

U.S. GOVERNMENT (Congress) Reading Comprehension

THE SENATE

The U.S. Senate is the upper house of Congress. Unlike the House of Representatives, the Senate consists of two senators for each state, regardless of that state's population. This ensures equal representation for each state. Hence, there are 100 senators.

Senators serve six-year terms, however, senate elections are held every two years to ensure that no state ever holds an election in which both Senate seats are in contention. Elections are held on the first Tuesday after the first Monday in November in even-numbered years. Senators must be 30 years of age, a citizen of the United States for the prior nine years, and must live in the state they seek to represent. Much of the work done in the Senate is performed in committees. 16 standing committees, each with a specific jurisdiction (such as foreign relations, judicial review, or finance) edit, amend, and consider bills related to those jurisdictions.

Powers exclusive to the Senate include the approval of treaties as a condition to their ratification, and the approval of federal judges and cabinet members as a condition of their appointment. The Senate also tries impeachments.

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

The U.S. House of Representatives is one of the two houses of Congress. Unlike the Senate, a state's number of representatives is based on its population. States with large populations have more representatives than states with small populations. The state of California, America's most populous state, currently has 55 representatives. There are 435 total representatives, and each serves a two-year term. Like the Senate, the House of Representatives performs much of its legislative work in committees. The House of Representatives has 20 standing committees. Much like the Senate committees, these committees meet to review, amend, edit, and consider bills specific to certain jurisdictions such as agriculture, revenue, or foreign relations.

The top officer of the House of Representatives is referred to as the Speaker of the House. He or she is elected by other members of the House and has substantial powers, including choosing the order in which other representatives speak, choosing members of conference committees, and choosing which committees review specific bills. Representatives must be 25 years old, a U.S. citizen for seven years, and a resident of the state they wish to represent.

Much like the Senate, the House of Representatives has exclusive powers including the right to impeach (an impeachment is a legal statement of charges against an official. The Senate only has the power to try impeachment.), to initiate revenue bills (those involving money), and to elect the president in the case of an electoral tie.

1.) There are _____ senators for every state.

- a.) 1
- b.) 4
- c.) 2
- d.) 3

2.) Each senator serves a term of _____ years

- a.) 4
- b.) 6
- c.) 2
- d.) 7

3.) Which of the following is NOT true about a U.S. Senator?

- a.) Only men can be senators.
- b.) They must be a citizen of the United States for at least 9 years prior to appointment.
- c.) They must be 30 years old.
- d.) They must live in the state they hope to represent.

4.) Select all of the following that are TRUE.

- a.) Federal judges are approved in the Senate.
- b.) The Senate elects the president of the United States in the event of an electoral tie.
- c.) Senators can introduce revenue bills.
- d.) Impeachments are tried in the Senate.

5.) The top official in the U.S. House of Representatives is known as the _____ of the House.

- a.) Leader
- b.) President
- c.) Speaker
- d.) Master

6.) The number of representatives per state in the House of Representative is determined by the _____ of that state.

- a.) population
- b.) total area
- c.) income level
- d.) power

7.) _____ has the most representatives.

- a.) California
- b.) New York
- c.) Texas
- d.) Alaska

8.) A state representative must be _____ years old.

- a.) 25
- b.) 30
- c.) 35
- d.) 20

9.) Which of the following is NOT true?

- a.) Revenue bills can be initiated in the House of Representatives.
- b.) A Senator can be 31 years old.
- c.) The right to impeach an elected official can be invoked in the Senate.
- d.) Senators serve longer terms than representatives.

10.) In the following passage:

The House of Representatives has 20 standing committees. Much like the Senate committees, these committees meet to review, amend, edit, and consider bills specific to a certain jurisdictions such as agriculture, revenue, or foreign relations.

What does “amend” mean?

- a.) determine
- b.) change
- c.) withdraw
- d.) trade