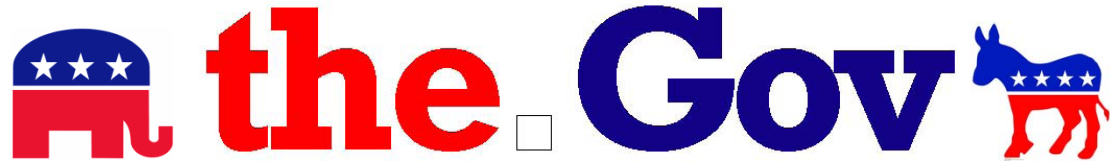


## **“Redistricting: Drawing the Lines” Social Studies Lesson Plan**

**the Gov**  
is a feature of

**the.News**

**A daily news broadcast for High School and Middle School students  
now under development by MacNeil/Lehrer Productions**



# **Redistricting: Drawing the Lines** **Social Studies Curriculum**

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Winter 2012

Dear Educator,

*the.News* online video reports for *the.Gov* provide middle and high school students with a valuable exercise in social studies and language arts with this **8:19 minute** segment on “Redistricting: Drawing the Lines” at [www.pbs.org/newshour/thenews/thegov](http://www.pbs.org/newshour/thenews/thegov). Antonio Neves reports on how redistricting and the controversial concept of gerrymandering can affect the outcome of state elections and federal policy. You can view this report in the “For Educators” section of the website. All videos and curricula have been informed by *the.News* instructional design that can be found on the website [www.pbs.org/newshour/thenews/foreducators](http://www.pbs.org/newshour/thenews/foreducators). The curriculum includes content-based standards, discussion questions, student activities, vocabulary and primary reference sources. A complete transcript of each video report includes time codes to assist in isolating specific segments of the video and to augment the instruction of media literacy and multimedia production. All of this material is presented as options to fit teachers’ instructional needs.

References to Larry Bell’s “The 12 Powerful Words” are highlighted in **bold** in the lesson plans and in the “thought starter” questions on the home page and educator’s page, and in the transcript (to denote where they are used in the video segment).

We have also added a section called general topics to correlate to the lessons and video as well as concept based standards with conceptual lens and enduring understanding.

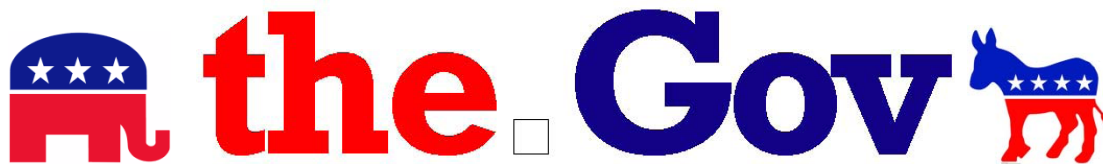
We welcome our partners at the Omaha Public Schools who have joined *the.News* in the third year of a special pilot project. We have also developed a special authoring tool for students called *YOU.edit* which gives students an online tool to remix the content of *the.News* reports, so they can create their own multimedia presentations. This editing tool can be found by clicking on the *YOU.edit* button on the home page of the website. Currently used with our OPS teacher consultants it is password protected so that it can serve as a viable educational asset that allows classroom teachers to assign multimedia projects within the security and content safety of *the.News* website.

Answers to **student “thought starter”** questions listed below the video.

- #1. Changing the lines of a district can change the majority/minority populations by political party, race and ethnicity, and even by the incumbency of politicians.
- #2. Their party may lose elected leadership and/or their affinity groups may be dispersed, thus, weakening the potential for state and national policies which they support.
- #3. Drawing a district with boundaries that favor one or more groups of voters and/or some candidates over others.

Sincerely,

Karen W. Jaffe  
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## Redistricting: Drawing the Lines

This lesson was designed to support *the.News* video “Redistricting: Drawing the Lines.” The video can be found online at [www.pbs.org/newshour/thenews/thegov](http://www.pbs.org/newshour/thenews/thegov)

### **Omaha Public Schools Standards :** <http://bit.ly/wgAPad>

**Social Studies**  
**Citizenship/Government**  
**Grade 7-8**

**Standard 4: Describe rights and responsibilities of citizenship and function of government, the expanding role and responsibilities of the citizen in a representative democracy, and compare and contrast these elements with those in other societies.**

**Conceptual Lens:** Citizenship rights  
**Enduring Understanding:** A country’s political documents embody the basic rights and principles which ensure the protection of individuals’ rights

**Social Studies Government**  
**Grade**

**Standard 4: Describe the factors that influence government policy and decisions.**

**Language Arts**  
**Grade 12**

**Reading**  
**Standard 01: Students will read a variety of grade level texts fluently with accuracy, appropriate pace, phrasing and expression.**

**Standard 03: Students will extract and construct meaning using prior knowledge, applying text information, and monitoring comprehension while reading grade level text.**

**Grade Level: 7-12**

**Content Areas:** Social Studies,  
Government/Civics

### **Key Concepts:**

This lesson contains a series of activities that help students understand reapportioning for representation in Congress and the process of redistricting. The Constitution mandates that representation in Congress be assessed every 10 years through the decennial census. Early on in the nation’s history, politicians discovered how to manipulate this process for political advantage. Gerrymandering of congressional districts became the standard for reapportioning congressional districts. This technique of redistricting strengthens one party over another and provides easy elections for incumbents. But what is the effect on democracy?



*Screen shot by ProPublica*

### **Key Objectives:**

The student will:

- **Trace** the role of the decennial census in reapportionment.
- **Explain** the importance of accurate voter representation in congressional districts
- Understand how congressional districts can be drawn to the advantage of one political party over another.
- **Analyze** the different processes of redistricting congressional districts to the advantage of a political party.
- **Evaluate** the costs and benefits of partisan redistricting
- **Formulate** alternative methods to partisan redistricting.

**Key Vocabulary:**

- **Apportionment:** the determination of the number of members of the U.S. House of Representatives according to the proportion of the population of each state to the total population of the U.S.
- **Bleaching:** similar to “packing” a district with one type of voter but done along racial lines where a district is given a majority of white voters.



*Screen shot by ProPublica*

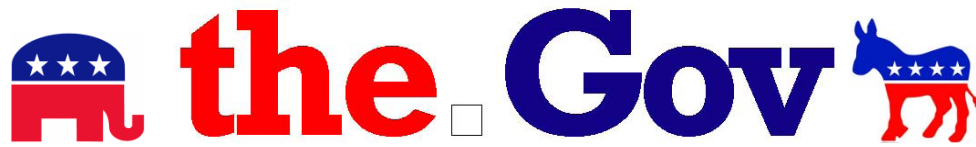
- **Census:** process of surveying and counting the U.S. population, using mailed surveys and in-person visits to homes, mandated by the U.S. Constitution and done every ten years by the federal government. Its results are used for reapportioning House seats among the states and redistricting districts within states.
- **Covered jurisdictions:** Section 5 of the 1965 Voting Right Act requires that jurisdictions that have violated Section 5, must receive preclearance from the U.S. Department of Justice or the District Court for the District of Columbia for any changes to districts or other voting laws.
- **Cracking:** a term used when the electoral strength of a particular group is divided by a redistricting plan
- **Demographic:** anything pertaining to statistics of human population.
- **Standing committees:** a permanent committee intended to consider all matters pertaining to a designated subject. Ex: a committee to consider redistricting plans.
- **Gerrymander:** drawing a district with boundaries that favor one or more groups of voters and/or some candidates over others.

