARTY ADVANTAGE

I want maps that enable my political party to win as many seats as its vote tallies can justify.

WILD CARD

Is there another value you'd like to see maps uphold? Write it on a sticky note and put it here.