

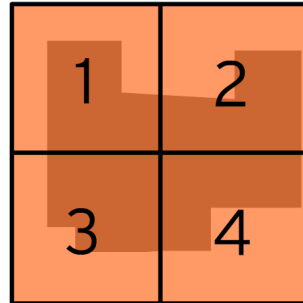


## FYI Voting

Ever heard of a gerrymander? **Gerrymandering** is the process of redrawing the lines of a voting district in order to manipulate the result of an election.

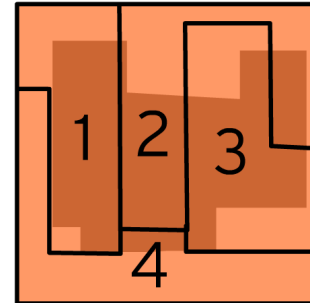
The process is named in part after **Elbridge Gerry**, a Massachusetts governor who in 1812 changed the shape of his electoral district to gain a political advantage. The “mander” part of “gerrymander” comes from the word “salamander,” which was the image used to mockingly describe the look of the very first gerrymandered district.

Four evenly matched districts



All districts produce an even voting ratio for each party

Four gerrymandered district



Three districts heavily favor voters from one party

So how does gerrymandering work? In any state, each district gets to send a representative to the House of Representatives. Every 10 years after the **census** (a major population survey), the districts are redrawn. Let’s say that there’s a heavily Republican district in a certain state, and that, year after year, they elect a Republican representative. If they’re able, Democrats might try redraw the district lines to distribute the Republican votes into more Democratic districts—and vice versa!

Today, gerrymandering overwhelmingly favors incumbent senators and representatives of both parties. And it’s a lot more high-tech than it used to be: Politicians use cutting-edge computer programs to create districts that ensure their seats remain safe. Although unethical, gerrymandering remains legal in the United States.

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