

American Citizenship
Chapter 12
Congress in Action

Notes:

Section 1

a. Congress Organizes

B. Congress Convenes

a. _____

b. Opening Day in the House

i. All 435 representatives-elect meet together in the House chamber

ii. Take roll then elect the speaker of the House

1. _____

iii. The Speaker takes the oath, then swears in the rest of the 435 members

1. _____

iv. Finally election of clerk, sergeant at arms, chief administrative officer, and chaplain by House members

1. _____

c. Opening Day in the Senate

i. Senate is a _____ that has been organized without interruption since 1789

ii. _____

1. Same basic pattern as House, just done more quickly

d. State of the Union Message

i. The House will inform the Senate, once they have been organized

1. Then both the House and Senate send a message to the President that they are ready for any message the President might have for them
2. _____

- ii. House, Senate, Cabinet, Justices of the Supreme Court, and more assemble in the House chamber to listen to the President
 1. _____

Notes:

C. The Presiding Officers

- a. The Speaker of the House
 - i. Most important and powerful position within Congress
 1. _____
 - ii. Expected to preside in a fair and judicious manner, while also helping their parties legislative goals
 1. _____
 2. _____

 3. puts motions to a vote
 4. decides the outcome of most votes taken in the house
 - iii. Follows the _____ in the line of succession
- b. The President of the Senate
 - i. _____

 1. Has the power of a presiding officer to recognize members, put questions to a vote, etc.

2. _____

ii. President Pro Tempore is the presiding officer who serves in the Vice President's absence

1. _____

iii. Follows the _____ in the line of succession

Notes:

D. Party Officers

a. Congress is organized along party lines

b. The Party Caucus

i. _____

ii. Meets before Congress convenes in January and occasionally during a session

1. _____

c. The Floor Leaders

i. _____

1. not an official position in either chamber, but party positions

2. they are legislative strategists

ii. Majority party leader is the more powerful position of the two

iii. The majority and minority party leaders are assisted by the party whips

1. basically assistant floor leaders

2. _____

E. Committee Chairmen

Notes:

- a. Bulk of Congress' work is done through _____
 - i. _____

 - 1. chosen from the majority party by the majority party caucus
- b. Seniority Rule
 - i. An unwritten custom that the most important posts, in both the formal and the party organization will be held by those party member with the longest records of service in Congress
 - 1. _____

- c. Criticism of the Seniority Rule
 - i. _____

 - ii. Positively, ensures that a powerful and experienced member will head each committee

Section 2

- d. Committees in Congress

F. Standing Committees

- a. A permanent panel to which all similar bills could be sent
 - i. _____

- b. Committee Assignments
 - i. Each House committee has from 9 to 75 members
 - ii. Each Senate committee has from 12 to 28 members
 - 1. _____

 - 2. However the other party is well represented as well

Notes:

iii. Most bills receive their most thorough debate in the standing committees

1. _____

iv. Prominent House standing committees are:

1. Rules, Ways and Means
2. _____
3. Armed Services
4. Judiciary

v. Prominent Senate standing committees are:

1. _____
2. Appropriations
3. Finance
4. _____
5. Armed Services

vi. _____

1. The standing committee is also made up of subcommittees

c. The House Rules Committee

i. _____

ii. They interpret how the bill will do with all the House members

d. Select Committees

i. Special committees, or panels, that are set up for some specific purpose for a limited time

ii. _____
1. Example: Senate Watergate Committee

G. Joint and Conference Committees

a. Compose of members of both houses

i. Set up to serve some temporary purpose

b. Before a bill may be sent to the President, each house must pass it in identical form

i. the two houses pass differing versions and the two houses cannot agree on changes

ii. _____

1. A temporary, joint body

Notes:

Section 3

c. How a Bill Becomes a Law: The House

H. The First Steps

a. A bill is a proposed law presented to the House or Senate for consideration

i. _____

ii. Others also born from private citizens or from standing committees

b. Types of Bills and Resolutions

i. Two different Types:

1. Public Bills

a. _____

2. Private Bills

a. _____

ii. Resolution types:

