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STUDY GUIDE



Chapter 4, Section 4

For use with textbook pages 112–116.

FEDERALISM AND POLITICS

KEY TERMS

sunset law A law that requires periodic checks of government agencies to see if they are still needed (page 112)

sunshine law A law prohibiting government officials from holding meetings not open to the public (page 113)

bureaucracy Organization of government administrators (page 115)

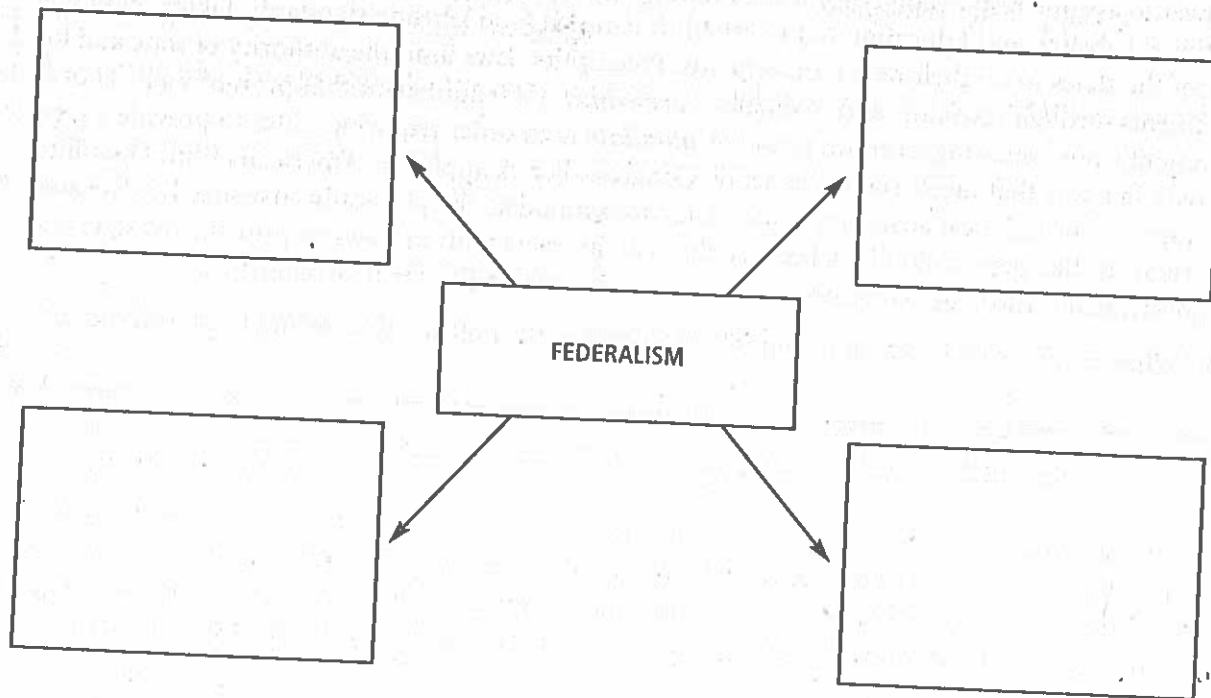
DRAWING FROM EXPERIENCE

The layout of your home affects your quality of life. For example, if an entire family has to share one bathroom, life is less convenient than in a household with two bathrooms. The organization of American government also affects Americans' quality of life.

This section focuses on the benefits of federalism.

ORGANIZING YOUR THOUGHTS

Use the graphic organizer below to help you take notes as you read the summaries that follow. Think about the areas of government that federalism influences.



STUDY GUIDE (continued)

Chapter 4, Section 4

READ TO LEARN

☐ Introduction (page 112)

Federalism affects government policy making, the political party system, the political activities of citizens, and the quality of life in all 50 states.

☐ Federalism and Public Policy (page 112)

A public policy is the course of action a government takes in response to some issue or problem. Federalism affects public policy in the following two ways:

- A. **How and where new policies are made in the United States** It allows states and localities to serve as proving grounds where new policies can be developed and tested. For example, Georgia was the first state to allow 18 year olds to vote. The right has since been given to all Americans.
- B. **Limits on government policy making** For example, Colorado pioneered the use of sunset laws in 1976. A *sunset law* requires periodic checks of government agencies to see if they are still needed. Another example is when Florida passed the first *sunshine law* in 1967. This kind of law stops public officials from holding meetings not open to the public.

Policy may also start at the national level. Sometimes the national government will impose new policies on states in which local pressure groups have resisted change. For example, the national government forced the states to change civil rights and voting policies in the 1960s.

