

Word Bank

For

Members of Congress and Their Work

Page One:

1. assigned a Member.
2. only 10% ever pass
3. 2. Meet with staff members
4. A member of Congress can only introduce a bill. However
5. their constituents
6. A proposed law presented to a legislative body
7. Prepare legislation - They
8. both the House of Representative and the Senate
9. The most important role of a Representative or Senator is to consider bills proposed for legislation.

Page Two:

1. with a 2/3 vote.
2. pigeonholed – simply forgotten and never discussed.
3. on the calendar for floor debate.
4. has a chairperson
5. 1. Sign the bill into law
6. to the bill. The committee may choose to pass the bill out of committee or kill it.
7. 90% of all bills die in committee or as
8. add amendments (Changes)
9. Veto the Bill – Refuses
10. statements in favor or in opposition of the bill
11. Veto- The president refuses to act on the bill until Congress has adjourned.
12. vote to pass or kill a bill.

Page Three:

1. Media
2. Party Membership
3. Staff Members
4. Constituents' Views chances of reelection could be hurt.
5. Personal Views
6. Lobbyists

Name: _____ Date: _____ Hour: _____

Members of Congress and Their Work

Page 1

How Representative spend their days:

1. They must split time traveling between Washington D.C. and their home state.

They have to keep in touch with their _____ People they represent.

2. _____

3. Make telephone calls and answer mail

4. _____ - They must be in the House or Senate chambers for debate and voting on legislation.

Bill - _____

How hard is it to pass a bill?

- It is extremely hard to pass bills. Out of the hundreds of bills that

Are introduced in Congress only _____.

- It is important to remember a bill must pass through _____

So how does a bill get passed?

- The process can be broken down into 4 steps in both the House of Representatives and Senate.

1. Introduction of the Bill

- _____ However, constitution, the president, and interest groups can suggest them.

- The bill when introduced in either the house of Senate is assigned a

2. Bill of Committee

- Once a Bill is introduced it is then sent to a committee that deals with the subject matter. For example, a bill dealing with highway funding would go to the Transportation Committee.
- _____ or as it's called in
Congress pigeonholed - _____.
- Each committee has a _____ who has the power to address or ignore a bill.
- IF the committee chooses to act on a bill they will have hearings on the bill. They will also mark-up or make changes to the bill.

3. Floor Action and Debate

- If a bill is passed out of committee it is put on the _____
_____.
- When a bill is addressed on the floor, members can make statements
_____.
- They may also add _____ to the bill, which may hurt or help its chances of passage.
- After floor debate Congress members can vote to _____.

4. President's Actions

- After a bill passes through both the House of Representatives and the Senate it is then presented to the President. The President may do the following.
 1. _____
 2. _____ - Refuses to sign. Congress can override the veto with a _____.
 3. Pocket Veto - _____
_____.

What influences members of Congress when they vote for bills?

1. _____ - Members of Congress listen to the people they represent. If they fail to listen to their constituents their chances of _____.
2. _____ - Usually members of Congress belong to the Democratic and Republican Party. They often vote based on the views of their party.
3. _____
4. _____ - Individuals who represent a particular interest group who tries to persuade the government to meet their interests.
5. _____ - The media lets members of Congress to know what is important to the people.
6. _____ - People who work for members of Congress.

★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★

Differences Between the House and the Senate

List at least 10 differences:

FIGURE 14-2 Differences between the House and the Senate* This table lists the differences between the United States House of Representatives and the Senate. In which of these two chambers of Congress would most politicians prefer to serve? Why?

House

Senate

How a Member Decides

Rep. Lee Hamilton

A question that has intrigued me is how various Members of Congress decide how to vote. Members cast about 400 votes a year on the most difficult and controversial issues on the national agenda. My impression is that in deciding how to vote, Members weigh three goals: they want to make good policy, gain respect inside Congress, and get re-elected. It is impossible to name all the factors that influence the vote of individual Members. They must balance many changing pressures, expectations and demands every day. In the end, of course, they must rely on their own judgment about the merits of a particular bill or amendment, but that judgment is influenced by many factors. Among the most important are these:

Constituents

Constituents are the most important influence on a Member's voting decision. Whether Members are agents of their constituents' wishes or free to exercise their own judgment is a classic question in a representative democracy. Members have a duty to listen carefully to their constituents and to consider their views. After all, Members are not representatives if their actions bear little or no relationship to the views of constituents. Members may not always vote with the views of a majority of their constituents because in the absence of a referendum they cannot be certain what they think. But all Members ask themselves on each vote where their constituents stand on the issue. On those issues where the constituency expressed strong preferences, the Member is almost certain to favor them. Representatives who fail to reflect generally the views of their constituents will soon need other work. If they vote in a way their constituents may not approve, they will explain their votes in terms their constituents will respect, even if they do not agree.

