YOU DO COUNT!

A game teaching American citizens how to keep their republic

Based on the Mountain Majesty Method (a.k.a. Arapahoe or B2B Method) of hand counting developed by a team led by Shawn Smith and Jeff Young for the 2024 Colorado Republican State Assembly, where approximately 2000 ballots were counted in 45 minutes.

The Mountain Majesty Method is similar to other major hand count methods such as the Missouri Method and Gold Standard Elections. Its current distinctive is requiring only office supplies and the quadruple-checking of tallies by a four-person aggregation team.

HOW TO WIN

Be the fastest team in every step of counting, under the most adverse conditions. Since not everyone who plays this game will have the same conditions at the same time, a secondary form of winning is to convince everyone your conditions were the worst, therefore you are the best team.

Remember that tall tales are a very American form of storytelling. ("Yes, but when we counted 17,000 ballots in 30 minutes it was in a blizzard and uphill both ways.")

HOW TO LOSE

Count wrong and fail spectacularly at every opportunity to correct the count.

Contents:

BACKGROUND

In the United States of America, we-the-people are the government, which in 1789 established the Constitution as the law of the land.

> We the People of the United States, in Order to form a more perfect Union, establish Justice, insure domestic Tranquility, provide for the common defence, promote the general Welfare, and secure the Blessings of Liberty to ourselves and our Posterity, do ordain and establish this Constitution for the United States of America.

Article IV, Section 4 of the Constitution, says "The United States shall guarantee to every State in this Union a Republican Form of Government," meaning one in which citizens elect their own representatives.

But counting elections is at least as important as voting in them. As Josef Stalin may have said, "Those who vote decide nothing. Those who count the vote decide everything." So in order to have the representative self-government guaranteed by the Constitution, we-the-people need to count the vote ourselves, not hand it over to election officials.

This game trains United States citizens to hand-count through hands-on experience, not instruction. In an actual election, there will be additional details and complications, but those can be covered by instructions and reminders at the time. 95% of what a United States citizen needs to self-govern through elections is covered by this game.

INTRODUCTION

Consider this game a team-building, brain-training exercise. (Warning: also consider the material you build your team with. In beta tests with sibling teams, many memories – of arguments – were created.)

You'll have to focus on listening to the correct input and producing the correct output, working as a team to move all the ballots through the process. The goal is complete accuracy within the shortest time. Once everyone is familiar with each of the roles, you may switch out people to create a dream team with the best person in each role. (Or a team of tender feelings may pretend everyone is equally good at everything and keep rotating through the roles.) Teams may compete against each other, but unless you form a league or something, teams will mostly compete against their own previous times or levels of complexity.

One basic game involves counting 100 pre-marked ballots correctly. A precinct-level game involves counting 1000 ballots correctly. You may create your own ballots, but be creative with the questions. Absolutely no seriousness allowed. There is also a quick version, counting at least 20 pre-marked ballots correctly, for those people who can't be pried away from their devices for more than half an hour.

An obnoxiously experienced team can play with any number of ballots, designing an election, marking the ballots, and making sure there are lots of overvotes, spoiled ballots, and write-ins to deal with. Teams are encouraged to set and break records for speed, number of ballots, and complexity of races. As an example of complexity, how about voting to choose 23 of 189 applicants to receive free zucchini for life?

You can achieve different levels. At Level 3 you are reasonably trained to be a precinct-level hand-counter in an actual election. Not that you know everything yet, but you'd forget the rest of the details and have to be reminded at election time anyway, so you're good enough for self-government purposes.

> Level 1: Read the game directions.

> Level 2: Play at least one role in a basic game.

> Level 2.5: Play the quick version of the game.

> Level 3: Play every role in a basic game.

> Level 4: Play at least one role in a precinct-level game.

> Level 5: Organize, direct, and tyrannize a game as Timekeeper.

> Level 6: Play every role in a precinct-level game with auditory and visual distractions. (Loud annoying music and flashing lights if you can't come up with anything more creative.)

> Level 7: Play a "bad actor" game where half the team tries to change votes, add or subtract ballots, or commit other kinds of fraud – the goal is to stop all fraud before it contaminates the ballot pool. (The usual penalty for treason shall not be literally applied in this game.)

PLAY THE GAME

There are three basic jobs: BATCHING, TALLYING, and AGGREGATING. These are just pretentious names for putting the ballots in piles, counting them, and totaling the counts.

