

## Legislative Branch Study Guide

1. What determines representation in each chamber of Congress?

Senate = 2 per state – equal representation. House = based on population – proportional representation

2. What role does the Census play in our government?

The census is a count of the population conducted every 10 years – it determines Congressional representation.

3. What does the term bicameral mean?

Two Houses – such as the House & Senate

4. How is each term of Congress identified? How long does each term of Congress last? What is a session? How do we identify the Congress that is currently in session?

Each *Congress* lasts for two years. Each Congress is divided into 2 sessions that run from Jan to Nov. or Dec. Each two yearlong Congress is numbered we are currently in the 116 Congress.

5. What are the qualifications to be a senator?

At least 30 years old, citizen for at least 9 years, live in the state they represent

6. What are the qualifications to be a member in the House?

At least 25 years old, citizen for at least 7 years, live in the state they represent

7. What are the different categories of Congressional Committees? What is the purpose of each?

Standing Committees – permanent committees that focus on specific work with in Congress

Special Committees – temporary committee created for a specific issue.

Joint Committees - temporary – bring House & Senate together for a specific issue.

8. What is the purpose of the House Rules Committee?

Decides for how long and under what rules the full body of the House will debate a bill. It is the most powerful committee in the House.

9. How is the seniority system used in Congress (and in committees)?

The more time you spend in Congress (seniority) determines what committees you serve on and whether you are the chair (leader) of the committee. More seniority = more power.

10. What is the elastic clause (also known as the necessary and proper clause)?

Article I, section 8 of the Constitution says that if something not written out in the Constitution is needed and proper (helpful) then the government has the power to add it.

11. From which part of the Constitution does Congress derive its powers?

Article I of the Constitution lays out the powers of Congress.

12. What are the differences between expressed and implied powers?

Expressed powers are spelled out in the Constitution, implied (or enumerated) are powers added through the elastic clause.

13. What are examples of legislative and nonlegislative powers?

Legislative powers = power to make laws (3 categories - money / commerce / military & foreign policy)

Nonlegislative powers = check other branches of gov't. (Senate approves Pres. Appointments / impeachment)

14. Where do ideas for bills come from?

Members of Congress must introduce the bill but the idea can come from anyone. 3 main sources – citizens – special interest groups & the President

15. What is the structure of Party Leadership in Congress?

Whatever political party has the most members in Congress holds leadership powers.

16. What are Majority and Minority Parties?

The majority party is the political party that holds the most seats (currently Dem – House – Senate -Rep.)

The minority party is the political party that is out numbered.

17. Who presides over each chamber of Congress?

House of Representatives leader = Speaker of the House

Senate leader = US VP (can only vote if tie) = president pro tempore (in charge when VP is not there)

Their assistant is called a whip

18. In what ways do members of Congress attempt to please their constituents in the attempt to be re-elected?

Members of Congress try to help their constituents – pork barrel spending – bring federal dollars into their district.

19. Who can Congress impeach? What is the process for impeachment?

Any federal official that has been involved in serious wrongdoing. Impeachment = 2 steps

House –impeach or accuse the person (need a majority vote) - Senate holds trial & acts as jury (need 2/3rds vote for conviction) If convicted – official is removed.

20. Know the process of how a bill becomes a law. For example, you should know:

a. How is a bill introduced?

House = given to clerk, put into hopper - given HR number

Senate = announce bill on floor – given S number

b. Where does it go after it is introduced?

Sent to a standing committee – then subcommittee to be researched.

c. How does a bill make it to the floor to be debated?

Has to be ok'd by committee

In the House the Rules Committee sets rules for debate

In Senate – no limit on debate can be filibustered.

d. In which ways can a bill be voted upon?

Voice Vote – standing vote – roll call vote

e. What actions can a president take?

Sign it = becomes a law

Veto = goes back to Congress (need 2/3rds to override)

Do Nothing = if Congress is in session it becomes a law

If Congress is not in session then it dies = Pocket veto.

21. Who is the Representative of Florida's district 8?

Republican Bill Posey

22. Who are Florida's Senators?

Republicans Marco Rubio & Rick Scott

23. Define filibuster

a political tactic in the Senate where one or more members debate a bill so as to delay or entirely prevent a vote being made

24 Define Gerrymandering

A political party drawing district lines to create an unfair political advantage for a certain party.