Voter Turnout in the 2012 Presidential Election

Use the United States Election Project’s 2012 General Election Turnout Rates to answer the questions below. You may want to conduct Internet research to help formulate some of your answers. Before you begin, familiarize yourself with the following terms, which are used to compile the voting data.

- **VAP (Voting Age Population):** Defined by the U.S. Census Bureau as everyone residing in the United States, age 18 and older. Counted among the voting-age population are persons who are ineligible to vote, such as non-citizens, felons (depending on state law), and mentally incapacitated persons. The VAP is appropriately adjusted in order to arrive at the voting-eligible population, as described below.

- **VEP (Voting Eligible Population):** Describes the population that is eligible to vote. The most valid turnout rates are calculated using voting-eligible population.

- **VEP Highest Office Turnout Rate:** The number of people who voted in the 2012 presidential election.

1. Which state had the highest VAP Turnout Rate? The lowest? Explain the factors that might contribute to these numbers.

2. Look at the states that have a large number of felons who are ineligible to vote. Which state has the largest felon population in comparison to other states? Why do you think this is the case?

3. Which three states have the largest percentage of non-citizens? Based on these states’ geographic locations and demographics, why might this be the case?

4. Compare the national and state VAP turnout rates for 2012 and 2008. What conclusion can be drawn about the differences in turnout for these two presidential elections?