To play, you'll work as a team to accomplish each of these jobs, switching positions now and then so everyone gets to try each role. Explanations of roles are on the following pages. (Stop jumping ahead. Just be patient!) Timekeeper supervises and times each step. Ideally the game should have one or more teams of 4 plus the Timekeeper, but make do with whatever you have; any good hostess should know how to handle an odd (or just plain strange) person. Here's how you can divide up the jobs:

- Team of 2
    - o **Batch** 100 ballots as Batcher One and Two, role switching not necessary.
    - o **Tally** and total 50 ballots with one person as caller, the other as Tally One, then switch roles for the other 50 ballots. Since Tally Two is similar to Tally One, and Watcher is backup for Caller, switching between all four roles isn't vital.
    - o **Aggregate** 50 ballots with one person as Agg Caller, the other as Total One, then switch roles for the other 50 ballots. Then calculate the aggregated totals. Do not get aggravated.
- Team of 4
    - o **Batch** 50 ballots each in two 2-person teams. Players may do si do when done.
    - o **Tally** and total 25 ballots, then switch to the next one of the four positions, possibly with an allemande left.

- **Aggregate** one batch, then switch to the next of four positions. Swing your partner, if so inclined. Whoever is in Total One and Two last gets to calculate the aggregated totals. Do not whine; it's not like it's calculus or something.
- Team of More
  - Divide up into teams of 4 and make sure to have enough ballots for all players to rotate through all positions.
- Team of 20
  - It is especially fun to fit a group of 20 close together so one tally group is saying "10, 13, 18" while the other is saying "11, 12, 16" and everyone gets properly annoyed.

ROLES AND STATIONS

Timekeeper

1. Direct the team to their stations, show them their paper, pens, and any other equipment.
2. Start the timer when the team is ready.
3. Stop the timer when the Batcher/Watcher/Agg Watcher raises a hand, or if blood is spilled.
4. Act as referee and Supreme Judge for any questions that come up.
5. Confirm the team's accuracy (either by using a known set of pre-marked ballots, having personally pre-counted the ballots, or assuming that if two teams come up with identical numbers, they are highly likely to be correct.)
6. (Optional) Challenge the team with auditory and visual distractions, such as loud music with a strong beat a bit too fast to count in time with, flashing lights, or bystanders making loud and obnoxious comments. ("Are you sure you're allowed to be here?" "Yo momma gets lost counting to two." "I think you did something wrong there. See, you did it again.")

Runner (Optional)

Carry batches between tables as needed. This is a good job for a young child, or an adult who acts like one.

Batching

STOP WORK for any problem/discrepancy/mistake until it is fixed. OR ELSE.

Batcher/Batcherette One

1. Collect a batch of 25 ballots.
2. Clip the ballot stack together with two tally sheets.

Batcher/Batcherette Two

1. Count the batch separately to confirm the work of Batcher/Batcherette One.
2. Raise a hand to tell the Timekeeper the team is done.

Tallying

STOP WORK for any problem/discrepancy/mistake until it is fixed. OR ELSE.

Caller, Watcher, Tally One and Tally Two

1. Write names at the top on both tally sheets.

Caller

1. Read the votes on each ballot by number. Example: "4, 8, 9, 14, 19. Next ballot. 3, 8, 9, 12, 20. Next ballot, 2, 7, 10, 13, 20." You don't have to keep the ballots in order, but if you don't and your team has to start the batch all over again when there is a question with ballot 23, well….
2. Adjust the speed of calling to keep Tally One and Tally Two comfortable. The tallier is always right about the speed; the caller is always wrong.
3. Seal the ballots:
   a. Put the ballots in a baggie.
   b. Tape over the top.
   c. Initial on the tape.(This is your tamper-indicating device to prove that nobody broke the tape and changed anything. Okay, there are better devices than this, but it's really cheap!)
   d. Paperclip the two finished tally sheets to the bag.

Watcher

1. Watch the ballots to check that Caller calls correctly. Watching like a vulture is allowed but not usually appreciated.
2. After the ballots are packaged and the tally sheets clipped with them, raise a hand to tell the Timekeeper the team is done.
3. (Optional for eagle-eyed Watchers) Check that Tally One and Tally Two mark votes correctly.