- **Hijacking:** redrawing the district line to include two (or more) incumbents from the same party. Only one can win and the opposition party has one less representative to worry about.
- **Kidnapping:** redrawing the district line around an incumbent's neighborhood to place it in a new district with the opposition party in the majority.
- **Legislative districts:** territorial areas partitioned on a map designating areas of representation by a legislative body.



*Cartoon by Elkanah Tisdale, 1812, Library of Congress*

- **One person, One Vote:** Constitutional principle based on Article I, Section 2 and the 14<sup>th</sup> Amendment which holds that each person's vote should count the same as every other person's vote.
- **Packing:** a term used when one group is consolidated as a super-majority in a small number of districts, they reducing its electoral influence in surrounding districts.
- **Partisan Gerrymandering:** drawing a district to favor one political party over others
- **Racial Gerrymandering:** drawing a district to favor one racial group over others
- **Reapportionment:** process of redistributing the number of seats in a jurisdiction's legislative body to the districts of that jurisdiction based on the results of the latest Census.
- **Redistricting:** process of redrawing the districts within a jurisdiction to reflect the results of the reapportioning process as well as the results of the Census
- **Redistricting commission:** a committee intended to consider all matters pertaining to redistricting plans.



- **Voting Rights Act:** Federal law prohibiting discrimination in voting practices on the basis of race or language group.
  - **Section 2:** prohibits states and other jurisdictions from maintain voting laws, standards or practices that abridge the right to vote on the basis of race or language group. Covers all parts of the United States.
  - **Section 5:** requires that jurisdictions that have been determined to violate Section 2 and placed on a watch list receive preclearance from the U.S. Department of Justice or the District Court for the District of Columbia for any changes to districts or other voting laws. Section 5 covers nine states and portions of seven others.

Sources:

FairVote.org: <http://bit.ly/xmJIyz>

ProPublica: <http://bit.ly/uXLJvv>

Dictionary.com

### **Time Frame:**

- Previewing Activity: 10-15 minutes
- Viewing Activity: the.News news segment viewing activity: 15-20 minutes
- Post Viewing Activity: Redistricting Song viewing activity 15-20 minutes
- Main Activity: 1-2 class periods

### **Materials:**

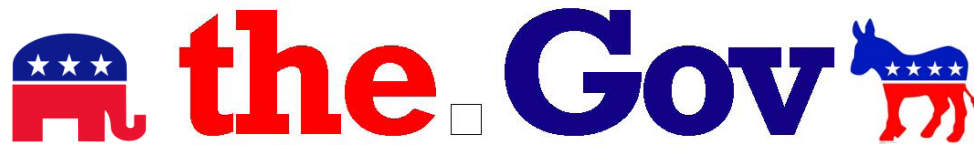
- *the.News* video – “Redistricting: Drawing the Lines”  
<http://www.pbs.org/newshour/thenews/thegov>

Student Handouts

- 1: How Redistricting Maps
- 2: Redistricting Song
- 3: Redistricting State-by-State Analysis

### **Lesson Topics:**

- Redistricting
- Gerrymandering
- Reapportionment
- Congressional Representation



## Background:

During the writing of the Constitution in 1787, there was much discussion on representation in Congress. It was decided that the members of the Senate would represent the different states and members of the House of Representatives would represent people in those states. For the House, the Constitution's framers set up a system of **apportionment** whereby states would be divided into separate **legislative districts** based on the population of the state. Article 1, Section 2 of the Constitution requires a **census** be taken every 10 years to determine population for purposes of determining the number of people in each district for each state. Each district is to have roughly the same amount of people to ensure citizens are equally represented. Originally, the number of people per Representative was 30,000 and the Constitution set the total number of the Representatives in the House at 65. Every state would be guaranteed at least one representative even if the state's population was below 30,000. Every ten years the census would be taken and Congress would have to **reapportion** the House of Representatives to adjust to the increase in population and the **demographic** changes that occurred.

It didn't take long before politicians discovered ways to draw congressional districts to achieve political ends. In 1812, Massachusetts governor Elbridge Gerry had his state's congressional districts redrawn to strengthen his party's (the Democratic Republicans) majority in the state legislature. This method created district boundaries that had contorted shapes that resembled a lizard. A political cartoon, drawn by Elkanah Tisdale, in 1812, configured some of Governor Gerry's districts to look like a salamander. Political opponents quickly adopted the term "**gerrymander**" to describe these districts and the process of manipulating the boundaries for political gain.<sup>1</sup>

### National Curriculum Standards for Social Studies

<http://bit.ly/y8igto>

#### Standard VI Power, Authority, and Governance

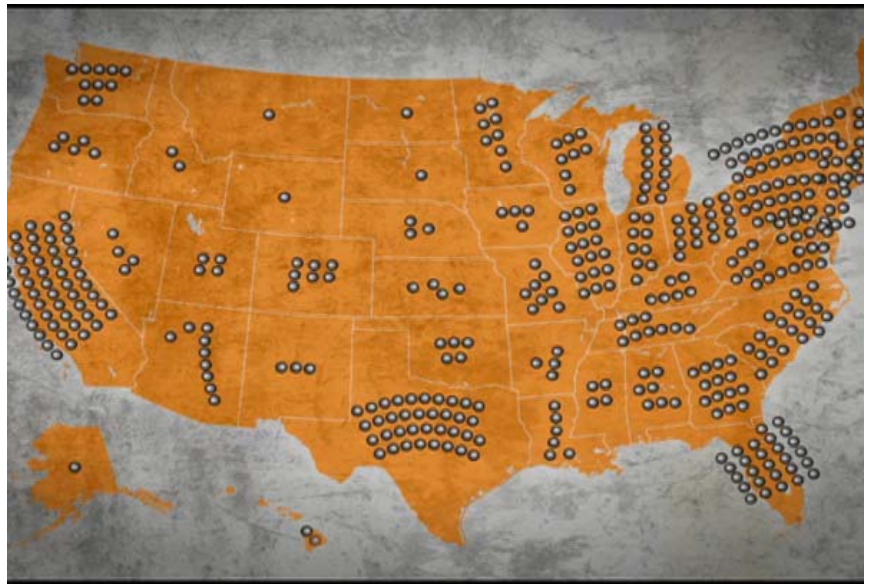
- help students to understand the purpose of government and how its powers are acquired, used, and justified;
- help learners to analyze and explain governmental mechanisms to meet the needs and wants of citizens, regulate territory, manage conflict, and establish order and security;

#### Standard X Civic Ideals and Practices

- guide learner efforts to identify, analyze, interpret, and evaluate sources and examples of citizens' rights and responsibilities;
- facilitate learner efforts to locate, access, analyze, organize, synthesize, evaluate, and apply information about selected public issues—identifying, describing, and evaluating multiple points of view and taking reasoned positions on such issues;
- help learners to analyze and evaluate the influence of various forms of citizen action on public policy;
- encourage learner efforts to evaluate the degree to which public policies and citizen behaviors reflect or foster the stated ideals of a democratic republican form of government;
- encourage learner efforts to evaluate the degree to which public policies and citizen behaviors reflect or foster the stated ideals of a democratic republican form of government;

<sup>1</sup> "Gerrymandering and Legislator Efficiency", John Mackenzie. University of Delaware  
<http://www.udel.edu/johnmack/research/gerrymandering.pdf>

From 1790 to 1910, the size of the House of Representatives was adjusted after every census to keep up with the country's growing population. This process is called **redistricting**, where states redraw their district boundaries to more closely reflect the character of the state's population. Congressional districts should be roughly the same size in population and should be compact so as to respect communities who share collective interests through redistricting is supposed to help ensure that everyone's vote counts.



