



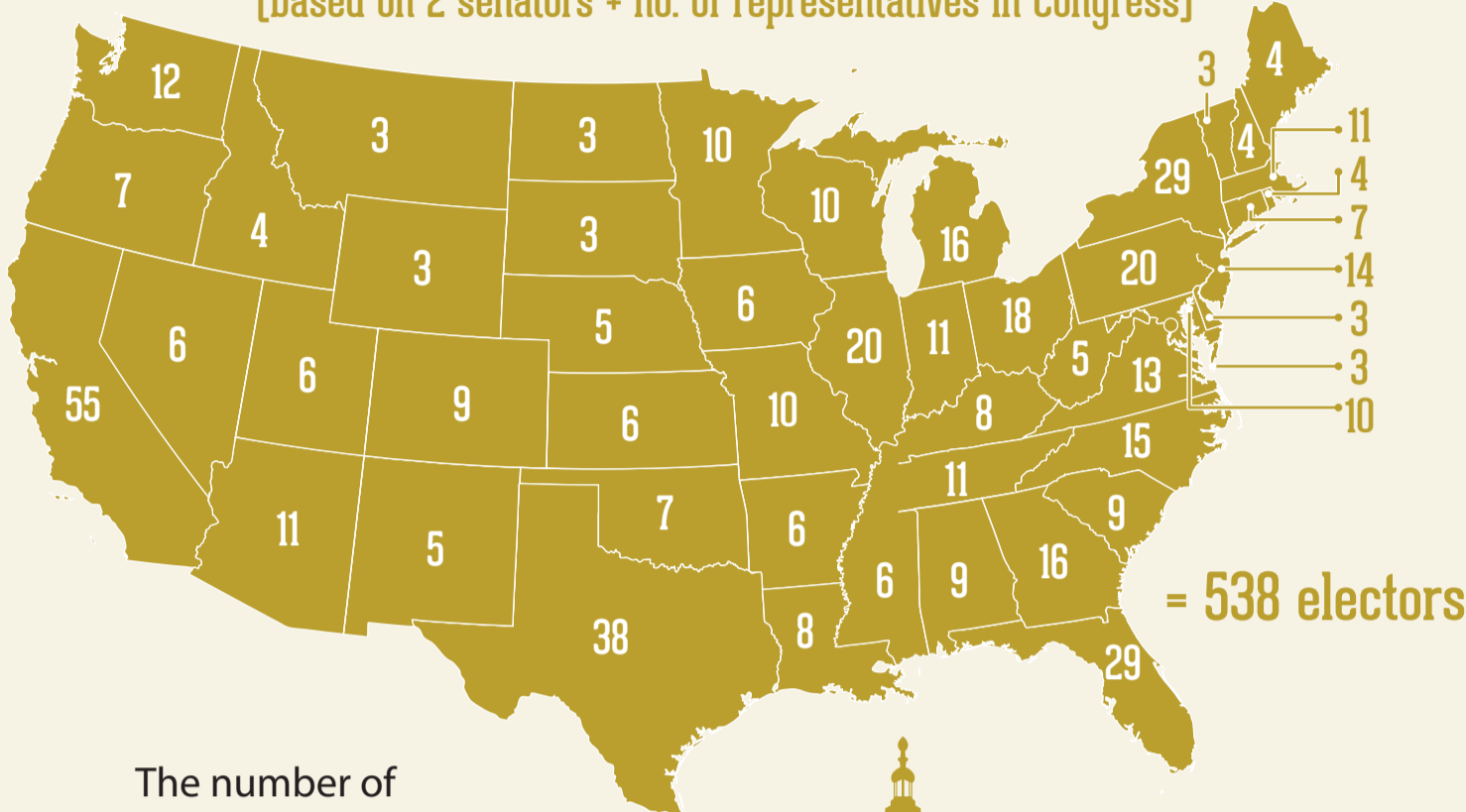
UNITED STATES PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION GUIDE

On 3rd November, the American people will choose their next president. Or will they? US presidential elections are a pretty complicated business. Here's your guide to how the process works.

Voters don't directly elect the president

In fact, it's the Electoral College that elects the president. In the Electoral College system, each state is allocated a number of electors.

No. of electors in each state
[based on 2 senators + no. of representatives in Congress]



The number of representatives in Congress is based on the state's population.



There are currently 538 electors. In order to make it to the White House, the winning candidate needs half of these votes plus one. Which means the magic number for the keys to the White House is 270!