Tally One

1. Tally. On the tally sheet, using one row per ballot, use a green marker to dot the boxes containing the numbers read out by Caller. This is not an art contest; no need to color in the box all the way to the edges. If there are write-ins, write the name in the extra space provided.
2. Correct mistakes as soon as you notice them.
   a. Forgot to mark a box: well, mark it then!
   b. Marked the wrong box: X out the box in red so you will know not to count it.
   c. Skipped a line: go back and fill in the blank line correctly. Then, on the next ballot (and line), dot any new boxes and X out in red any dots that shouldn't be there. Then yell at the Timekeeper for not having made sure you know how to use a straightedge.
   d. Completely messed up everything: throw away the bad tally sheet, start the batch again with a new tally sheet. Apologize deeply to team, because they will probably be pretty annoyed, at least until they make a mistake and have to apologize back to you.
3. Total. At the end of the batch, total the marked boxes in each column and write the total at the bottom of the column.
4. Check. Read the totals while Tally Two confirms (switch readers if you want). Correct mistakes as soon as you notice them.
   a. Counted wrong: count right this time.
   b. Marked the wrong box, changing the totals for two columns: Check to be sure which tallier was mistaken, then change that tallier's marks and totals to be correct.
   c. Different totals, unsure who is right: have the caller re-read those ballots, possibly re-do the whole batch. Don't get mad, remember everything is the caller's fault, not the talliers' fault

Tally Two

Same as Tally One.

Aggregating

STOP WORK for any problem/discrepancy/mistake until it is fixed. OR ELSE.

Agg Caller, Agg Watcher, Total One and Total Two

1. Write names at the top on both aggregation sheets.

Agg Caller

1. Read the vote totals from one of the tally sheets. Example: "2, 10, 12, 1, 0." Read very carefully or you will get questions like, "Did you just say column 16 is 17?"
2. Seal the tallies with the ballots:
   a. Tape both tally sheets to their ballot baggie.
   b. Put all the ballot baggies and tally sheets in a big baggie.
   c. Put one of the aggregation sheets inside the big baggie, face out so it can be seen through the baggie. (This proves you checked your answers and they match.)
   d. Tape over the top of the big baggie.
   e. Initial on the tape. (This is your outer tamper-indicating device. Make it pretty.)
   f. Tape the other aggregation sheet to the outside of the baggie. This is your official page of final results, like the final answer on a math problem, and everything in the baggie is like showing your work on a math problem.

Agg Watcher

1. Check the Agg Caller by silently reading totals on the other tally sheet, but become very vocal if the caller gets something wrong.
2. After the tally and aggregation sheets are packaged, raise a hand to tell the Timekeeper the team is done.
3. Show the Timekeeper the team's aggregated totals to confirm they are correct.

Total One

1. Enter totals. On the aggregation sheet, use one row per batch to write in each box the totals as the Agg Call reads them.
2. Correct mistakes as soon as you notice them.
   a. Wrote wrong number: Scribble out the wrong number so it is unreadable and carefully write the correct number.
   b. Skipped a line – for a large number of tally sheets you might need to get a new aggregation sheet and start over. But if you just have a few lines to fill in you can probably handle marking or just mentally relabeling which line is which. And learn to use a straightedge!
3. Aggregate. At the end of all the batches, add up the numbers in each column and enter the aggregated total at the bottom of the column. (Calculators, slide rules, or abacuses are allowed here, but it is much better style to do the arithmetic in your head.)
4. Check. Read the aggregated totals while Total Two confirms (switch readers if you want). Correct mistakes as soon as you notice them.
   a. Somebody added a column wrong: scribble out the wrong total and add right this time!
   b. Totals are completely different: figure out who didn't pay attention to the instructions and re-do the aggregation.

Total Two

Same as Total One.

INSTRUCTIONS FOR QUICK GAME

For batching, counting, and aggregating 100 ballots with a team of four, allow a couple hours, because the first time through is going to be slow. It takes most people 20-30 minutes tally 25 ballots the first time, because the caller and talliers usually have to argue a bit to find the right rhythm.

But if you know you only have half an hour before you lose people or at least their attention, here's how to get the idea across in half an hour or so. Do not forget to harangue these people about what could possibly be more important than learning to do their civic duty of making sure votes are counted honestly.

Batching
Make batches (at least 2 batches) of 10 ballots instead of 25.

Tallying
Tally 10 ballots, then have the two talliers switch with the observer/caller and tally another 10. When checking against each other, see if discrepancies can be quickly resolved. If not, point out that in reality the solution is to go through the whole batch of ballots again because accuracy is essential. But in training, which is non-reality, if you absolutely must you can just change one page to match the other.

