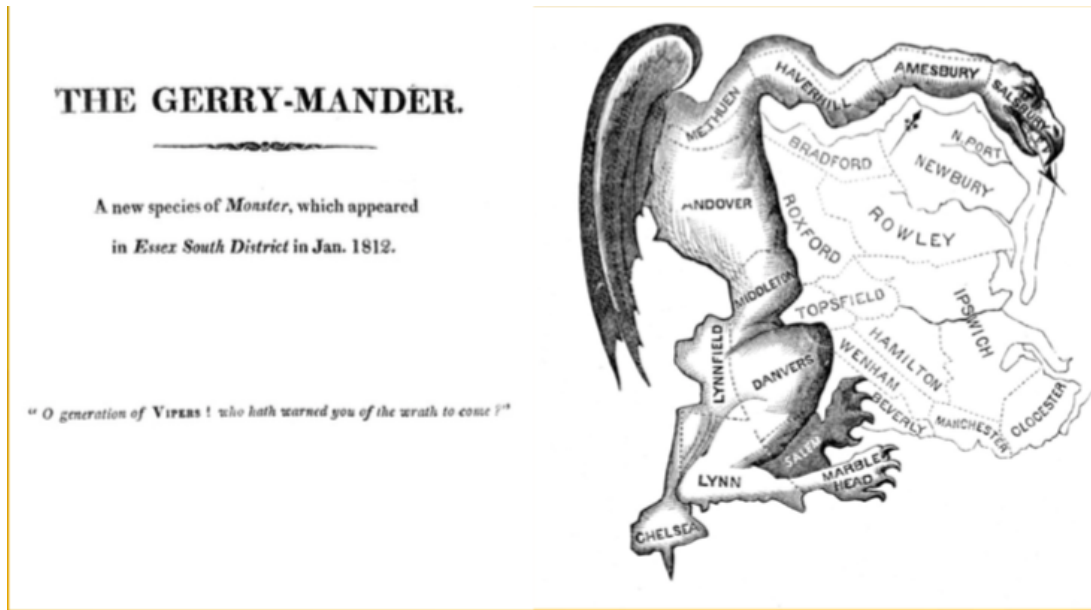


## Gerrymandering Introduction

After completing this lesson, students should be able to:

- Find ways to maximize gerrymandering in small "toy" examples and explain why this the most gerrymandering that can be achieved.
- Explain how gerrymandering is achieved through packing and cracking.

## Background and context



Boston Gazette March 1812

**Question.** What is the difference between gerrymandering and redistricting?

**Question.** Which political offices do we elect using districts in North Carolina?

**Question.** When do you expect districts to next be drawn? (PollEv) Why?

**Question.** Who does the redrawing of districts in North Carolina? What are the potential problems of this system?

Some history:

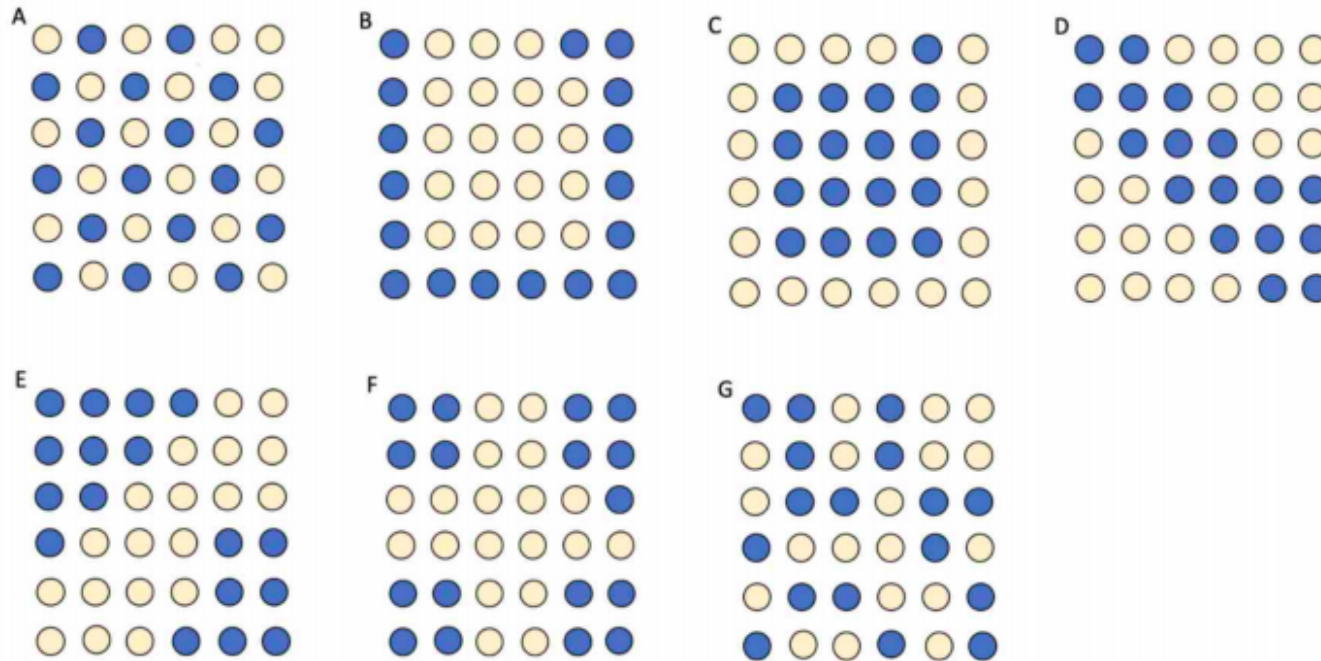
- Gerrymandering based on race has been deemed unconstitutional at the federal level (i.e. it is not allowed in any state) and some of North Carolina's recent districts have been overturned on those grounds.
- But the legality of partisan gerrymandering is an open question, and not disallowed by the NC constitution (unlike some other states).
- In 2019, the U.S. Supreme Court ruled that, to evaluate claims of partisan gerrymandering, they would need "a limited and precise standard" that would be "clear, manageable, and politically neutral." Is there one?

