



# What is a Gerrymander?

from the Esri GeoInquiries™ collection for Government



Target audience – Government learners

Time required – 15 minutes

URL: <http://esriurl.com/GovGeoInquiry7>

AP Human Geography Course Descriptors

Voting districts, redistricting, and gerrymandering influence the results of elections at various scales

## Why do shapes of congressional districts vary from state to state?

→ Click the link above to launch the map.

### ? What is gerrymandering?

→ In the map, click a few districts to find the average number of people per district.

### ? What is the average?

### ? Why do some states have more congressional districts?

## What is the connection between population and district size?

- With the Details button underlined, press the button Show Contents of Map.
- Check the box to the left of the layer, 2016 Population Density by Congressional District.
- Uncheck the box to the left of the layer, USA 115th Congressional Districts.
- Click the map in a few districts to explore population density.

### ? What is the connection between population density and the size of congressional districts?

### ? Why do you think the Constitution's founding fathers created this system?

## How can gerrymandering be recognized?

- Click Bookmarks and choose the Chicago Metropolitan bookmark.
- Turn on the Chicago Metro Districts layer and turn off all other layers.
- The Supreme Court ruled that districts must be drawn compact, contiguous, and have roughly equal populations.

### ? Which of Chicago's districts appear to be the most gerrymandered?

### How do party politics affect the drawing of districts?

- Select the bookmark, North Carolina.
- Turn on the two layers for North Carolina Congressional Districts.
- The state legislature is responsible for drawing district borders after each census.
- Assuming support for the Republicans and Democrats are roughly equal, which political party likely had majority control when districts were drawn? Why?
- Compare the 115th Congressional Districts to North Carolina's previous districts by changing the transparency of one of the layers.

**? Which seems to meet the court requirements better?**

### How do different states draw their congressional districts?

- Turn off all layers except the 2016 Congressional Districts layer.
- Type the name of a state into the search field to zoom to the state.

**? Do the districts seem to be drawn fairly or not? What criteria did you use?**

**? Which districts seem to be the most gerrymandered in the state? Explain your reasoning.**