In 1911, Congress passed legislation that fixed the number of Representatives at 433 with the provision that Arizona and New Mexico would be given one representative each upon statehood. After the 1920 census, Congress failed to pass a reapportionment act due to disputes between Democrats and Republicans over whether urban populations had been undercounted and arguments over which apportionment formulas to use.<sup>2</sup> In 1929, Congress settled on limiting the number of Representatives to 435. Over the years, as the population of the nation has increased, the number of people per district increased too.



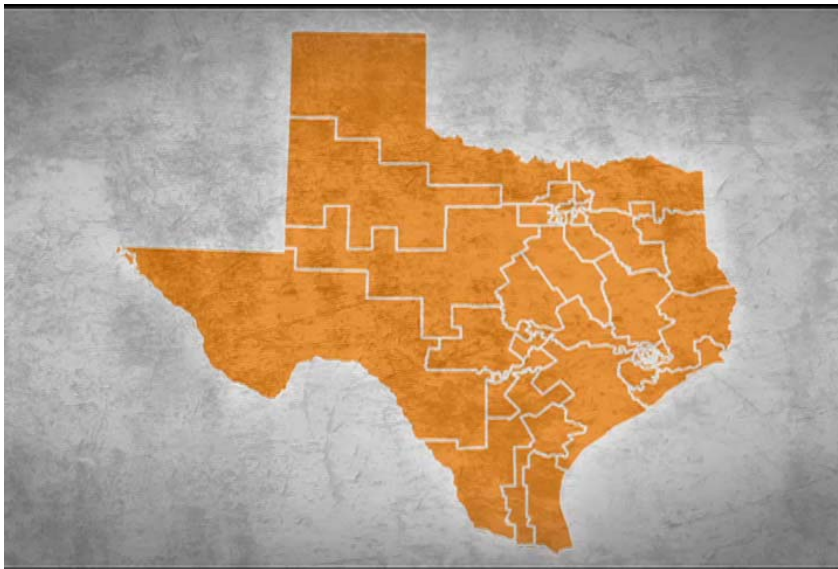
Photo: Lyndon Baines Johnson Library & Museum

During the Civil Rights movement, various state legislatures redrew legislative districts to reduce the influence of African American voters. In 1962, the Supreme Court ruled in *Baker v. Carr* that the 14<sup>th</sup> Amendment's Equal Protection Clause required political districts to be equal in population so that one person's vote would not weigh more than another person's vote who resides in a separate district (the "**one person, one vote**") principle). As an example, a voter living in a political district with 100,000 people will have a 3 times more voting power to elect a representative than a voter living in a district with 300,000 residents.

<sup>2</sup> "A Brief History of Apportionment" from Thirty-Thousand.org <http://www.thirty-thousand.org/pages/Apportionment.htm#A>

In 1965, Congress enacted the **Voting Rights Act** to aggressively enforce the 15<sup>th</sup> Amendment's guarantee of the right to vote. Originally intended to eliminate barriers to voting for African Americans such as the poll tax and literacy tests, by the 1990, enforcement of the provisions of the Voting Rights Act changed to redistricting to make sure African Americans and other minorities were not being denied equal protection in voting. The law also established the mandate that states with histories of voting discrimination (so-called "**covered jurisdictions**") have to submit plans to the Justice Department or a federal court for approval to ensure provisions of the Voting Rights Act are being followed.<sup>3</sup> Later court action further clarified this. In the Supreme Court case of *Shaw v. Reno* (1993) and again in *Miller v. Johnson* (1999), the court ruled that gerrymandering based solely on racial data is unconstitutional. However, **partisan gerrymandering** is allowed.

In most states today, the responsibility for setting the boundary lines lies with the state legislatures. Only a few states assign the responsibility to a **redistricting commission** or committee established solely for the purpose of redistricting.<sup>4</sup> In those states where new districts are drawn by the state legislatures, a bill is passed to lay out its requirements. Public hearings are usually conducted, but not always. In almost every case, the process becomes intensely partisan, and often the majority political party attempts to gain a political advantage by redrawing the district boundary lines.



For example, after the 2000 census, the Republican controlled Texas legislature set their sights on establishing a majority of U.S. House of Representatives seats by their party. In 2002, Democrats held a 17-15 margin majority. After a long partisan battle, the legislature enacted a congressional redistricting map that favored Republican candidates. As a result, Republicans won 21 seats in the 2004 Congressional elections. In the redistricting process was controversial, particularly because of the role played by Texas

Congressman Tom DeLay and that Texas had never undertaken a mid-decade redistricting that was not ordered by a court.<sup>5</sup> Legal challenges mounted and for a time Democrats actually left the state while the legislature was in session to prevent a vote on the new redistricting plan. In the case of *League of United Latin American Citizens v. Perry* (2006), the U.S. Supreme Court ruled that most of the plan was constitutional, except for one district where it was clear redistricting was based solely on racial data.

After the 2010 census, Texas gained four Congressional seats in the U.S. House of Representatives, due primarily to increases in the Latino population. The Texas legislature developed a redistricting map creating four new districts and the plan was submitted to a federal court in Washington D.C. In the meantime, a three-judge federal court, apparently anticipating the Texas plan

<sup>3</sup> Public Mapping Project "The Voting Rights Act: <http://www.publicmapping.org/what-is-redistricting/redistricting-criteria-the-voting-rights-act>

<sup>4</sup> Redistricting in America <http://www.redistrictinginamerica.org/>

<sup>5</sup> Texas Redistricting Effort, SourceWatch [http://www.sourcewatch.org/index.php?title=Texas\\_redistricting\\_effort](http://www.sourcewatch.org/index.php?title=Texas_redistricting_effort)

would not be approved, drew up its own maps that gave racial minorities more opportunities to elect candidates of their choice. Texas government has sued the court claiming it had no authority to develop such a plan. The Supreme Court agreed to hear the case and is expected to make a decision before the first Texas elections on April. In January, 2012, the Supreme Court instructed the three-judge federal court in Texas to review the maps drawn by the Texas legislature saying that the lower court had not paid enough deference to the Legislature's choices and had improperly substituted its own values for those of elected officials.<sup>6</sup>

In the state of Maryland, Democrats have also been accused of gerrymandering along racial lines. In October, 2011, Maryland's governor, Martin O'Malley, signed into law a redistricting plan designed to pick up another U.S. House seat for Democrats by anchoring most of the eight congressional districts in the Maryland suburbs surrounding Washington, DC. Minority populations, which traditionally vote Democratic, have been surging in this area since the 2000 census. The redistricting plan redraws new lines dividing minorities along multiple districts, and preventing the creation of a new, third congressional district dominated by minorities.<sup>7</sup> Maryland Republicans have called upon the U.S. Justice Department to investigate whether the Democrats' plan is a **racial gerrymandering** technique called bleaching.

