**Gerrymandering**

**Name\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**

**Directions:** Use the Gerrymandering power point on my website to complete the worksheet below.

1. Which of the following statements do you think most accurately describes the type of representative democracy the Framers intended to create? (circle one and explain why)

* A nation where the voters get to choose their representatives.
* A nation where the representatives get to choose their voters.

2. Go to House.gov and in the upper right corner, type your zip code into search bar. On the next page, enter your address.

What district do you live in? #\_\_\_\_\_ Who is your representative? \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

3a. How many congressional districts are either inside or bordering Travis County? \_\_\_\_\_

b. According to the U.S. Census Bureau for 2010, this area should only have between 2 and 3 congressional Districts. Why do you think the area has 7? (what is going on?)

4. How does gerrymandering distort the political process? Explain this in terms of the political make up of Austin and central Texas.

5a. What is the current ratio of districts in Texas? Republican \_\_\_\_\_ Democratic \_\_\_\_\_

b. What would be the ratio if drawn in proportion to party membership? Republican \_\_\_\_\_ Democratic \_\_\_\_\_

6a. Look up the term political polarization and explain what it is in easily understood terms.

b. Explain how gerrymandering increases political polarization.

c. Explain why a republican representative might have a disincentive to “reach across the aisle” and work with a democrat to reach a compromise on an issue?

7a. Explain the non-partisan alternative for drawing congressional districts.

b. What is the current ratio of seats in the U.S. Congress? Republican \_\_\_\_\_\_ Democrat\_\_\_\_\_\_

c. What would be the effect on the ratio if drawn by non-partisan committee? Republican \_\_\_\_\_ Democrat\_\_\_\_

8a. Explain the alternative that would take human political biases out of the redistricting process.

b. How would this limit the tactics used by politicians to currently gerrymander districts? (What difference do you notice between the two maps?)

9. Explain TWO reasons why it is difficult to change the current gerrymandering process.

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10. If you had a say in redistricting, would you favor keeping the current gerrymandering system? Explain why or why not. If your answer is no, explain how you think it should be done.

**Redistricting Activity-** Each diagram below represents an identical mythical state. Each individual block represents a county of equal population that is either dominated by the Republican Party (R) or the Democratic Party (D). The state must be divided into 5 districts according to the rules set out by national law, and counties must remain whole.

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| R | D | D | R | R |
| R | R | D | R | D |
| R | R | D | R | D |

If a non-partisan commission was established to create districts that

were proportional to the state’s political party affiliation, what

would be the ratio of Republican to Democratic districts?

# of Republican \_\_\_\_\_\_ # of Democratic \_\_\_\_\_\_

Create those districts on the map to the right.

**Gerrymandering**

Diagram (with thick outlines, and maybe shading) the maximum number of districts that each party could control if they had a majority in the State Legislature, and chose to engage in gerrymandering.

Republican Control Democratic Control

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| R | D | D | R | R |
| R | R | D | R | D |
| R | R | D | R | D |

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| R | D | D | R | R |
| R | R | D | R | D |
| R | R | D | R | D |

# of Republican \_\_\_\_\_\_ # of Republican \_\_\_\_\_\_

# of Democratic \_\_\_\_\_\_ # of Democratic \_\_\_\_\_\_