1. Joint Resolution

a. _____

b. Generally about dealing with unusual or temporary matters

2. Concurrent Resolution

a. _____

Notes:

- 3. Resolutions deal with matters concerning either house alone and are taken up only by that house
 - a. _____
- iii. Generally Resolutions or Bills deal with a single subject
 - 1. Sometimes contains riders
 - a. _____
 - b. “Pork Barrel” spending on appropriations bills
- c. The First Reading
 - i. _____
 - 1. Examples
 - a. H.R. 3410 would be the 3,400th measure introduced in the House during the congressional term
 - b. S. 210 would be the 210 measure introduced in the Senate during the congressional term
 - ii. Each Bill also gets a short title
 - 1. And goes into the *Journal*, which contains the minutes
 - 2. Also goes into the *Congressional Record*, a daily volume of events
 - iii. Then Bills are read to the House
 - 1. _____
 - iv. _____

I. The Bill in Committee

Notes:

- a. _____

- b. Most Bills introduced into Congress are pigeonholed,
or _____
 - i. However there can be a discharge petition
 - 1. enables members to force a bill that has
remained in committee 30 days onto the
floor for consideration
- c. Gathering Information
 - i. Most committees do most of their work through
their several subcommittees
 - 1. _____

 - ii. _____

 - 1. Example: Major League Baseball and
Steroids
 - iii. Sometimes subcommittee members take trips to
the areas under consideration
- d. Committee Actions
 - i. Once subcommittee has completed it work, the
bill is sent to the full standing committee
 - ii. They may then do:
 - 1. _____
 - 2. _____
 - 3. Report the bill in amended form
 - 4. Report the bill with an unfavorable
recommendation
 - 5. Report a committee bill
 - a. Substitute with a different bill

J. Scheduling Floor Debate

Notes:

- a. _____
- b. Calendars
 - i. Types:
 - 1. _____

 - 2. House Calendar for all other _____
 - 3. The Private Calendar for all _____
 - 4. Corrections Calendar
 - 5. Discharge Calendar
 - ii. Each calendar determines when certain bills types are considered on the floor

K. The Bill on the Floor

- a. _____

- i. Sometimes just the title is read
- b. Important measures are dealt with the consideration of the Committee of the Whole
 - i. _____

 - ii. Once the Committee of the Whole comes to an agreement, it is resolved and the House resumes it's session where they adopt the committee's work
- c. Debate
 - i. _____

- d. Voting
 - i. A bill may be the subject of several votes on the floor
 - ii. Four different methods for taking floor votes
 - 1. Voice votes... "Aye" and "Noes"
 - 2. Standing Votes

3. One fifth of a quorum can demand a teller vote, which is now a computerized voting machine

- a. _____

4. A roll-call vote

e. Final Steps

i. Once approved at the second reading, it is engrossed

- 1. _____

ii. Read a third time, by title, and a final vote is taken

Section 4

f. The Bill in the Senate

L. Introducing the Bill

a. Much similarity between the House and the Senate, with a few critical differences

b. _____

i. Overall the same, but less formal

1. There is only one calendar

- 2. _____

M. Rules for Debate

a. Floor debate is almost unrestrained in the Senate

- i. _____

b. Most debates are ended by unanimous consent agreement, which brings about a vote

c. The Filibuster

- i. _____

Notes:

Notes:

- 1. _____

- ii. Used to kill over 200 bills over the years
- d. The Cloture Rule
 - i. Senates real check on the filibuster is the Cloture Rule, Rule XXII, which provides for cloture
 - 1. limiting debate
 - 2. _____

N. Conference Committees

- a. Any bill enacted by Congress must have been passed by both houses in identical form
 - i. _____

 - ii. However, if the House is unwilling to change, the measure it turned over to a conference committee
 - 1. _____
- b. _____

O. The President Acts

- a. The President has four options once Congress has presented a bill
 - i. May sign the bill, and it becomes _____
 - ii. May veto the bill
 - 1. Refuse to sign the bill
 - 2. _____

Name: _____ Date: _____ Block: _____

- iii. _____

- iv. _____

Notes: