

Unit 5 Reading Guide

Chapter Seven – Congress

1. Outline the major differences between the House and Senate.

CHARACTERISTIC	HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES	SENATE
Number of members		
Length of term		
Qualifications		
Presiding Officers		
Constituencies (larger, smaller)		
Differences in constitutional powers	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. 2. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. 2. 3.
Centralization of power (stronger, weaker)		
Leadership Style (stronger, weaker)		
Political Prestige (more, less)		
Policymaking Focus (foreign affairs, budget)		
Specialized policymaking (more, less)		
Turnover (large, moderate, small)		
Role of Seniority (more imp., less imp.)		
Debate (unlimited, limited)		

2. What is an 'open seat'?

3. List five advantages that incumbents have over challengers.

4. Is the 'incumbency advantage' greater for House members or Senators? Why?

5. Explain the difference between reapportionment and redistricting? Which one is related to gerrymandering?

6. What are 'presidential coattails'? According to research, do they really exist?

7. Explain in your own words: midterm election, primary, general election. Which one has the highest turnout?

8. What is the significance of the 17th Amendment? Why do some say we should have a similar amendment for the Electoral College? What do you think?

9. Incumbents help protect their seat by participating in three specific types of activities.

Name the activity	Explain	Provide your own original, specific example

10. Explain the significance of being the majority party in the House and/or Senate.

11. Is it easier to be a new Senator or House member? Why?

12. Write the name of the current leader, his/her duties, and how they are chosen. Highlight the offices that are established in the Constitution.

Leadership of the House of Representatives	
Speaker of the House –	
Majority Leader –	Minority Leader --
Majority Whip –	Minority Whip --
Conference Chair –	Conference Chair --
Policy Chair –	Policy Chair --
Congressional Campaign Committee (DCCC) --	Congressional Campaign Committee (NRCC)
Leadership of the Senate	
President of the Senate –	
President Pro Tempore --	
Majority Leader –	Minority Leader --
Majority Whip –	Minority Whip --

Conference Secretary –	Conference Chair --
Policy Chair –	Policy Chair –
Senatorial Campaign Committee (DSCC) --	Senatorial Campaign Committee (NRSC)

13. Congress has four types of committees. Highlight the one that is usually meant by “committee”.

Type of Committee	Description	Example (by specific name)

14. What is the Rules Committee? What type of committee is it? Why is it the most important committee in the House? Does the Senate have one? Explain.

15. What is the difference between the Ways & Means Committee and Appropriations Committee?

16. Why are committees important in Congress? Are they mentioned in the Constitution?
17. How does a member get appointed to a committee? Is it different between the House and the Senate?
18. How does a member decide on which committees they want to serve?
19. Name the three committees on which everyone would like to serve in the House?
20. Name the most powerful committees in the Senate?
21. The typical House member serves on _____ committees and _____ subcommittees.
22. The typical Senate member serves on _____ committees and _____ subcommittees.
23. How are committee chairs selected? How were they selected? When and why did the method change?
24. In addition to committees, congressional members join caucuses. List and describe four different caucuses (other than party caucuses).
25. Why should a member join a caucus?
26. I have compared committees and caucuses to BHS classes and clubs. Explain.
27. What is the difference between personal staff and committee staff? Which one is more specialized?

28. Typically, a Senator has _____ staff members and the House has _____.

29. What is a district office? Why are they important?

30. Several agencies have been established to provide specialized knowledge to the entire Congress.

Congressional Staff Agencies
Congressional Research Service (CRS)
General Accounting Office (GAO)
Congressional Budget Office (CBO)

31. Supreme Court rulings have affected congressional campaigns and the legislative process.

Court Case	Question before the Court	Ruling & Significance
<i>Baker v. Carr</i>		
<i>Term Limits v. Thornton</i>		
<i>Buckley v. Valero</i>		

32. A congressional member can act in one of three roles. Explain each.

Role	Description	What type of issues would suit this role?
Trustee		
Delegate		
Politico		

33. Draw your own flowchart for how a bill becomes a law.