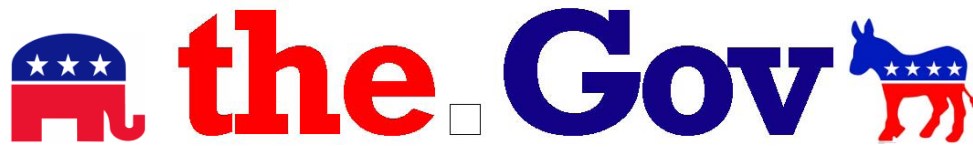
Many people feel that the entire redistricting process is in great need for reform. Several states have begun to address this with state legislation designed to reduce the partisan influence in the process. But some of these have run into difficulty because neither political party wants to give up its power or the opportunity to increase its influence. Often reform plans from the state legislatures restrict opportunities for other groups. Some public interest groups are considering shifting redistricting authority from politicians to non-partisan committees. Currently, only five states have such an arrangement. The states of Washington, California, and Arizona have created **standing committees** for redistricting following the 2010 census.



Screen shot by ProPublica

<sup>6</sup> Liptak, Adam, "Supreme Court Rejects Judge-Drawn Maps in Texas Redistricting Case", New York Times, January 20, 2012 <http://thecaucus.blogs.nytimes.com/2012/01/20/supreme-court-rejects-judge-drawn-maps-in-texas-redistricting-case/>

<sup>7</sup> Davis, Aaron C. "Three-judge panel question Maryland redistricting" The Washington Post, December 20, 2011



## LESSON PLAN

### Pre-Viewing Activity: How Redistricting Works

#### Partnership for 21st Century Skills

<http://www.21stcenturyskills.org>

#### Civic Literacy

- Participating effectively in civic life through knowing how to stay informed and understanding governmental processes
- Understanding the local and global implications of civic decisions.

#### Creativity and Innovation

##### Think Creatively:

- Elaborate, refine, analyze and evaluate their own ideas in order to improve and maximize creative efforts

##### Work Creatively with Others:

- Develop, implement and communicate new ideas to others effectively
- Be open and responsive to new and diverse perspectives; incorporate group input and feedback into the work

#### Critical Thinking and Problem Solving

##### Reason Effectively:

- Use various types of reasoning (inductive, deductive, etc.) as appropriate to the situation

##### Make Judgments and Decisions:

- Effectively analyze and evaluate evidence, arguments, claims and beliefs
- Analyze and evaluate major alternative points of view
- Interpret information and draw conclusions based on the best analysis

#### Communication and Collaboration

##### Communicate Clearly:

- Articulating thoughts and ideas clearly and effectively through speaking and writing
- Listen effectively to decipher meaning, including knowledge, values, attitudes and intentions

Before beginning this activity, tell students that they will be examining the procedure known as redistricting. You may choose to assign the Background Essay before presenting this activity or briefly review its content as an introduction. To set up this opening activity, tell students that every 10 years, a census is taken of each state to ascertain its demographics for purposes of reapportioning the district's voting make up. Often, this process involved redistricting, or adjusting the boundary line of congressional and state legislative districts. This opening activity will show them how redistricting can become political and the consequences of this.

Tell students that in this opening activity they will work in groups, examining the congressional boundaries of a fictitious state that has only three districts. Most U.S. states have more than this, but some have only one or two. Their task is to move district boundary lines to create new districts. You can reproduce copies of the all the pages of the student handout for each student group or you can make copies of Map A and Worksheet Maps A and B students Student Handout 1 or you can make overhead transparencies.

**Part A** introduces students to the state showing it has three Congressional districts with five party blocks in each district. The Gray Party is in the minority and represents 1/3 of the voters. The White Party represents 2/3rds of the state voters. In each district, the White Party holds a majority.

**In Part B**, students will try to redraw the district boundaries so that the three districts are more representative of the voters in the state. They will try to rearrange the district boundary lines to create three new districts with five blocks in each, but in one of the districts, the Gray Party will have a majority. Some students might find this task difficult, but tell them to be creative and stay with it until time is called. There is more than one way to create these districts.

**In Part C**, students will represent the Gray Party members and are in charge of redrawing the district boundary lines. They will try to redraw the district boundaries so that the Gray Party can

have a majority in two of the districts. This activity shows this can be done in such a way as to benefit one political party or a group in society. This process is known as “Gerrymandering.” Some students might find this task difficult, but tell them to be creative and stay with it until time is called. There is more than one way to create these districts.

**Read instructions and review Student Handout 1 before conducting this activity. Distribute the student handouts in order prescribed.**

### **Part A**

1. Arrange students in groups of three.
2. Distribute the of Student Handout 1: Redistricting Maps “The State of Squaredom.”
3. Explain to students that they are looking at a fictitious state with two political parties, the Gray Party and the White Party. The state has 9 White Party members and 6 Gray Party members.
4. Point out to students that three Congressional districts were created with simple vertical lines. The White Party has a majority in all three districts. Nice for the White Party, but not representative of the voters in the state.
5. In each of the next two parts, students will change their roles. In Part 2 they role-play members of a redistricting commission. In Part 3 they role play members of the Gray Party.

### **Part B**

6. Now distribute the Redistricting Map Worksheet A. Explain to students that they are part of a redistricting commission assigned to redraw the district boundary lines to be more representative of the voting population in the state. Since the state has nine White Party blocks and six Gray Party blocks, the districts should reflect this. Their task is to redraw the lines so that the Gray Party has one district with a majority of blocks and the White Party has two districts with a majority. Each district should have five blocks.
7. Give students about 2-3 minutes to figure out the redistricting lines, and then randomly ask a few groups to share their ideas. Make sure the criteria mentioned in Step 5 are met.
8. Now pass out Redistricting Map Worksheet A Answer Key and show students how boundaries could be drawn in such a way as to give the Gray Party a majority in one of the districts. Tell students that there are different ways other than what they see on the answer key to redistrict this state. Remind them to check their boundary lines making sure that each district has five squares and one of the districts have Gray Party majorities.

### **Part C**

1. Now distribute the Redistricting Map Worksheet B. Explain to students that they are all members of the Gray Party and that they been put in charge of redrawing the district boundaries. They could redraw the district boundary lines in such a way as to create Gray Party majorities in two of the three districts. There should be three districts, each with five blocks.
2. Give students about 2-3 minutes to figure out the redistricting lines, and then randomly ask a few groups to share their ideas. Make sure the criteria mentioned in Step 8 are met.
3. Now pass out Redistricting Map Worksheet B Answer Key and show students one way the boundaries could be drawn so as to give the Gray Party a majority in two districts. Tell students that there are different ways other than what they see on the answer key to redistrict

this state. Remind them to check their boundary lines making sure that each district has five squares and two of the districts have Gray Party majorities.