Colleagues

Members learn to identify certain colleagues whose judgment they respect on particular issues. Other Members are important sources of information because, as professional politicians, they will tailor their advice to a Member's needs; they are often well-informed on the issue; and they are available at the time of the vote. Members do not seek advice from just any colleague. Instead they seek out those who over time have earned the respect and attention of their colleagues. Members also pay special attention to the other Members of their state delegation—as well as to state and local officials—because they share common interests and problems.

Lobbies

Interest groups are neither the most nor least important influence on Congress. Lobbyists can help or hinder a Member's work. They can provide members with easily digested information and innovative proposals. They can identify allies, help round up votes, and aid election campaigns. They can provide or withhold campaign contributions, support or oppose a Member's reelection. Members ignore lobbyists at their peril.

- Over -

The Executive

The President is, in many respects, the chief legislator. He and his Vice President are the only officials elected by all the people. Although the President's lobbying activities do not differ significantly from those of other groups, the President's prestige, or standing in the polls, is often persuasive to Members. At the same time, partisan distrust may create opposition to the President's position. With his excellent sources of information, his ability to initiate legislation, to appeal to all Americans, and to set the legislative agenda, the President has formidable power in the legislative process. But that power no longer yields the unique advantage it once did, as other sources of information—the Congressional Budget Office, the Congressional Research Service, the Office of Technology Assessment, for example—have grown in respect and influence.

Party Leadership

Political party leadership has much less effect on Members' decisions. Members of Congress do not hear often from their party leaders about specific votes on legislation. They do hear often from the leadership of their party in the Congress, i.e. the Speaker and the Majority and Minority leaders. The leadership does have resources besides gentle persuasion. It controls the scheduling of bills, parliamentary rulings, choice committee assignments and prerogatives, and it can choose, within limits, who is recognized to speak on the floor. The effects of these tools are not unimportant, and on close votes are often decisive.

Media

News media may have their greatest effect on Congress as agenda setters. By focusing attention on a particular issue, they can get the American people and the Congress to deal with it. The stories the media emphasize, and how those stories are treated, have a real effect on which issues Congress considers and which it puts off. In considering a vote, Members must anticipate how that vote will be played by the media.

Staff

It is a mistake to underestimate the importance of congressional staff in the legislative process. Because of Members' hectic schedules, they rely on staff to help them evaluate legislation. Today's staffers usually have a good appreciation of political processes, but their main strength is substantive technical knowledge. As a result, staffers have become important actors in the legislative arena. The greater their expertise, the more Members rely on them, and the more they shape the legislative product.

Members of Congress vote several times every legislative day on diverse and complex issues. Usually they have more information than they can assimilate, so they need and seek help. They cannot be experts on every bill that comes before the Congress. If all of the factors on which a Member ordinarily relies agree, the decision is easy. If these factors point to opposite conclusions, the decision becomes difficult. It is then that decision-making becomes a very personal matter. When the voting clock is running down the Member must make a decision. The Member knows that in our democracy he or she alone will be held accountable for it.

How a Member Decides Worksheet

Name: _____ . Date: _____

1. Members weigh what 3 goals in deciding how to vote? _____

2. Members must rely on what about the merits of a bill? _____
3. Members have a duty to listen to whom? _____
4. Explain why members may not always vote with the views of a majority of their constituents.

5. What can constituents (voters) do if a representative fails to reflect the view of the people?

6. Why are other members important sources of information? _____

7. Members seek advice from those who over time have done what? _____

8. What can lobbyists provide members? _____

9. Whom do Members ignore at their peril? _____
10. Who are the only officials elected by all the people? _____
11. What is often persuasive to Members concerning the President? _____

12. List other sources that have ^{Growth} ~~grown~~ in respect and influence. _____

13. What makes up the leadership of a member in the Congress? _____

14. What can the party leadership do besides gentle persuasion? _____

15. How does the news media have their greatest effect on Congress? _____
16. In considering a vote, Members must consider what? _____

17. What do Members rely on to help them evaluate legislation? _____
18. Who wrote this article? _____