1. In what two ways does federalism affect public policy?

☐ Federalism and Political Parties (page 113)

Rival parties are a key element of democratic government. Each political party has a chance to win some elections somewhere in the system. In this way, federalism lessens the chance that one party will gain a monopoly of political power. By providing opportunities for parties to win local, state, and national elections, federalism has helped to keep the two-party system alive.

2. How does federalism lessen the chance of one political party gaining a monopoly of power?

☐ Political Participation (page 114)

Federalism increases opportunities for citizens to participate in politics at the national, state, and local levels. People have easier access to political office because federalism creates several levels of government. The road to national office often begins at the local or state level. This helps to build political organization from the bottom up. Federalism also gives Americans many points of access to government and increases their opportunities for influencing public policy. For example, citizens vote for state and local officials and on such local issues as mass transit, property taxes, and smoking bans. They may also join interest groups to influence policies on all levels, so more people are likely to participate in politics.

STUDY GUIDE (continued)**Chapter 4, Section 4**

3. How does federalism make government in the United States more democratic?
- _____
- _____

☐ Federalism's Professional Politicians (page 115)

In the 1930s, federal programs began to increase in response to national economic problems. The increase created a bureaucracy, or organization of administrators, to carry out the programs. Bureaucrats became experts in a specialized area of government. In other words, they were professional politicians, sometimes called the technocracy. The growth of federal programs also led to organizations that keep state and local officials informed about the programs. An example is the United States Conference of Mayors.

4. How did the federal bureaucracy develop?
- _____
- _____

☐ Differences Among the States (page 115)

Federalism allows each state considerable freedom in arranging its own internal affairs. As a result, some states do more than others to regulate industry, for example, provide more health and welfare services, or protect the environment. Americans have more choices regarding the conditions they live under because states can create different economic and political environments. Political traditions among states also differ, therefore states have different officials, laws, and taxes.

5. What are some of the differences in the political and economic environments of different states?
- _____
- _____

☐ The Direction of Federalism (page 115)

The power balance between national and state governments is constantly evolving in response to new issues. In recent decades, Democrats have generally supported national power, while Republicans have favored states' rights. Because of the relatively even distribution of party seats in recent Congresses, legislation has reflected both positions. For example, Congress has allowed states to set their own highway speed limits, but has also established national food safety standards.

6. How do Republicans and Democrats differ on the issue of federalism?
- _____
- _____

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#1-5

Textbook

October 27

CHAPTER SUMMARY

CHAPTER
5

The Organization of Congress

★ CONGRESSIONAL MEMBERSHIP

The United States Congress has two chambers—the House of Representatives and the Senate. Each Congress meets for one two-year term divided into two one-year sessions. Representatives serve two-year terms; Senators serve six-year terms.

The 100 Senators are elected by all the voters in their state. The 435 seats in the House are divided among the states based on population. Every state has at least one seat. Every 10 years the number of seats for each state is recalculated based on census figures—a process called reapportionment. States may then redistrict, or change election district boundaries. Occasionally the majority party in state legislatures has abused this power by gerrymandering—using voter registration information to draw districts for political advantage. The Supreme Court has ruled gerrymandering unconstitutional.

Members of Congress have constitutional immunity from arrest or law suits arising from their

Qualifications for Representatives

- Must be at least 25 years old
- Must be citizens for at least 7 years
- All members of Congress must legally reside in the state that elects them.

Qualifications for Senators

- Must be at least 30 years old
- Must be citizens for at least 9 years
- All members of Congress must legally reside in the state that elects them.

duties, but legislators can censure, or formally disapprove, a member's actions. In serious cases, such as treason or bribery, expel a member by a two-thirds vote.

★ THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Both the House and Senate have complex rules and leadership structures. In each chamber precedents, or past rulings, guide the way business is conducted. The House's large size makes complex rules necessary. Each term, members introduce thousands of bills and resolutions, but only about 10 to 20 percent of them ever go to the full House for a vote. Still, legislation must move quickly once it reaches the floor so House rules allow its leaders to make key decisions without consulting other members. Committees do most legislative work because they have more time to study and shape bills. To serve the interests of constituents in their districts, many representatives specialize in issues important to those constituents. Serving on the right committees gives representatives enormous influence.

At the start of each session, the majority party in the House meets in caucus, or closed meeting, to select the Speaker of the House—the presiding

officer and most dominant leader. The speaker appoints committee chairs, which allows the majority party to control the flow of legislation. The speaker also follows the vice president in the line of succession to the presidency. The speaker's top assistant, the majority leader, helps plan and move forward that party's legislative program. House bills appear on one of five calendars, or schedules, that are organized by subject and arranged in the order in which they will be considered. Representatives called *whips* help the majority leader organize party members.