4. Tell students that redistricting techniques like these and have others have been used in several states to give certain political parties majorities in their state legislatures and create congressional districts that more represent the desires of one political party or the other instead of being representative of the voting population of the state.
5. Debrief with the following questions:
  - What just happened in this activity?
  - Who benefitted and who didn't?
  - What are the potential consequences of this type of redistricting procedure?
  - How might different segments of society be positively and negatively affected by this procedure?

### **Viewing Activity: *the.News* news segment on Redistricting**

1. Show students *the.News* news segment on Redistricting
2. Discuss the following questions:
3. What role does the census have in determining the number of representatives a state has? (*Answer: The census determines the population of districts. If one state gains in population, it will be awarded more seats in Congress. If a state's population has declined, it will receive fewer seats in Congress.*)
4. Under what conditions do states have to consider redistricting? (*Answer: When a state gains or losses population or when the population demographics of a state or district change.*)
5. As was shown in the Opening Activity in Redistricting Map A, redistricting should reflect the voting population of a district. Why hasn't this been the case in many states? (*Answer: In many states, the legislature and governor have redrawn the district lines to favor their own political party.*)
6. Examine Map B from the Opening Activity. Can you identify where any of these techniques were used? (*Answer: Students should see that the five squares in the lower right hand corner of the district were lumped together to form one district of all the same party. The result is that White Party candidates will be elected there but in no other district. If this lumping was based on race, this would be called bleaching.*)
7. What is Gerrymandering and where does it come from? (*Answer: The term comes from the 19<sup>th</sup> century, when Massachusetts Governor Elbridge Gerry signed into law a redistricting plan that favored his party over the rival Federalists. The newly drawn district looked like a salamander. Critics called it a "Gerrymander."*)
8. How was this system of packing a congressional district done in Texas? (*Answer: the Texas legislature created a district that packed many of the state's Hispanic voters into one district,*

*giving only one of Texas' four new seats to the Democrats. [Point out that this population in Texas traditionally votes Democratic.]*

9. Why did the U.S. Justice Department object to the Texas plan? *(Answer: Because it hadn't been asked to approve the plan before it went into effect.)*
  
10. A three-judge panel of the U.S. District Court in San Antonio redrew up a new plan that favored Democrats and the case is now before the U.S. Supreme Court. Why does the Supreme Court have to arrive at a decision before April? *(Answer: Texas holds its primaries in April and voters will need to know what district they're in.)*

## **Post-Viewing Activity**

### **Part 1: "The Redistricting Song"**

1. Show the video The Redistricting Song [INSERT: <http://www.propublica.org/article/video-the-redistricting-song>]. Have student read along with the transcript [INSERT Transcript Link]
2. Divide class up into small groups or keep same groups from previous activity.
3. Distribute Student Handout 2: "The Redistricting Song" to each group.
  
4. Play the first 42 seconds and have student groups discuss the following then review with the entire class:
  - Why should the populations of Congressional districts be roughly the same?
  - Why do changes in the census data create the need to redraw district lines?
  - Why is it important that representative districts are established properly?
  
5. Play the rest of the video and review the different methods of redistricting: (These are detailed in ProPublica's website at <http://www.propublica.org/article/redistricting-a-devils-dictionary>)
  - Packing: is when all the voters who favor the opposing party are lumped together to lessen their impact on surrounding districts. When people are lumped together this way based on race it's called "bleaching."
  - Cracking: is splitting a community into multiple districts and joining them with other districts where they're in the minority.
  - Kidnapping: redrawing the district line around an incumbent's neighborhood to place it in a new district with the opposition party in the majority. They will be voted out of office because they don't have the support they once had in their old district.
  - Hijacking: redrawing the district line to include two (or more) incumbents from the same party. Only one can win and the opposition party has one less representative to worry about.
  
6. Discussion on the pros and cons of redistricting. Place all students in a "fishbowl" configuration with 4-5 students in a middle circle facing outward and the rest of the class sitting around them facing inward. Use the following questions in the discussion. For more information on how to

conduct a fishbowl activity consult this link (INSERT:  
<http://www.edchange.org/multicultural/activities/fishbowl.html>)

- **Compare and contrast** the intent of traditional redistricting methods that reflected natural communities and their collective interests with new redistricting methods described in the video.
- What segments of society might benefit from these newer redistricting methods?
- What segments of society might be harmed by these newer methods?
- Comment on whether you think state legislatures should be responsible for redistricting in their state? What might be a better way of conducting redistricting?

## **Part 2: How does your State Redistrict?**

Tell students that in this activity, they will be examining their state or another state's redistricting procedure and determine if there are any problems or potential problems with the process. They will then review several proposals for reforming the redistricting process and determine if any or a combination of any would help the state's redistricting procedure.

When assigning states for students to research, remember that seven states (AK, DE, MT, ND, SD, VT, and WY) have only one Congressional district and don't need to redistrict. If you are on one of these states you can assign students other states. States that have recently had some controversy are Ohio, Pennsylvania, New York, North Carolina, Florida, and Alabama.<sup>8</sup>

1. Arrange students into new groups of three or keep the same groups from the Opening Activity.
2. Distribute Students Handout 3 "Redistricting State-by-State Analysis" and review the directions with students. Make sure they understand how the states are arranged on the Ballot\*pedia website.
3. Provide time for students to complete the graphic organizer on Handout 4.
4. When students have completed the graphic organizers, randomly ask a few groups to report on their findings.

## **Assessment**

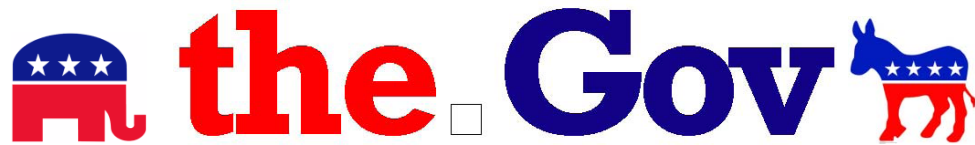
- Cooperation and participation in group activities.
- Individual student completion of the Graphic Organizer.
- Have students write an essay or **formulate** a presentation that summarizes their findings in researching their assigned state's redistricting procedure. They may use the graphic organizer as a guide..

## **Extension Activity:**

Have students do some research on reform recommendations for the way states are redistricted. A good source for identifying these recommendations is Fair Vote Model State Redistricting Reform Criteria <http://archive.fairvote.org/index.php?page=1429>. Have them **formulate** recommendations for redistricting reform.

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<sup>8</sup> As identified in ProPublica's "The Redistricting Song."