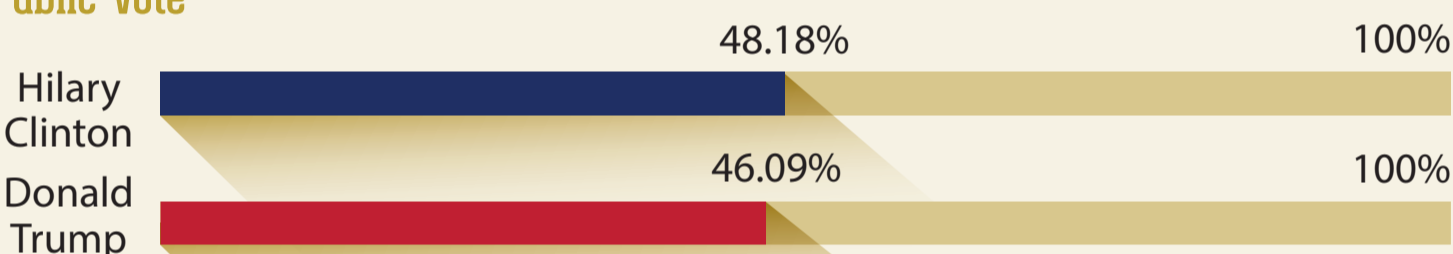
The winner may not have won the public vote

It's possible that the winner won't actually have won the popular vote. That's because most states operate a 'winner takes all' system. This means that the winner of the popular vote takes all of the electoral votes, so popular voting margins don't matter in the overall picture.

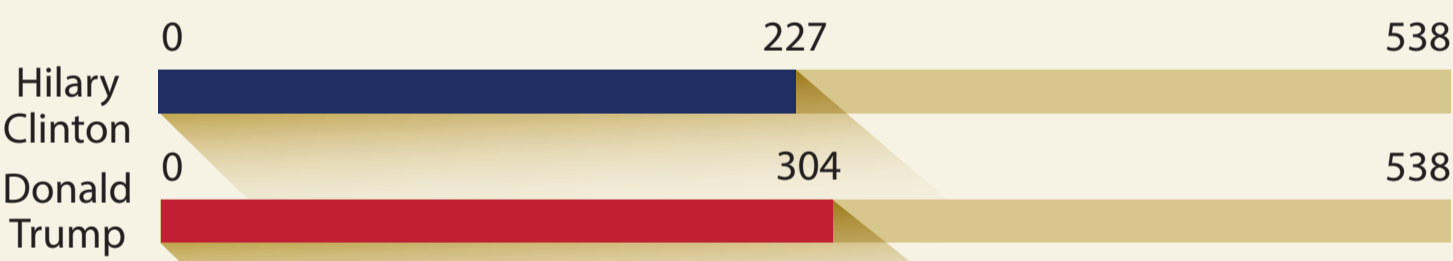
2016 Presidential Election

for example...

Public Vote



Electoral Votes



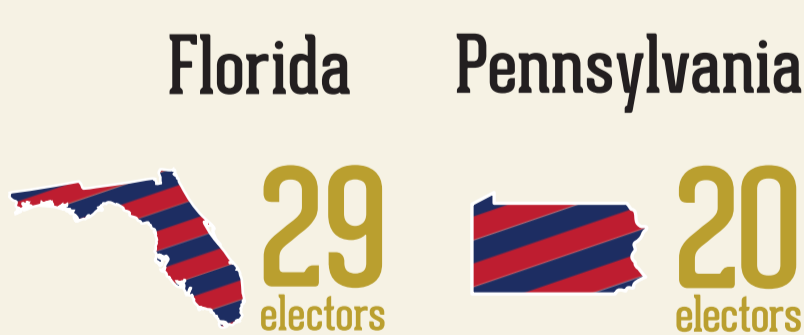
Swing states really do matter

So, obviously the winning strategy will target the biggest states, as they have the biggest share of the electors, right? Well, it's not that simple.

The two largest states, California and Texas, are a safe bet for the democrats and republicans respectively.



So the campaign teams focus on the 'swing states' – the states where either candidate has a chance of winning. The biggest swing states are:



What happens if no-one wins a majority in the Electoral College?

12th amendment

Under the 12th Amendment, the House of Representatives will vote. Each state delegation receives one vote, so the majority party in each delegation normally controls its vote.

To win the presidency, a candidate must gain an absolute majority in this ballot.

1824

The House of Representatives has elected the president just once before, resulting in the presidency of John Quincy Adams.