The most powerful committee in the House, the Rules Committee, serves as a "traffic officer." After a committee approves a bill, it usually goes to the Rules Committee, which can move it ahead quickly, hold it back, or stop it completely. The Rules Committee also rules on jurisdictional disputes among other committees.

CHAPTER 5 SUMMARY CONTINUED

★ THE SENATE ★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★

Although the Senate leadership structure parallels that of the House, Senate leaders have less power. The vice president presides but may not debate issues or vote except to break a tie. In the vice president's absence, a senior majority party member presides as the Senate's president *pro tempore* (for a time). Majority and a minority floor leaders are the most important officers. Each works to further his or her

party's legislative program, and together they plan the Senate's agenda. As in the House, whips assist them. The Senate has no rules committee. Bills reach the Senate floor by unanimous consent of the members. Because unlimited debate is usually allowed, one or more senators may filibuster, or try to prevent a vote by stalling until a majority of the Senate abandons the bill or agrees to modify it.

★ CONGRESSIONAL COMMITTEES ★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★

Congressional committees and subcommittees do the detailed, daily work of considering proposed legislation. The committee system allows members of Congress to

- divide their complex workload
- become specialists on certain issues
- select, from bills proposed, those that merit further consideration
- holding hearings to help inform the public

Each political party's representation on a committee roughly equals the percentage of its seats in the House or Senate. Chairs of standing committees are extremely powerful. Historically, the member of the majority party with the longest uninterrupted service on a committee became its chair, but recent rules changes have weakened this seniority system.

COMMITTEES OF CONGRESS	
Standing Committees	oversee bills dealing with certain issues
Select Committees	study one issue and report their findings
Joint Committees	made up of members from both houses
Conference Committees	work out the differences when the House and Senate pass conflicting versions of the same bill

★ STAFF AND SUPPORT AGENCIES ★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★

The workload of the modern Congress is so massive and complicated that lawmakers employ thousands of trained staff members. Personal staff work directly for individual Congress members.

- **Administrative assistants** oversee schedules.
- **Legislative assistants** conduct research, draft bills, and write speeches.
- **Caseworkers** handle constituent's requests.

Committees and subcommittees also hire experts. Some lawmakers are concerned that unelected staffers have too much influence; they have sought to trim congressional staff.

Four important support agencies also help Congress carry out its responsibilities:

- The **Library of Congress** maintains almost 100 million items and administers copyright law.
- The **Congressional Budget Office** coordinates the budget-making work of Congress.
- The **General Accounting Office** oversees spending.
- The **Government Printing Office**, the world's largest multipurpose printing plant, prints materials for the entire federal government.

CHAPTER SUMMARY Activity



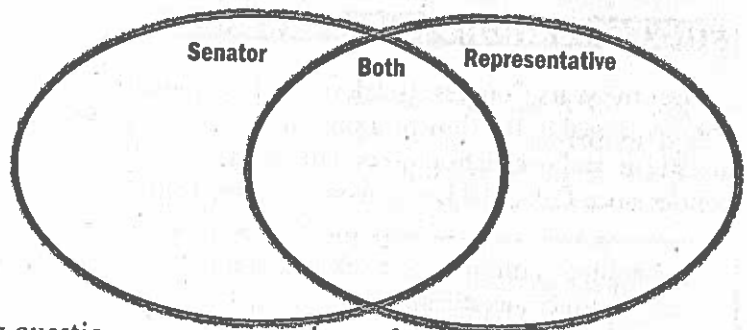
The Organization of Congress

DIRECTIONS In the space provided, write the word or phrase that best completes each sentence.

1. The United States Congress is made up of two chambers: the _____ and the _____.
2. _____ is the process by which the government recalculates the number of House seats to which each state is entitled.
3. The rules of the House of Representatives allow its leaders to make _____ without consulting other members.
4. At the start of each congressional session, the representatives in the majority party meet in caucus to select the _____ of the _____.
5. The _____ Committee has the power to move House bills ahead quickly, hold them back, or stop them completely.
6. To _____ means to stall the legislative process and prevent a vote.
7. In both the House and the Senate _____ do the detailed, daily work of considering proposed legislation.
8. _____ committees study one issue and report their findings.
9. The _____ presides over the Senate but does not debate issues or vote except to break a tie.
10. _____ conduct research, draft bills, and write speeches.

Organizing Information Examine the following diagram and study the list of characteristics associated with representatives and senators. Write the letter of each item in the appropriate space.