## Resources

- All About Redistricting <http://redistricting.ils.edu/>
- Americans for Redistricting Reform <http://americansforredistrictingreform.org/>
- Ballot\*pedia <http://ballotpedia.org>
- Congressional Apportionment <http://www.census.gov/population/apportionment/>
- FairVote.org: <http://www.fairvote.org/redistricting#.Tw-ednPHrzh>
- FairVote.org – “Glossary of Terms”: <http://www.fairvote.org/redistricting-glossary/>
- Gerrymandering the Movie <http://www.gerrymanderingmovie.com/index.php>
- PBS’s *the.News*: <http://www.pbs.org/newshour/thenews/>
- Public Mapping Project <http://www.publicmapping.org/>
- Redistricting America <http://www.redistrictinginamerica.org/>
- Redistricting Game <http://www.redistrictinggame.org/>
- Redistricting Online.org [http://redistrictingonline.org/Home\\_Page.html](http://redistrictingonline.org/Home_Page.html)
- Redistricting the Nation <http://www.redistrictingthenation.com/glossary.aspx>
- Texas Redistricting <http://www.tlc.state.tx.us/redist/redist.htm>
- Thirty-Thousand.org <http://www.thirty-thousand.org>
- Understanding Redistricting <http://wxxi.org/curriculum/redistrict/background/index.html>
- U.S. Census Bureau “Congressional Apportionment”  
<http://www.census.gov/population/apportionment/>
- United States Elections Project <http://elections.gmu.edu/Redistricting.html>

### Activity Designer:

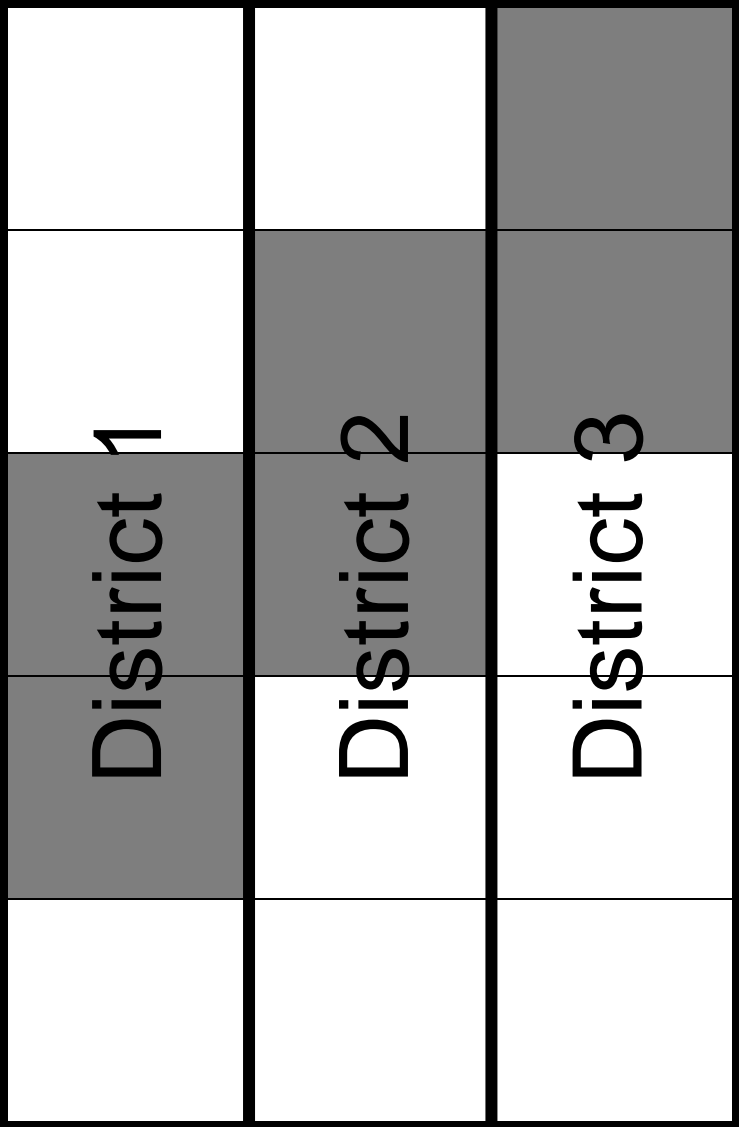
Greg Timmons is a former social studies teacher, now freelance writer and education consultant

# Student Handout 1: Redistricting Maps

## Part 1

### Map for the State of Squaredom

Below is a map that represents a fictitious state with two political parties, the Gray Party and the White Party. Three Congressional districts were formed with vertical lines marking the district boundaries. In each district, the White Party has a majority of votes. Nice for the White Party, but not an accurate representation of the Gray Party voting population in the state.