Goal: develop quantitative measures of gerrymandering.

### Be a Gerrymanderer - Group Activity

1. Introduce yourselves, choose a taskmaster, explainer, and scribe.
2. Go to the tab of the gerrymandering jamboard that corresponds to your group number.
3. Choose one of the maps (A-G). Each map represents a very very small state with 19 Republican voters (yellow) and 17 Democratic voters (blue).
4. Delete the other maps on your tab and make copies of your chosen map, so that you have 3 copies total, arranged from left to right.
5. You will draw a different set of districts on each of these 3 maps. The two rules are that there always need to be (i) exactly 3 voters per district and (ii) districts have to be contiguous but can be either straight or bent. Whichever party has the majority of voters in a given district wins the district. Use the pen tool in Jamboard to draw the borders around each of your districts and the text tool or sticky note tool to record how many districts each party won for each of the maps.
  - (a) Left map, try to achieve an equal number of red districts and blue districts.
  - (b) Middle map, try to maximize the number of Republican (yellow) districts.
  - (c) Right map, try to maximize the number of Democratic (blue) districts.
6. Discuss and be ready to report back to the class:

- (a) What strategies did you use to gerrymander?
  - (b) What obstacles did you face trying to engineer the number of districts with your chosen state?
7. If time permits: please discuss: What do you think is the maximum number of yellow districts (of size 3 voters) that can be achieved in a 6 x 6 grid with 19 yellow voters and 17 blue voters? What about blue?



**Question.** What do you think is the maximum number of yellow districts (of size 3 voters) that can be achieved in a 6 x 6 grid with 19 yellow voters and 17 blue voters?

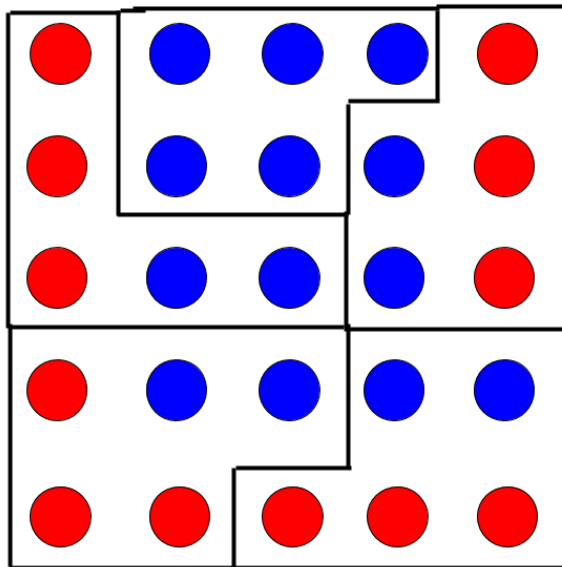
What is the maximum number of blue districts that can be achieved? (PolleEv)

**Question.** What strategies did you use to gerrymander?



### Packing and Cracking

Two main techniques of gerrymandering are called “packing” and “cracking”. What do these terms mean?



**Note.** It is possible to apply these techniques much more effectively today than in 1812 due to detailed voter information databases and computers that can evaluate many alternative maps very quickly.