

WHOSE POWER IS IT?

Learning Objectives: The student will

1. Gain an understanding of the powers held by the various houses in Congress.
2. Identify the key similarities and differences between the House of Representatives and the Senate.
3. Discuss the reasons for the differences in organization of and powers given to the House of Representatives and the Senate.

TEKS: 8.15D; Govt.7A

Vocabulary: Bicameral (two-house legislature)

Materials Needed: a set of 30 cards; one set of signs (Congress, House of Representatives, Senate, and Neither)

Teaching Strategy:

1. Post the four signs about the room.
2. Review with the students the powers held by Congress, the House of Representatives, the Senate and those denied.
3. Pass out a card to each student and let them decide to which sign their card belongs. One at a time, have the students post the cards under the appropriate sign. Beginning with the cards under the "Congress" sign, check the accuracy of the cards placed in this category. If any are incorrect, ask the students to which sign it belongs. Continue with the other signs until all cards have been accurately placed.
4. Debrief the activity with the following questions:
 - Which house of Congress do you feel has the most influence? Why?
 - What are the benefits of having a bicameral legislature?
 - What are the disadvantages of having this type of legislature?
 - What do you feel is the most significant power of the House of Representatives? The Senate?
 - Why are the restrictions under the "Neither" sign important?
5. An alternate method to use the cards would be to run sets of cards for each group of two to three students and see if they could classify them correctly under the four categories.

Key:

Congress Cards:

- Must be an inhabitant of the state represented when elected
- Begins meeting on January 3rd as provided by the 20th Amendment
- Grants patents and copyrights
- Is established by Article I of the Constitution
- 2/3 vote required to override a presidential veto
- Makes laws
- Has the power to coin money, borrow money, and regulate foreign and interstate trade
- Declares war

House of Representative Cards:

- Must originate all revenue bills
- Has the sole power of impeachment
- Presiding officer is third in line for presidency
- Must be a citizen for a minimum of seven years
- Responsible for selecting the president if neither candidate receives a majority of the
Electoral College votes
- Favors the states with large populations
- Cannot filibuster
- Has to run for election every two years

Senate Cards:

- Protects states with small populations
- Must be a minimum of 30 years of age to serve
- 2/3 vote needed for approval of treaties made by the President
- Has the ability to filibuster
- Is comprised of a maximum of 100 members
- Has to approve Presidential appointments
- Presiding officer belongs to two branches
- Has the power to conduct the trial of an impeached official
- Changed to be directly elected by the states' voters due to the 17th Amendment
- Must be a citizen for a minimum of nine years
- Cannot originate a tax cut
- 1/3 of the body runs for election every two years

Neither Cards:

- Cannot suspend the Writ of Habeas Corpus; pass a bill of attainder; pass an ex post facto law
- Cannot tax exports

Congress Cards

**Protects states with
small populations**

**Cannot originate a tax
cut**

**Must be a minimum of
30 years of age to serve**

**Has the ability to
filibuster**

Declares war

**Is comprised of a
maximum of 100
members**

**Must originate all
revenue bills**

**2/3 vote needed for
approval of treaties
made by the
President**

**Begins meeting on
January 3rd as
provided by the
20th Amendment**

Cannot tax exports

**Grants patents and
copyrights**

**Has the sole power of
impeachment**

Congress Cards

**Has the power to
conduct the trial of an
impeached official**

**Presiding officer is
third in line for
presidency**

**Must be a citizen for a
minimum of seven
years**

**Responsible for selecting
the president and vice
president if neither
candidate receives a
majority of the Electoral
College votes**

**Is established by
Article I of the
Constitution**

**Has to approve
Presidential
appointments**

**2/3 vote required to
override a
presidential veto**

**Presiding officer
belongs to two branches**

**Has to run for election
every two years**

**1/3 of the body runs for
election every two years**

Congress Cards

**Changed to be directly
elected by the states'
voters due to the 17th
Amendment**

Makes laws

**Must be a citizen for a
minimum of nine years**

**Favors the states with
large populations**

**Has the power to coin
money, borrow money,
and regulate foreign and
interstate trade**

**Cannot suspend the Writ
of Habeas Corpus; pass a
bill of attainder; pass an
ex post facto law**

Cannot filibuster

**Cannot originate a tax
cut**