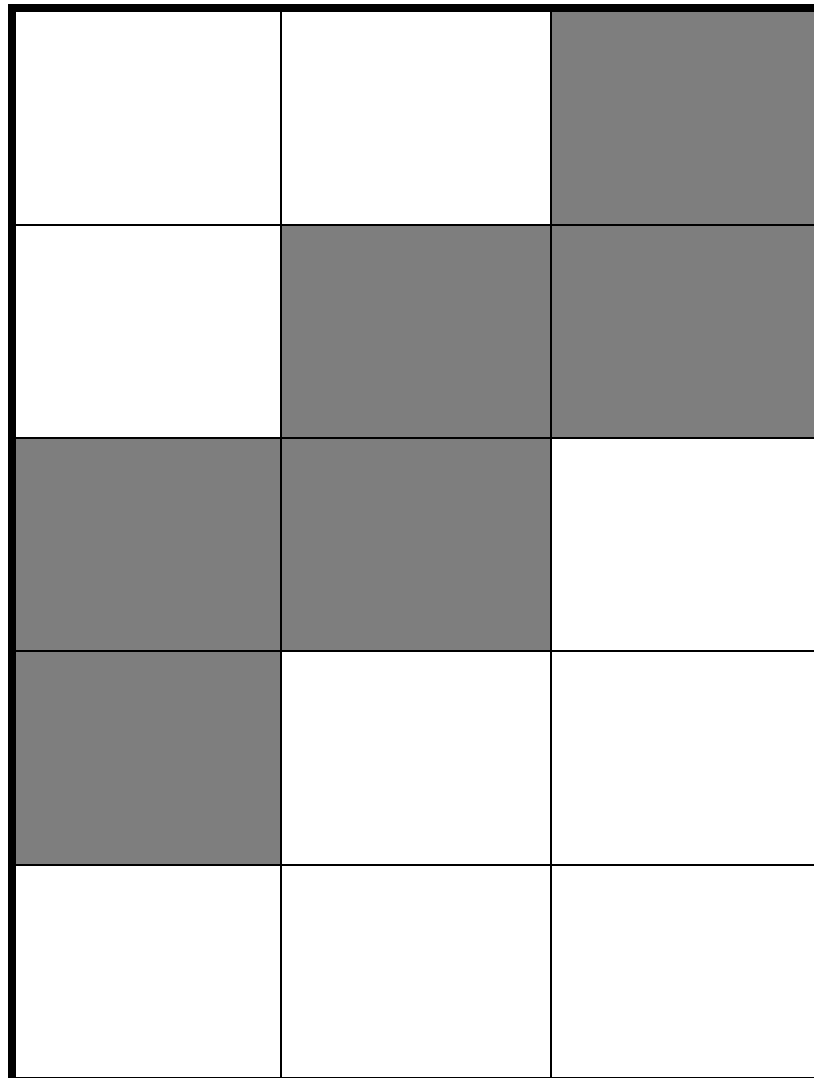


# Redistricting Map Worksheet A

## Part 2

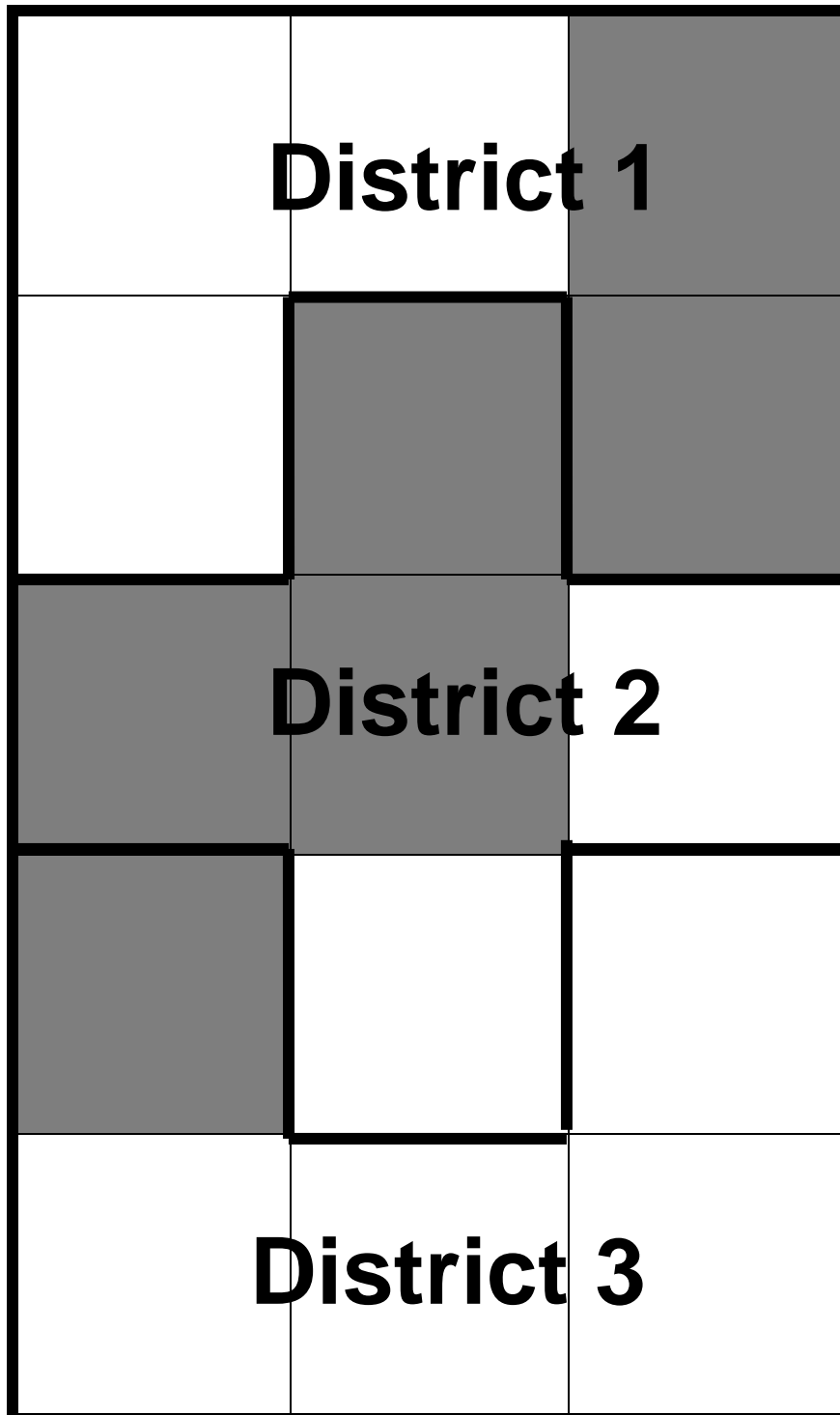
Redraw the district boundary lines on Map A so that:

- There are three districts
- Each district has five blocks total
- The Gray Party has a majority in one district
- The White Party has majorities in two districts



# Redistricting Map Worksheet A Answer Key

NOTE: There is more than one way to divide up this state under the criteria required.