- a. elected to a six-year term
- b. must be at least 30 years of age
- c. makes laws for the nation
- d. elected to a two-year term
- e. must reside in the state represented
- f. must be at least 25 years of age
- g. elected from a district
- h. elected statewide
- i. may serve on a joint committee



Critical Thinking Answer the following question on a separate sheet of paper.

11. Which of the four support agencies do you think is more important and why?

STUDY GUIDE Chapter 5, Section 1

For use with textbook pages 123–130.

CONGRESSIONAL MEMBERSHIP

KEY TERMS

- bicameral legislature** A two-chamber legislature (page 123)
- session** A period of time during which a legislature meets to conduct business (page 123)
- census** A population count (page 124)
- reapportionment** The process of reassigning representation based on population after every census (page 124)
- redistrict** To set up new district lines after reapportionment is complete (page 125)
- gerrymander** To draw a district's boundaries to gain an advantage in elections (page 126)
- at-large** As a whole; for example, statewide (page 128)
- censure** A vote of formal disapproval of a member's actions (page 129)
- incumbent** Candidate who is already in office (page 130)

DRAWING FROM EXPERIENCE

Have you ever voted in a school election? How did you choose your candidate? You probably voted for the person who wanted the same things that you wanted. Voters choose members of Congress for the same reason.

This section focuses on the nation's representatives in Congress.

ORGANIZING YOUR THOUGHTS

Use the graphic organizer below to help you take notes as you read the summaries that follow. Think about the qualifications for senators and representatives.

SENATOR	REPRESENTATIVE

STUDY GUIDE (continued)**Chapter 5, Section 1****READ TO LEARN****Introduction** (page 123)

The United States Congress is a **bicameral legislature**. It is made up of two houses, the Senate and the House of Representatives. Today Congress plays an important role in policy making by passing laws dealing with everything from health care to tax changes.

Congressional Sessions (page 123)

Each term of Congress is divided into two **sessions**, or meetings. A session lasts one year and includes breaks for holidays and vacations. Congress remains in session until its members vote to adjourn. If Congress is adjourned, the president may call it back for a special session.

1. How long does a term of Congress last?
-

Membership of the House (page 124)

The House of Representatives has 435 members. House seats are apportioned, or divided, among the states based on population. Each state has at least one seat, no matter how small its population.

Qualifications The Constitution states that a representative must be at least 25 years of age, a citizen of the United States for at least seven years, and a legal resident of the state that elects him or her. Traditionally, a representative also lives in the district he or she represents.

Term of Office Members of the House of Representatives are elected for two-year terms. Elections are held in November of even-numbered years—for example, 1998, 2000, and 2002. Representatives begin their term of office on January 3 following the November election. Representatives have to run for office every two years, but the House has continuity because 90 percent of all representatives are reelected.

Representation and Reapportionment The Census Bureau takes a national **census**, or population count, every 10 years. The population count of each state determines how many of the 435 seats in the House each state gets—a process called **reapportionment**.

Congressional Redistricting State legislatures set up districts to elect representatives. The process of drawing new district lines after reapportionment is called redistricting. In 2006, the Supreme Court decided a case that allows legislators to redraw districts in the middle of a decade rather than only after a census. This would likely occur only if one party dominated the legislature and governorship. State legislatures have sometimes abused the redistricting power by:

- A. creating congressional districts of very unequal populations, and
- B. **gerrymandering**—the dominant party in the legislature draws boundaries to gain an electoral advantage. They can try packing a district: drawing lines to include as many voters as possible in one district. Remaining districts will then be safe for their party. They can also try cracking: spreading opposition voters across districts to make it more likely majority party candidates will be elected.

2. How does the census affect members of the House of Representatives?
-

STUDY GUIDE (continued)**Chapter 5, Section 1****Membership of the Senate** (page 128)

The Senate consists of 100 members—2 from each of the 50 states.

Qualifications The Constitution requires a senator to be at least 30 years old, a citizen of the United States for at least 9 years before the election, and a legal resident of the state he or she represents. All voters of each state elect senators *at-large*, or statewide, rather than by districts.

Term of Office Elections for the Senate are held in November of even-numbered years, and senators begin their terms on January 3. The terms last six years, with one-third of the senators running for reelection every two years.

Salary and Benefits The Senate and House set their own salaries. However, the Twenty-seventh Amendment specifies that any new congressional salary increase takes effect after the next election. Members of Congress also enjoy benefits such as free postage for official business, a medical clinic, and a gymnasium, as well as large allowances and annual retirement pensions.