Aggregating
You should have at least 2 sets of 2 tally sheets. Have one team enter all the tally totals onto the aggregation sheet, and everyone else watch. While the aggregators try to remember their basic arithmetic to add 9+7, you might have to keep up the suspense by asking, "So, is everyone hoping for harmonicas or kazoos to win? How about that Zbigniew Hemmelskamp?"

EQUIPMENT NEEDED

- Printouts:
    - A set of 100 pre-marked ballots, or any number of guest-marked and/or home-made ballots the Timekeeper is prepared to guarantee the accuracy of the numbers for.
    - One set of two tally sheets for each batch. Tally sheets can be home-made, but need enough numbers in each row to accommodate all possible choices on the ballot. **To get the number of batches, divide the number of ballots by 25, then add 1 for any fraction of 25. Example: 100 ballots make 4 batches; 101 ballots make 5 batches.**
    - One set of two aggregation sheets for every 500 ballots. Aggregation sheets need enough numbers in each row to accommodate all the races on the ballot.
- Baggies:
    - Enough small clear plastic baggies to hold one batch of ballots each. You can fold the ballots, just don't mutilate, spindle, or destroy them.
    - A large clear plastic baggie big enough to hold a ballot batch plus two tally sheets (can be folded).
- Office supplies:
    - Clips (sized to hold about 30 pieces of paper).
    - At least one green and red marker for each tallier. (If you don't have red and green, use two other highly visible, highly contrasting colors, such as magenta and teal. Crayons could work too. Even lipstick could work if someone has green lipstick.)
    - Plenty of pens.
    - Tape.
    - Rulers or other straightedges, to keep talliers' eyes from crossing.
- Table and chairs for each of the three stations (semi-optional; you can do it without tables and chairs, and this will help in raising the stress level that makes for a real bootcamp experience.)
- Optional:
    - Transparent plastic box to hold ballots (good for explaining why literal transparency matters.)
    - Flags to raise to signal a runner that a batch is ready for the next station.
    - Signs identifying each position.

- o Finger moisteners/rubber finger tips.
- o Calculators for Total One and Total Two, unless they like to show off their math skills. For purists who are against electronics in elections, you could use abacuses. (Note that calculators here are different from electronic tabulators, because all they are doing is adding numbers which are in plain view and anyone can check the addition at any time.)

TERMS AND DEFINITIONS

- **Ballot**: A paper listing identification numbers beside each of the choices a voter may make (for instance, 1 for "Yes" and 2 for "No"), for at least one race. A ballot may have multiple choices and multiple races ("pick 14 out of 82 choices for the Committee to Create Committees.")
- **Overvote**: Too many votes in one race; don't count any of the votes for that race, although other races on the same ballot may be counted, and the ballot still counts as one of the 25 ballots in the batch. Example: choosing both "yes" and "no", or voting for 8 candidates in a race where voters are to pick 7 of 15. Anyone who overvotes might not be real great at counting; maybe they should just watch rather than be on your team.
- **Race**: The multiple candidates competing for a position (Smith, Jones, and Arawak for Lord High Executioner), or choices for a question (Yes, No, In Your Dreams for "Shall taxes be raised?").
- **Spoiled ballot**: A ballot that should not be counted, for instance because it is ripped into shreds, handwritten on a napkin, soiled with something nobody wants to touch, or it is from a voter who made a mistake and exchanged the ballot for a fresh ballot. Spoiled ballots are kept away from the counting process, and maybe from decent society.
- **Undervote:** Fewer votes than allowed, or even no votes at all for a race. This is okay (nobody is actually required to hold their nose and vote for a candidate) but since it would be easy for someone to quickly mark it with a vote for their favorite candidate, an undervoted ballot is especially vulnerable to cheating. Pay close attention to anyone with a pen near that ballot.
- **Vote**: A marked choice in a race on a ballot. **The mark can be anything (an X, slash, oval, circle, "THIS ONE" written in crayon), as long as the intent of the voter is clear.** People are really good at figuring out the obvious but non-standard intent of a voter. Machines are really bad at it.
- **Write-in**: A vote for a candidate not listed on the ballot. Not all races allow write-ins, but where allowed, it must be counted, even if it is for somebody's cat.

NICE TO KNOW
Using numbers instead of names on the ballot is helpful, like a bank teller thinking of bills as just pieces of paper – it gets your attention away from crimes you shouldn't be thinking about.