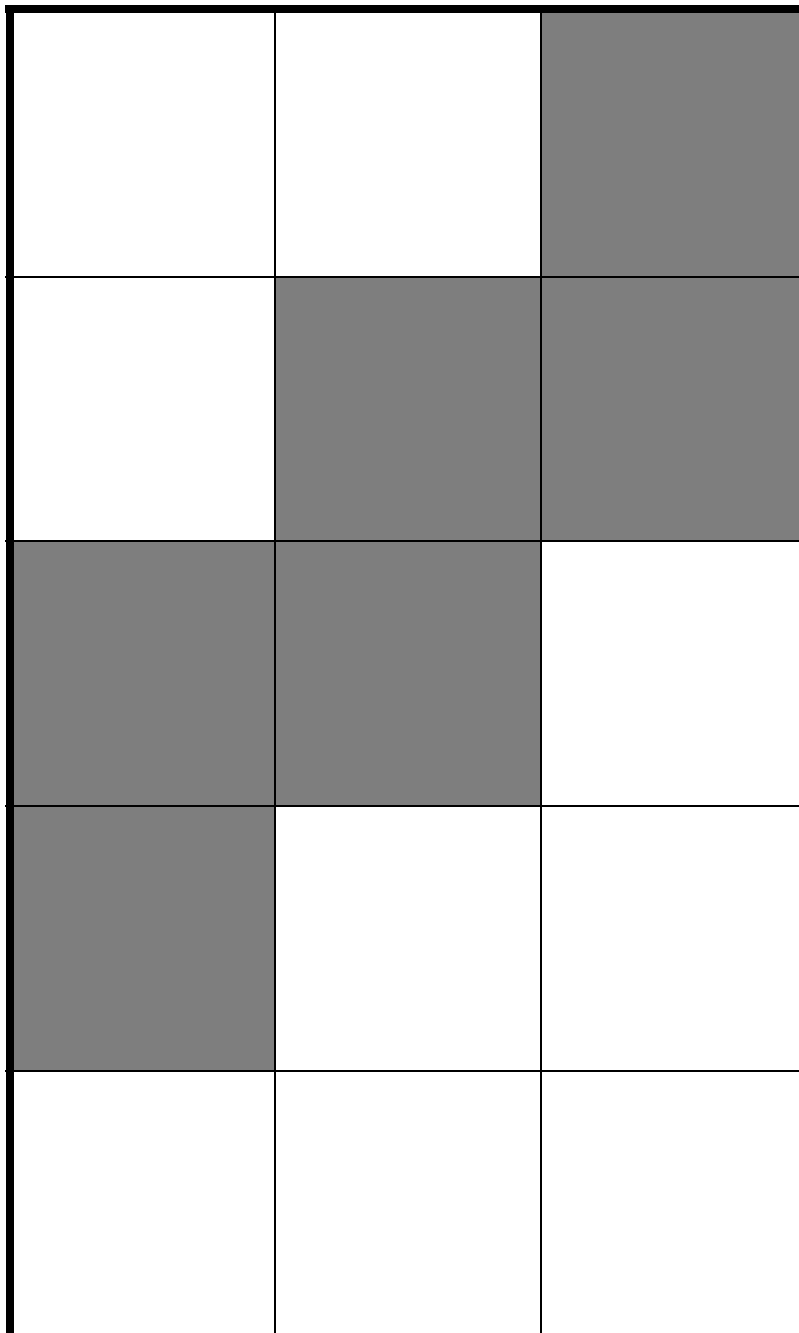


# Redistricting Map Worksheet B

## Part 3

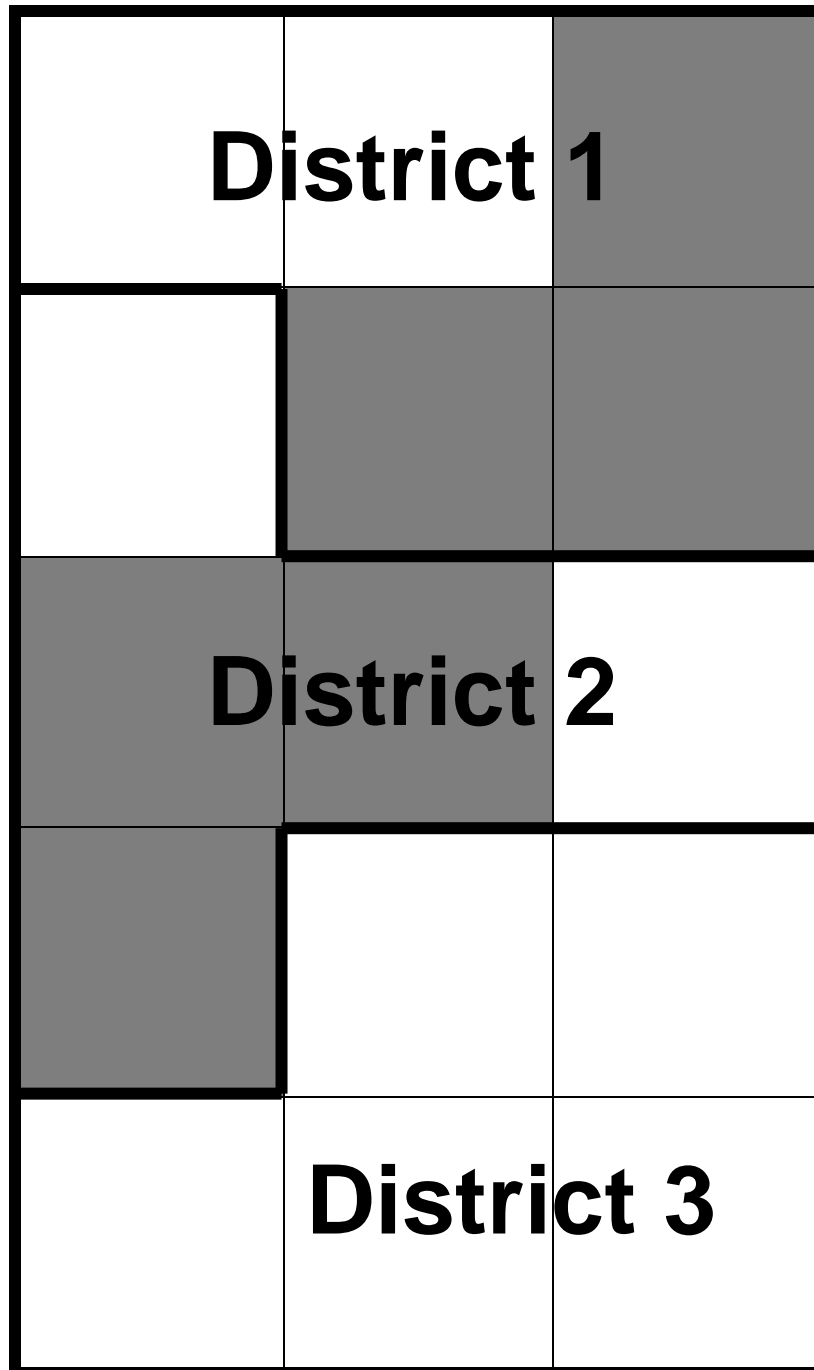
Redraw the district boundary lines on Map B so that:

- There are three districts
- Each district has five blocks total
- The Gray Party has a majority in two districts
- The White Party has majorities in one district



# Redistricting Map Worksheet B Answer Key

NOTE: There is more than one way to divide up this state under the criteria required.



## Student Handout 2: “The Redistricting Song”

### Discussion Guide

1. After viewing the first 42 seconds of “The Redistricting Song” video, discuss the following questions:
  - Why should the populations of Congressional districts be roughly the same?
  - Why do changes in the census data create the need to redraw district lines?
  - Why is it important that representative districts are established properly?
2. After viewing the rest of the video, review the different methods of redistricting: (These are detailed in ProPublica’s website at <http://www.propublica.org/article/redistricting-a-devils-dictionary>)
  - Packing: redrawing a district to pack in as many of one type of voters
  - Cracking: redrawing a district to break up concentrated areas of one type of other.
  - Kidnapping: redrawing the district line around an incumbent’s neighborhood to place it in a new district with the opposition party in the majority. They will be voted out of office because they don’t have the support they once had in their old district.
  - Hijacking: redrawing the district line to include two (or more) incumbents from the same party. Only one can win and the opposition party has one less representative to worry about.
3. In a “fishbowl” configuration discuss the following questions:
  - **Compare and contrast** the intent of traditional redistricting methods that reflected natural communities and their collective interests with new redistricting methods described in the video.
  - What segments of society might benefit from these newer redistricting methods?
  - What segments of society might be harmed by these newer methods?
  - Comment on whether you think state legislatures should have the responsibility for redistricting in their state? What might be a better way of conducting redistricting?

## Student Handout 3: Redistricting State-by-State Analysis

**Directions:** In this activity, you will be **analyzing** how your state or a state assigned to you conducts its redistricting procedures. Then you will review several proposals for reforming redistricting and **formulate** recommendations for redistricting reform for your assigned state.

1. Go to the webpage “Ballot-pedia” at [http://ballotpedia.org/wiki/index.php/State-by-state\\_redistricting\\_procedures](http://ballotpedia.org/wiki/index.php/State-by-state_redistricting_procedures) . This webpage has three linear charts dividing the states into three categories: States where redistricting is conducted by a commission, states where redistricting is determined by the state legislature, and states that use a hybrid method.
2. Find your state on one of the lists and click the hyperlink on your state’s name
3. Find the following information and summarize in a quick report:
  - a. How many Congressional seats does the state have? \_\_\_\_\_

- b. Identify the government body(ies) (state legislature, commission, independent commission or a combination) that are responsible for redistricting and briefly **describe** the process.

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- c. **Describe** the results from the 2010 census.

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- d. **Describe** the process for public hearings on redistricting.

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- e. **Describe** the possible strategies Democrats and/or Republicans have for redistricting?

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- f. Review the various articles written about redistricting in the state and **explain** whether any actions or proposed actions seem to be motivated by politics.

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- g. **Explain** whether there is a preponderance of irregular shaped Congressional Districts. What conclusions can you draw about this state's record of gerrymandering?

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