Privileges of Members The Constitution states that members of Congress are free from arrest “in all cases except treason, felony, and breach of the peace” when attending Congress or on their way to or from Congress. They cannot be sued for anything they say on the House or Senate floor. Each house may expel a member for a serious offense, such as treason or accepting bribes, and may censure members who are guilty of lesser crimes. **Censure** is a vote of formal disapproval.

3. When are members of Congress free from arrest?

The Members of Congress (page 129)

Congress includes 535 representatives and senators. It also includes 4 delegates in the House—one each from the District of Columbia, Guam, American Samoa, and the Virgin Islands—and one resident commissioner from Puerto Rico. None of these five can vote, but they attend sessions, introduce bills, speak in debates, and vote in committees.

Nearly half the members of Congress are lawyers. A large number come from business, banking, and education. Members of Congress are typically middle-aged white males. However, Congress is beginning to reflect the diversity of the general population. For example, one recent Congress included 51 women.

In Congress, a large percentage of *incumbents*—those already in office—win reelection. Why? They find it easier to raise campaign funds. Often districts have been gerrymandered to favor the incumbents’ party. In addition, incumbents are well known to the voters and use their power to solve voters’ problems.

Candidates running for Congress have begun using the Internet as a campaign tool. Nearly all candidates now have election websites that are used as electronic brochures, as voter recruitment tools, to raise campaign contributions, or to broadcast speeches. Some experts predict that candidates will make greater use of Web technologies in the future, to identify important issues, target voters, and improve communication within campaign organizations.

4. Describe a typical member of Congress.

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#1-5

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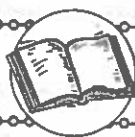
Date

October 30th

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STUDY GUIDE



Chapter 5, Section 2

For use with textbook pages 132–137.



THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

KEY TERMS

constituents Persons a member of Congress has been elected to represent (page 133)

caucus A private meeting of party leaders to choose candidates for office (page 134)

majority leader The Speaker's top assistant whose job is to help plan the majority party's legislative program and to steer important bills through the House (page 134)

whips Assistants to the party floor leaders in the legislature (page 135)

bill A proposed law (page 135)

calendars Schedules that list the order in which bills will be considered in Congress (page 136)

quorum The minimum number of members who must be present to permit a legislative body to take official action (page 137)

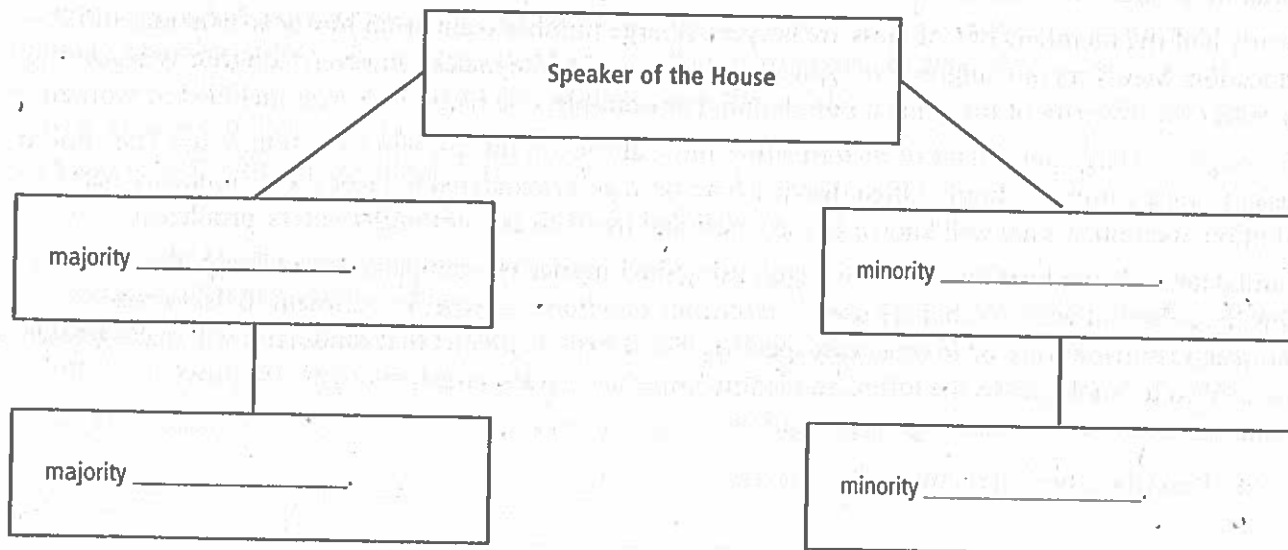
DRAWING FROM EXPERIENCE

Do you belong to a sports team? The team probably has a captain. Like leaders in sports, House leaders help House members work as a team.

