

Chapter 9 – The Congress

Describe the various functions played by Congress and the constitutional basis of its powers.

Bicameralism - _____

Nature and Functions of Congress:

Law making		Oversight	
Representation		Public education	
Service to constituents		Conflict resolution	

Powers of Congress:

Enumerated powers	
Powers of the Senate	
Constitutional Amendments	
The Necessary and Proper Clause	

Explain some of the differences between the House and the Senate, and some of the privileges enjoyed by members of Congress.

House and Senate Differences:

Size	Rules
Debate and Filibustering	
Filibuster	
Cloture	
Reconciliation	

Congresspersons and the Citizenry: A comparison

What are the usual characteristics of a typical member of the House or Senate?

Perks and privileges:

Franking	
Permanent professional staffs	
Privileges and immunities under the law	

Differences Between House and Senate

House of Representatives	Area	Senate
435 members	Size	100 members
2 year terms	Term Length	6 year terms
Debate is limited Amendments are limited	Rules	Unlimited Debate Open Amendment Process
Narrow (District)	Constituency (Who They Represent)	Broad (Whole State)
High Level	Partisanship (Party Unity and Loyalty)	More Independent
Low Unless controversial	Media Attention	Greater
Generate Revenue Bills Impeach Officials	Powers	Appointment Confirmation Try Impeachment Hearings



Examine the implications of apportioning House seats.

How have Congressional campaigns changed over the past couple of decades?

What implications does the presidential effect and the power of incumbency have on the outcomes of elections?

Presidential effect - _____

Power of incumbency - _____

Apportionment of the House:

What determines reapportionment in the House of Representation?

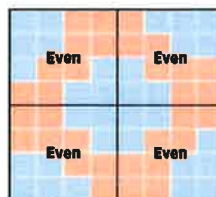
What happens as a result of a change in the population of states across the United States?

What is gerrymandering? Be sure to explain "packing" and "cracking". What are some of the results?

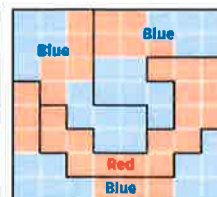


Two Ways to Gerrymander: Packing and Cracking

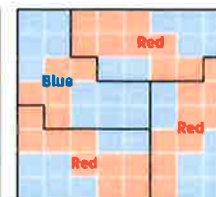
Even in an area with an even distribution of voters along party lines, politicians can redraw boundaries to create favorable conditions for the party in power. Azavea, a Philadelphia-based geographic software company, created this example to show how it can be done.



Even distribution
2 red, 2 blue
In the example above, there are an even number of red and blue voters to be split among four districts. Drawing four squares creates districts that split red and blue voters equally.



Packing
1 red, 3 blue
Packing concentrates members of a party in a single district, allowing the other party to win the others. Here, one district is packed entirely with red voters. Blue voters have a majority in the three others.



Cracking
3 red, 1 blue
Cracking splits a group among multiple districts to dilute their voting power. Above, blue voters are divided in such a way that red voters have a slim majority in three of the districts.

SOURCE: Azavea

Staff Graphic

Describe the committee structure of the House and the Senate, and specify key leadership positions in each chamber.

What role do committees play on legislation? - _____

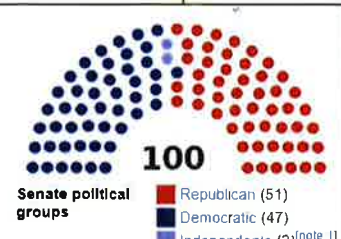
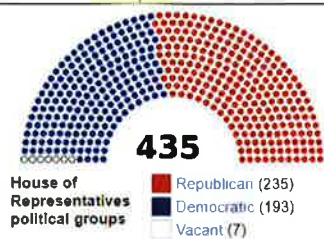
Types of Committees:

Standing committees	
Select committees	
Joint committees	
Conference committees	
House rules committee	

How are committee members appointed? _____

Leadership in the House and Senate: Put the name of the office holder, the state they represent & their party:

House of Representatives		Senate	
Speaker of the House		President of the Senate	
		President Pro-Tempore	
House Majority Leader	House Minority Leader	Senate Majority Leader	Senate Minority Leader
House Majority Whip	House Minority Whip	Senate Majority Whip	Senate Minority Whip



Congress in a *FLASH*

Name: _____

Help the Historian. Someone has found an early copy of the Constitution, but it is in pretty bad shape, and lots of pieces are missing—especially in Article I. Now that you know about Congress, you can help fill in the gaps! Read each excerpt and decide what should go where the numbers are.

SECTION. 2.

(1) shall be composed of Members chosen every second Year by the People of the several States, and the Electors in each State shall have the Qualifications requisite for Electors of the most numerous Branch of the State Legislature.

No Person shall be a (2) who shall not have attained to the Age of (3) Years, and been seven Years a (4) of the United States, and who shall not, when elected, *be an Inhabitant of that State in which he shall be chosen....* (5)

1. Which chamber of congress is Section 2 talking about?
2. What role is missing here?
3. How old must they be to serve?
4. Seven years of being a *what*?
5. What does that last part mean? Can you put it in simpler language?

