

AP Govt. Day 53

Objectives:

- **4.00 - The Learner will examine and understand the institutions of national government: Congress**
- **4.01 - Examine the Constitutional framework for this institution**
- **4.02 - Explain the legislative process**
- **4.03 Evaluate the informal institutional arrangements of power within Congress**

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Objectives:

- 4.00 - The Learner will examine and understand the institutions of national government: Congress
- 4.04 - Analyze the linkages between Congress and the following:
 - Public opinion and voters
 - Interest Groups
 - Political Parties
 - The Media
 - State and local Governments
- 4.05 - Understand the relationship of Congress to the Presidency, Judiciary, and Bureaucracy and their varying balances of power

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Overview / Focus / Introduction of Congress

- Congress is the crucial policy-making institution in the United States
- Most of the work done in Congress is done in smaller groups called committees
 - Standing
 - Select
 - Joint
 - Conference
- Committee membership is usually based on the party demographics of the body as a whole.(Ways and Means, Appropriations, & Rules)
- Committee chairs are assigned using a modified seniority system and are always members of the majority party

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Overview / Focus / Introduction of Congress

- Each House has different constitutional powers
 - “People House”
 - “Upper House”
- We will discuss in detail the various steps in how a bill becomes a law
- We will examine the use of the filibuster in policy-making
- 10% - 15% of the multiple-choice will come from Congress

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Potential MC Topics

- **Open Rules**
- **Closed Rules**
- **Chairmanships**
 - **Powers**
 - **Selection**
- **Ideology of members of Congress**
 - **Polarized**
 - **Moderate**
 - **Liberal**
 - **Conservative**
- **Committees**
 - **Types**
- **Who do members represent?**
- **Why do they vote the way they vote?**
 - **Representative View**
 - **Organizational View**
 - **Attitudinal View**
- **Modern Senate and Party unity**
- **Centralization**
- **Decentralization**
- **Potential Corruption**

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Potential MC Topics

- **6 Historical Eras of the House**
 - The Powerful House
 - A Divided House
 - The Speaker Rules
 - The House Revolts
 - The Members Rule
 - The Leadership Returns
- **Evolution of the Senate**
 - More or less stable?
 - Why?
- **Which bills make it through to be a law?**
- **Mark-up sessions**
- **Why do large swings sometimes occur in House memberships?**
 - 1994
 - 2010
- **Revenue Bills**
- **Authorization & Appropriation**
- **How is power distributed throughout Congress?**
- **Committees**
 - Max Number
 - Max Number of Chairmanships
- **Filibuster and Cloture**
- **Marginal vs. Safe Seats**
- **Membership Numbers**

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Potential MC Topics

- **Bicameralism**
- **Leadership Roles (House)**
 - **Speaker**
 - **Majority Leader**
 - **Minority Leader**
 - **Majority Whip**
 - **Minority Whip**
- **Leadership Roles (Senate)**
 - **VP**
 - **President Pro Tempore**
 - **Majority Leader**
 - **Minority Leader**
 - **Majority Whip**
 - **Minority Whip**
- **Conference Committee**
- **Membership and diversity in the House and Senate**
- **How a Bill Becomes a Law**
 - **Idea**
 - **Sponsored**
 - **Drafted**
 - **Intro**
 - **Committee Work**
 - **Possibilities**
 - **Full House / Senate Work**
 - **Debate**
 - **Voting**
 - **Conference**
 - **President**
 - **Possibilities**

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Potential MC Topics

- **Congressional elections**
 - Original Const
 - 17th Amendment
- **Amendments and Riders**
- **Caucuses**
 - Types
 - Roles
- **Parliament vs. Congress**
- **Support Agencies**
 - CBO
 - CRS
 - GAO
- **Staff**
 - Personal
 - Committee
 - Interns and Pages
- **House Ways and Means Committee**
- **House Appropriations Committee**
- **Senate Steering Committee**
- **Resolutions**
 - Simple
 - Concurrent
 - Joint

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Potential SR Topics

- **Congressional Committees & How it influences the legislative process**
 - Specialization
 - Reciprocity
 - Logrolling
 - Party membership & representation on committees
- **What ways can party leadership influence the legislative process?**
- **Congressional reapportionment and redistricting**
- **Census every 10 years**
- **Importance of control over State legislatures**
- **Role and purpose of gerrymandering**
- **Limits to reapportionment and redistricting**
- **Supreme Court's Role**

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Potential SR Topics

- **Majority vs. Minority Party control in Congress**
- **Advantages of the majority party in passing bills in the House**
- **What are the various rule differences that make passing bills in the House different than passing bills in the Senate**
- **The way the Southerners vote in National elections**
- **What are the current trends in Southern elections**
 - House of Rep
 - Presidential
- **What explains why Southerners vote the way they vote?**
 - Incumbency Advantage
 - Gerrymandering
 - State vs. National party issues
- **What groups have changed the composition of the Modern Democratic and Republican Parties**
 - Catholics
 - Labor Union Members
 - Women
 - Social Conservatives

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