This section focuses on how the House of Representatives gets laws passed.

ORGANIZING YOUR THOUGHTS

Use the graphic organizer below to help you take notes as you read the summaries that follow. Think about the organization of leaders in the House.



STUDY GUIDE (continued)**Chapter 5, Section 2****READ TO LEARN****Introduction** (page 132)

The rules of Congress are necessary to ensure fairness, to enable the legislature to carry on business, and to protect the minority.

Rules for Lawmaking (page 132)

The House and Senate have many past rulings that serve as the lawmakers' guidelines. Both bodies print their rules every two years. House rules are geared toward moving legislation quickly. For example, House debates rarely last longer than one day. Also, the rules of the House allow its leaders to make key decisions about legislative work without consulting the other members of the House.

Committees do most of the work of the House. Members organize themselves into smaller groups because the House membership is so large. Representatives tend to concentrate on and specialize in a few issues that are important to their *constituents*—the people in the districts they represent.

In many ways, Congress is organized around political parties. For example, the Republicans sit on the right side and the Democrats sit on the left side in both the Senate and the House. In each house, the majority party—the one with the most members—selects the leaders of the body, controls the flow of legislative work, and appoints committee chairs.

In 1995 the House rules were changed to make members more accountable. The new rules provided for fewer committees, fewer staff members, term limits for chairpersons and the Speaker of the House, and an end to absentee voting in committees.

1. Why are committees important in the House of Representatives?

House Leadership (page 134)

Leaders of the House serve the following purposes:

- A. Organizing and unifying party members
- B. Scheduling the work of the House
- C. Making certain that lawmakers are present for key floor votes
- D. Distributing and collecting information
- E. Keeping the House in touch with the president
- F. Influencing lawmakers to support the policies of their political parties.

The Speaker's top assistant is the *majority leader*. The majority leader's job is to help plan the party's legislative programs, steer important bills through the House, and make sure that chairpersons of the many committees finish work on bills important to the party. The majority leader has help from the majority whip and deputy *whips*, who serve as assistant floor leaders. They watch how majority-party members intend to vote on bills, persuade them to vote as the party wishes, and see that party members are present to vote. The minority party also has a minority leader and minority whips.

STUDY GUIDE (continued) Chapter 5, Section 2

2. Describe the job of the majority leader in the House.

☐ Lawmaking in the House (page 135)

The House starts its floor sessions at noon or earlier and is normally in session from Monday through Friday.

All laws start as bills. A proposed law is called a **bill** until both houses of Congress pass it and the president signs it. To introduce a bill in the House, a representative drops it into the hopper—a mahogany box at the front of the chamber. The Speaker of the House sends the bill to the appropriate committee for study, discussion, and review. Bills that survive the committee process are put on one of the House's five calendars. **Calendars** list bills that are up for consideration.

After a committee has considered and approved a major bill, it goes to the Rules Committee, the most powerful committee in the House. The Rules Committee can move the bill ahead quickly, hold it back, or stop it completely.

Major bills that reach the floor of the House for debate and a vote do so by a "rule"—or special order—from the Rules Committee. The chair of the committee that sent the bill to the Rules Committee can ask the Rules Committee to move the bill ahead of other bills to be sent to the House floor. If the Rules Committee agrees, the bill moves ahead. The Rules Committee may also specify how much debate time the bill can have and how much it may be amended on the floor.

The Rules Committee also settles disputes among other House committees. Finally, the Rules Committee often delays and blocks bills that representatives and House leaders do not want to come to a vote. In this way the Rules Committee draws criticism away from members who do not want to take an unpopular stand on a bill if it reaches the floor.

A **quorum** is the minimum number of members who must be present to permit a legislative body to take official action. For a regular session of the House, a quorum consists of 218—a majority of the 435 members. When the House meets to debate and amend legislation, it may often sit as a Committee of the Whole. In that case, only a 100 members make up a quorum. This helps to speed the consideration of important bills. The Committee of the Whole cannot pass bills. It reports a measure back to the full House with whatever changes it has made. The House then passes or rejects the bill.

3. Why is the Rules Committee the most important committee in the House?

Page 137

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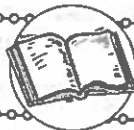
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STUDY GUIDE



Chapter 5, Section 3

For use with textbook pages 138–140.

