

State Elections: Content Outline for all Grade Levels



I. THE FOUNDATION OF ARIZONA GOVERNMENT

- A. Arizona became the 48th state on February 14th, 1912
- B. The state of Arizona is bounded on the west by the Colorado River, on the south by Mexico, on the east by New Mexico, and on the north by Colorado and Utah.
- C. Governments are established to protect and maintain individual rights.
- D. The Arizona Constitution is the document which sets forth the basic laws for our form of government.
- E. All political power rests in the people and the government derives its power from their votes.
- F. The people elect representatives to govern them at national, state, and local levels.
- G. The capitol, the seat of government, is located in Phoenix.
- H. The state is divided into 30 legislative, 8 congressional, and 227 school districts.
- I. Arizona is divided into 15 counties.
- J. Each county has its own form of government.
- K. Each county contains municipalities or city governing bodies.

Web Links:

For more information visit these web sites:

State of Arizona: <http://www.az.gov>

Arizona League of Cities and Towns: <http://www.azleague.org>

Counties in Arizona: <http://www.azcounties.org>

School Districts in Arizona: <http://www.ade.state.az.us>

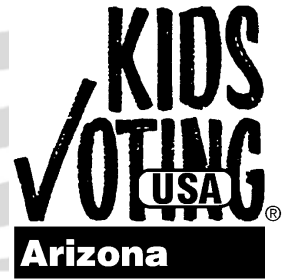
Arizona Legislature: <http://www.azleg.state.az.us>

Members of the U.S. House of Representatives from Arizona: <http://www.house.gov>





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II. THE ELECTION PROCESS

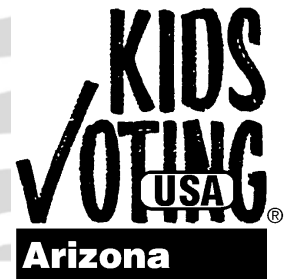
- A. In order to vote in Arizona, a person must be at least 18 years old, a citizen of the United States and a resident of Arizona.
- B. Each person's vote counts toward the election of candidates and passage of ballot propositions.
- C. All elections shall be by secret ballot.
- D. There shall be a primary election which will determine the nomination of candidates for all elective state, county, and city offices including candidates for U.S. Senate and House of Representatives.
- E. There shall be a general election of representatives in congress and of state, county, and precinct officials on the first Tuesday following the first Monday in November of the even numbered years.
- F. The highest number of legal votes received determines the person elected to a position.
- G. There is a process by which a candidate qualifies to run for office.
- H. Candidates are elected to office for a specific term.
- I. There is a process by which a candidate may be removed from office.
- J. There are appointed officials whose positions are affected by elections.
- K. There is a process by which the people can directly vote on legislation.
- L. An **area** which determines by residence where a person votes is called a precinct.
- M. The specific **place** where a person votes is called a polling place.

For more information on the election process in Arizona and to read the actual language in the Arizona Constitution, visit:

<http://www.azleg.state.az.us/>



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III. FORMS OF GOVERNMENT

A. STATE GOVERNMENT

The power of state government, like the federal government, is divided into three branches: Legislative, Executive, and Judicial.

1. The Legislative Branch consists of the Senate and House of Representatives whose members develop state laws and serve for a term of two years starting on the first Monday in January following their election. **Visit <http://www.azleg.state.az.us> for detailed information.**
 - a. There are 30 senators in the Senate. One senator is elected from each of the 30 legislative districts.
 - b. There are 60 representatives in the House of Representatives. Two representatives are elected from each of the 30 legislative districts.
 - c. Legislative sessions are held in Phoenix at the state capitol beginning the second Monday of January each year.
2. The Executive offices are the Governor, the Secretary of State, State Treasurer, Attorney General and Superintendent of Public Instruction. **Visit <http://www.az.gov> for detailed information.**
 - a. The Governor shall transact all executive business with the officers of the government, civil, and military. The Governor ensures that all laws are enforced.
 - b. The Secretary of State serves as official custodian of the Great Seal , serves as Acting Governor when the Governor is absent from the state and is first in the line of succession, serves as Chief Election Officer for the state, registers trade names and trademarks, serves as registration officer for lobbyists, registers charitable organizations, registers telemarketers, and, among other things, receives bills and resolutions passed by the legislature.
 - c. The State Treasurer's office provides banking, cash management, investments and accounting services for the State of Arizona.
 - d. The Attorney General serves as chief legal officer of the state and represents and provides legal advice to most state agencies, enforces criminal laws, and issues formal legal opinions as requested by state officers, legislators or county attorneys on issues of law.
 - e. The Superintendent of Public Instruction is the chief administrator for schools in Arizona, can request the auditor general to investigate the accounts of school monies, directs the work of all employees of the department of education, and executes the policies of the state board of education.



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3. The Judicial power shall be vested in a judicial department consisting of a supreme court, intermediate appellate courts, a superior court and justice courts.
 - a. The supreme court shall consist of not less than five justices and they shall hold office for a term of six years unless otherwise provided by Article VI of the state constitution. They shall interpret the laws of the state according to the constitution and have administrative supervision over all the courts of the state.
 1. The Chief Justice is elected from among the justices of the supreme court for a term of five years.
 2. The Vice Chief Justice is elected from among the supreme court for a term determined by the court. He acts in the absence or incapacity of the Chief Justice.
 - b. The intermediate appellate courts' powers, duties and composition are determined by law.
 - c. There shall be one superior court and one superior justice for each 30,000 inhabitants in each county. Where there are two or more judges, the supreme court shall appoint one presiding judge. They shall serve for a term of four years except as provided by Article VI of the Arizona Constitution.
 - d. The supreme and superior courts and the court of appeals are courts of record. Justice courts are not courts of record.

You can view the Arizona Constitution online by visiting:

<http://www.azleg.state.az.us/>



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B. COUNTY GOVERNMENT

There are fifteen counties in the state of Arizona. They are: Apache, Cochise, Coconino, Gila, Graham, Greenlee, La Paz, Maricopa, Mohave, Navajo, Pima, Pinal, Santa Cruz, Yavapai, and Yuma.

1. Each county in the state of Arizona is a separate government entity.
2. Each county is a territory of the state of Arizona.
3. Each county has officers, duties, powers and qualifications as prescribed by state law.
4. The following officers shall be elected by qualified electors of the county: sheriff, county attorney, recorder, treasurer, assessor, superintendent of schools, and at least three supervisors, each of whom shall be elected from districts as provided by law. Officers will hold office for a term of 4 (four) years beginning on the first of January after each election.
5. Basic laws and principles used for county governments are contained in Article XII of the Arizona Constitution and are prescribed by state laws.
6. In accordance with the Arizona Constitution, county governments aid in the administration of state laws through self – government. They identify powers, duties, and responsibilities of the governing body, its method of compensation, authority to delegate powers, and its method of election and removal of members, the terms of office and the manner of filling vacancies and levying and collecting taxes.

Visit <http://www.azcounties.org> for more information on Arizona’s counties.

C. MUNICIPAL GOVERNMENT

Visit <http://www.azleague.org> for more information on Arizona’s cities and towns.

D. SCHOOL BOARDS

Visit <http://www.azsba.org> for more information on school boards in Arizona.