The reason for sealing all the ballots in their batches with their tally sheets and the aggregation sheets is that it creates a completely auditable record. Anybody can read the totals of the election on the outside aggregation sheet, and can see that everything is recorded and sealed by the people who counted it. Anybody can then, if needed, break the seals to recount everything inside to prove you counted it right.

EXTRA CREDIT FOR ADVANCED TEAMS:

- Three write-in votes for "Tchaikovsky", "Chykofski", and "Tschiekawskyy". Should they be counted as three votes for one person, or one vote each for three people?
- Do overvotes on some of the ballots – some with overvotes in just one race, others with overvotes in all races, and see if the team catches all the overvotes. (None of the votes in the overvoted race on that ballot should be counted, but other races which aren't overvoted should be counted, and either way the ballot still counts as a ballot which must be kept.)
- Try to sneak in a spoiled (completely unusable) ballot without the team catching it.
- Try to add extra ballots, take out good ballots, change votes, or vote in an undervoted race.

Hand Counting – Did You Know?

"Hand counting" is short for transparent election systems understandable by the average citizen. Hand counted generally means elections which are one-day, in-person, ID-verified, with paper ballots cast at the precinct level and hand-counted where cast. (Hand-counted systems may include accommodations for a few special cases such as military or disabled.)

Math required: counting, and addition of numbers mostly under 25 (first-grade math!)

Workers needed: Recommendation for Arapahoe County as one of the biggest counties in Colorado is about 1% of the voters, for a few hours on one day. Even people with jobs can do this! Opponents work together, creating community. Bring food and make it a party!

Cost: printing and office supplies, possibly cameras, space for a few tables, and payment for workers (if not volunteers). No need to pay for election hardware/software, large-envelope postage to all voters, drop boxes, or weeks of paid election judges.

Speed: depends on ballot complexity and number of teams. In 2024 at the Colorado GOP State Assembly, 2000 one-question ballots divided among many teams took only minutes to count. Average voters/precinct is about 1000, so even 100% turnout is very manageable Election Night.

Simple: Ballots are counted where cast; few moving parts = resilient system.

Scalable: Scale up (more teams: faster) or down (fewer teams: less space, fewer workers needed).

Adaptable: humans identify voter intent better than machines, and do it in public, not behind locked doors. Stray marks don't break the system.

Benefits: most hand count systems result in double-checked, auditable, final results publicly available on Election Night.

Hand Counting Resources available at https://causeofamerica.org/hand-counting-resources/

Introductory Speech

Our problem is NOT the electronic machines, the mail-in ballots, the filthy voter rolls. The problem is hiding things, behind a wall, behind locked doors, behind a distance, behind a weird computer algorithm, behind complex laws. Elections are simple math, first-grade math at most. Counting and addition. That's all. There is no subtraction in a real election. Why do we need million-dollar machines to add?

What really matters is not paper ballots and hand counting. Colorado is correct that we already use paper ballots – but they hide what they do with them. I can hide what I do with my hands. What matters is transparency and simplicity. Everybody must be allowed to see everything and understand the system. That doesn't mean you HAVE to watch everything. But it does mean anyone who obscures anything is probably up to no good.

Ballots are incredibly valuable. If your ballot is your per capita share of the GDP, each ballot is worth like $50,000. Think of this pile of ballots as a pile of gold ore we all just mined. Shall I take it and lock it up for all of us? I promise I will hold on to the key myself. Nobody else will get the key. No? Well then, how about I save us all a lot of work and extract the gold from this ore; I have a great machine that works really well. But you're not an expert, you stay away from my machine.

Yeah, right! If this were a pile of ore here, we would all watch and maybe help extract the gold, and we would want to do it now. Because as soon as it's extracted and we all know exactly how much gold there is, it is much harder for any one of us to steal any.

So this is our election ore here, ballots which need votes extracted from them. After that, the ballots are only important for auditing. It's the vote numbers that matter. Numbers are much easier to move than ballots, and once we all know the numbers, it's a whole lot easier to move the ballots without the election being stolen. That's why we have to count the ballot where cast.

Like your bank teller, who has all kinds of counting machines. Maybe your teller is bad at counting. And slow. You're busy. But you still want him to count your cash in front of you, and you'll probably count it too. Because he should never just hand you a wad of cash and ask you to trust him.

The best way to count ballots is together with someone you don't trust at all. Then you do it REALLY carefully.