THE SENATE

KEY TERMS

president pro tempore The Senate member, elected by the Senate, who stands in as president of the Senate in the absence of the vice president (page 139)

filibuster A method of defeating a bill in which a senator keeps talking until a majority either abandons the bill or agrees to modify it (page 140)

cloture A procedure that allows each senator to speak only one hour on a bill under debate (page 140)

DRAWING FROM EXPERIENCE

Which group has fewer rules: your family or your school? The answer is probably your family because it has fewer members. For the same reason, the Senate has fewer rules than the House of Representatives. This section focuses on the workings of the Senate.

ORGANIZING YOUR THOUGHTS

Use the graphic organizer below to help you take notes as you read the summaries that follow. Think about the effects of the rule that allows unlimited debate in the Senate.

CAUSE

Members of the Senate filibuster against a bill.

EFFECT

STUDY GUIDE (continued)**Chapter 5, Section 3****READ TO LEARN****Introduction** (page 138)

Senators handle specific issues in their committees but also deal with many other issues on the floor.

The Senate at Work (page 138)

The Senate usually allows unlimited debate on proposed legislation. Members may debate an issue on and off for weeks or months before taking action. The atmosphere is less formal than in the House because Senate rules are fewer.

The vice president presides in the Senate and may vote to break a tie. The vice president does not take part in debates but may try to influence senators through personal contact. In the absence of the vice president, the president pro tempore presides. The Senate elects this leader, who is from the majority party and is often its senior member.

Majority and minority leaders are the most important officers in the Senate. They are elected by the members of their parties. The main job of the majority leader is to steer the party's bills through the Senate. To do this, the majority leader plans the Senate's work schedule and agenda with the advice of the minority leader. The majority leader also encourages certain majority party members to attend important Senate sessions and to organize support for key bills. The minority leader develops criticism of the majority party's bills and tries to keep senators in the minority party working together. As in the House, whips and assistant whips help the leaders by making sure legislators are present for key votes.

Senate bills can be introduced by any member of the senate. Senate leaders control the flow of bills to committees and to the floor by consulting closely with one another and with other senators. The Senate has only two calendars:

- A. The Calendar of General Orders, which lists all the bills the Senate will consider
- B. The Executive Calendar, which schedules treaties and nominations

The Senate brings bills to the floor by unanimous consent—a motion by all members present to set aside formal rules and consider a bill from the calendar.

The filibuster is one way for senators to defeat a bill they oppose. To **filibuster** means to stall the legislative process and prevent a vote, either by talking continuously, delaying issues in committee, or using other procedural roadblocks. A filibuster can be stopped when three-fifths of the Senate (60 Senators) votes for **cloture**. This is a procedure that allows each senator to speak for only one hour on a bill under debate. The filibuster is not commonly utilized today, because the Senate now allows other matters to continue during a filibuster, weakening its effectiveness. However, the simple threat of filibuster can often delay or defeat a bill.

1. What role does the vice president play in the Senate?

Page 140
#1-5

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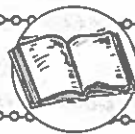
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STUDY GUIDE



Chapter 5, Section 4

For use with textbook pages 141–145.

CONGRESSIONAL COMMITTEES

KEY TERMS

standing committee A permanent committee in Congress that oversees bills that deal with certain kinds of issues (page 142)

subcommittee A group within a standing committee that specializes in a subcategory of its standing committee's responsibility (page 142)

select committee A temporary committee formed to study one specific issue and report its findings to the Senate or the House (page 142)

joint committee A committee of the House and Senate that usually acts as a study group and reports its findings back to the House and the Senate (page 143)

conference committee A temporary joint committee set up when the House and the Senate have passed different versions of a bill (page 144)

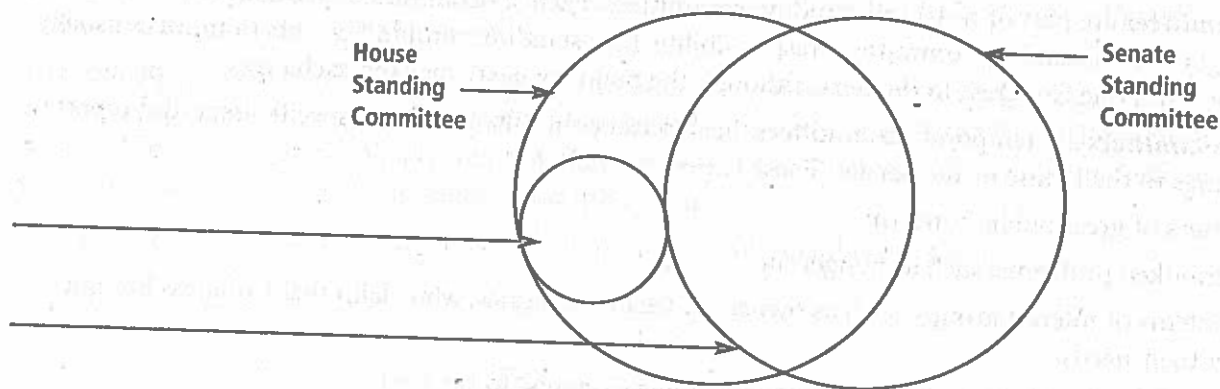
seniority system A system that gives the member of the majority party with the longest uninterrupted service on a particular committee the leadership of that committee (page 145)

