

THE LEGISLATIVE BRANCH HANDOUT & WORKSHEET

The U.S. Constitution, written in 1787, outlines the plan of government for the United States of America. It is the oldest Constitution that is still in use today. Three different "branches", or parts, of the government were established, including the Legislative, Executive and Judicial branches. These three branches of the "federal", or national, government have separate roles and responsibilities, but are equal in their importance and power.

The Legislative branch is described in Article I of the Constitution. The main legislative body is the Congress which is made up of two parts: the Senate and the House of Representatives. The main duty of the Legislative branch is to make laws. Congress meets in the Capitol Building in Washington, D.C.

The chart below summarizes the most important information about the Legislative branch. Read the chart carefully and use the information to answer the questions on page 15B.

COMPARISON	HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES	SENATE
Total Number of Members	435	100
Number of Members from each State	Based on the state population	Equal number for each state (two per state)
Qualifications	-At least 25 years of age -Citizen for 7 years -Resident of state where elected	-At least 30 years of age -Citizen for 9 years -Resident of the state where elected
Length of One Term in Office	2 years	6 years
Presiding Officers	Speaker of the House (elected by members)	Vice-President of the U.S. (called President of Senate) President pro tempore (elected by members)
Special Powers	Begin tax bills Impeaches (accuses) federal officials	Approves Presidential appointments Tries and convicts impeached officials by two-thirds vote Approves treaties by two-thirds vote
Powers in Common	Pass bills Raise, borrow and coin money Declare war	

DIRECTIONS: Use the information on page 15A to answer the questions below.

PART 1: FILL IN THE BLANK

1. The main duty of the Legislative Branch is _____.
2. The Legislative branch has two parts: _____ and _____.
3. There are _____ Congressmen.
4. Congress meets at _____ in Washington, D.C.
5. The title of the Vice-President while presiding over the Senate is the _____.

PART 2: TRUE AND FALSE

- _____ 1. The term of office for a Senate is two years.
- _____ 2. The number of Representatives from each state is based on the state's population.
- _____ 3. A Senator is elected for a 6 year term.
- _____ 4. Tax bills may begin in either the Senate or House.
- _____ 5. Congress has the power to declare war.
- _____ 6. Each state has 4 Senators.
- _____ 7. The House of Representatives has the power to impeach, or accuse, a federal official.
- _____ 8. Presidential appointments must be approved by a two-third vote of both the Senate and House.
- _____ 9. A Representative must be at least 25 years old.
- _____ 10. A foreign born person who has been a U.S. citizen for at least 9 years could be elected to the Senate.

PART 3: MATCHING - Decide which House of Congress is described for each item below. Use the following answers: Senate, House, or Both.

- _____ 1. Has 100 members.
- _____ 2. All members are elected every 2 years.
- _____ 3. Has the power to pass bills.
- _____ 4. Members must be at least 30 years old.
- _____ 5. Members must live in the state they represent.
- _____ 6. Has a Speaker for its presiding officer.
- _____ 7. Conducts impeachment trials for federal officials.
- _____ 8. Discussed in Article I of the U.S. Constitution.
- _____ 9. Has the power to approve or reject treaties.
- _____ 10. Members may be either male or female.

PART 4: OPINION

Why do you think there are higher qualifications for Senators?