SECTION. 3.

(1a) of the United States shall be composed of two (1b) from each State, chosen by the Legislature thereof, for six Years; and each ... shall have one Vote.

No Person shall be a ...who shall not have attained to the Age of (2) Years, and been (3) Years a Citizen of the United States, and who shall not, when elected, be an Inhabitant of that State for which he (4) shall be chosen.

1. Which chamber of congress is Section 3 talking about? What is this role called?
2. How old must they be to serve?
3. How long must they have been a citizen?
4. FYI– The first woman to be elected to this chamber was Hattie Caraway of Arkansas in 1932.

SECTION. 5.

...Each House may determine the Rules of its Proceedings (1), punish its Members for disorderly Behaviour, and, with the Concurrence of two thirds, expel a Member ... (2)

1. Who makes the rules for how the House and Senate do their jobs?
2. CHALLENGE QUESTION: If the Senate wants to expel a member, how many other Senators have to agree?

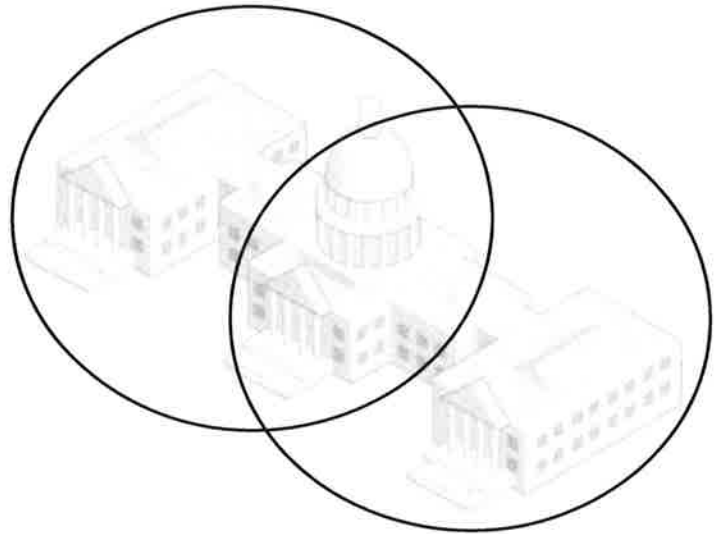
Congress in a *FLASH*

Name: _____

A. Who does what? Read each statement and decide if it is about the House of Representatives, the Senate, or both! Write the letter on the diagram.

- A. Members represent an entire state
- B. Bills about taxes and money must start here
- C. Approves presidential appointments
- D. Members represent citizens
- E. Serve two-year terms
- F. Passes bills onto the president to become laws
- G. There are 100 members of this chamber
- H. Can override a presidential veto with a 2/3 vote of support
- I. Have to be at least 25 to serve in this chamber

The House of Representatives



The Senate

B. Compromise! Just because Congress is made up of two different chambers, doesn't mean that they don't have to work together to get the job done. Read through each version of this imaginary bill to see where common ground might be found.

1. Read both bills. Circle the items that the versions of the bills have in common.

House Version of the Education Bill

- Increase funding for afterschool activities.
- Encourage teachers to fundraise for classroom materials.
- Extend the school year by 10 days.
- Lengthen the school day by one hour.
- Allow students to create their own classes.

Senate Version of the Education Bill

- Cut funding for afterschool activities.
- Encourage teachers to buy classroom materials with their own money.
- Extend the school year by 6 days.
- Require the school day to start earlier.
- Improve school lunches with more local produce.

2. Find a solution. Select two items that could go in the final section of the bill and write them below. (You may need to find middle ground.)

Item One: _____

Item Two: _____

3. Getting Support. You had to make some hard choices. Which chamber will support your compromise the most? Would they both agree? Explain your answer.



Follow the Law: How a Bill Gets Passed

How far does a bill have to travel before it becomes a law?
Write the order number beside the correct statement.

The bill travels from the House and the Senate to a Conference Committee.

A last vote is taken in the House and the Senate.

Finally, the President may or may not sign the bill into law.

Committees vote on the bill.

First, Senators and Representatives propose the bill.

The bill is debated in the House and the Senate.

Next, the House and Senate Committees consider the bill.

Name - _____
SUNY Broome – Public Policy
Congressional Committees

Answer each question in complete sentences. Here is a helpful link to the questions on the House Committees. Here is a helpful link to the questions on the Senate Committees. I recommend you open a different window for each website, because you will be switching back and forth.

1. What are committees and what is their main purpose?
2. What are the four different types of committees and how is each unique?
3. What are five different standing committees in the senate?
4. What are the 5 joint committees? Do members of the house or the senate form joint committees?
5. What are the 4 special or select committees in the Senate?
6. What is a sub committee?
7. What are the six sub committees of the Energy and Commerce committee in the House?
8. What are the “Hot Topics” for the subcommittee on Energy and Mineral Resources?

9. What committees do our 2 Senators serve on?
10. What committees do our 3 New York congressmen serve on?
11. Are you happy with the way your representatives are serving in committees?
12. If you were a congressman/woman, what committee would you want to serve on and why?