DRAWING FROM EXPERIENCE

Have you ever helped with a school dance? Then you know that the work is divided among committees, such as the decoration and refreshment committees. Congress divides its work among committees, too. This section focuses on the kinds of committees in Congress.

ORGANIZING YOUR THOUGHTS

Use the Venn diagram below to help you take notes as you read the summaries that follow. Think about the relationship among congressional committees, and supply the missing labels.



STUDY GUIDE (continued)**Chapter 5, Section 4****READ TO LEARN****Introduction** (page 141)

Much of the daily work of considering proposed legislation takes place in committees that meet in congressional offices.

Purposes of Committees (page 141)

The committee system allows members of Congress to:

- A. divide their work among many smaller groups. As a result, lawmakers become specialists on the issues their committees consider.
- B. select the few bills from the many introduced in Congress that are to receive further consideration. Lawmakers in committees listen to supporters and opponents of the bills, work out compromises, and decide which bills will or will not have a chance to become laws. Many bills never make it past the committee stage.
- C. instruct the public about national problems and issues such as organized crime, the safety of prescription drugs, and hunger in America.

1. What are the three purposes of the committee system?
-
-

Kinds of Committees (page 142)

Congress has the following kinds of committees:

Standing committees are permanent committees set up to oversee bills that deal with certain kinds of issues. The committees continue from one Congress to the next. The House and Senate each create their own standing committees. The majority party in each house controls the standing committees. It selects a chairperson from among its members. Committee membership in each party is usually divided in direct proportion to each party's strength in the house. However, the party in power will often have a larger proportion of its members on the most important committees.

Subcommittees are part of nearly all standing committees. Each subcommittee specializes in a subcategory of its standing committee's responsibility. Like standing committees, subcommittees usually continue from one Congress to the next, although the majority party may make changes.

Select committees are temporary committees. Each select committee studies a specific issue and reports its findings to the House or the Senate. These issues can include:

- A. matters of great public concern;
- B. overlooked problems, such as hunger; or
- C. problems of interest groups, such as owners of small businesses, who claim that Congress has not met their needs.

Select committees may or may not continue from one Congress to the next.

STUDY GUIDE (continued)**Chapter 5, Section 4**

Joint committees are made up of members from both the House and the Senate. They may be permanent or temporary. These committees usually act as study groups with responsibility for reporting their findings back to the House and Senate. Joint committees do not have the authority to deal directly with bills or to propose legislation to the Congress.

Conference committees are temporary committees set up when the House and Senate have passed different versions of the same bill. Members of a conference committee, called conferees, usually come from the standing committees that handled the bill in question. The job of the committee is to resolve the differences between the two versions of the bill. The conferees accomplish this by bargaining over each section of the bill. A majority of the conferees from each house must accept the final compromise bill—called a conference report—before it can be sent to the floor of the House and Senate. There it must be accepted or rejected as it comes from the conference committee.

2. How are joint committees and conference committees alike and different?
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Choosing Committee Members (page 144)

The right committee assignment can help a lawmaker in the following ways:

- A. By increasing a lawmaker's chances for reelection. For example, a lawmaker might benefit from membership on a committee that deals with bills that help his or her district.
- B. By ensuring that the lawmaker will help shape national policy on issues such as education, the budget, and foreign policy.
- C. By enabling lawmakers to influence other lawmakers, as a member of the Rules Committee, for instance.

The political parties assign members to the standing committees. However, a lawmaker may request an assignment or a transfer from one committee to another. Each member may only serve on a limited number of committees and subcommittees.

The chairpersons of standing committees decide when their committees will meet, which bills they will consider, and for how long. They also decide when hearings will be held and which witnesses will be called. In addition, they hire committee staff, control the committee budget, and manage the floor debates that take place on the bills from their committee.

Traditionally, the **seniority system** gave the member of the majority party with the longest uninterrupted service on a committee the leadership of that committee. However, in 1995 the House Republicans bypassed several senior members for chairs and ruled that chairpersons of House committees could hold their positions for no more than three consecutive terms.

3. Why are committee chairpersons considered powerful members of Congress?
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Textbook

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