

Name:

## Legislative Branch

Date:

### Background

The United States Constitution has three parts: the preamble, the articles, and the amendments. The preamble is the introduction to the Constitution and the amendments are changes made to the Constitution and the rights that all citizens have. The articles are the bulk of the Constitution and, essentially, describe how the government will work. There are seven articles, each one talking about a different aspect of the government, with the first three focusing on the three branches of government.

The first article is the longest and it describes how the legislative branch of the government, also known as Congress, will be run and organized. In short, the job of the legislative branch is to make the laws, but the powers that the Constitution gives this branch are much more extensive than just that. Congress has three types of powers:

- Expressed powers: Those powers directly written in the Constitution
- Implied powers: Powers not written in the Constitution but needed to perform the expressed powers
- Inherent powers: Powers that belong to all governments

Some of the main powers that Congress has, across all three categories, are the power to:

- To make, pass, or change laws
- To declare war
- To levy taxes (decide how much people have to pay the federal government in taxes)
- Organize all federal courts under the Supreme Court
- To borrow money
- Set a national minimum wage
- Acquire new territories (add new lands to the country or gain control of new areas)
- Control the national borders

Congress is divided up into two branches or "houses": the upper house, also known as the Senate, and the lower house, also known as the House of Representatives. These two houses have to work together to carry out the powers assigned to Congress. Each house is different and has different requirements to be a member, a different number of representatives, different leaders, etc. Below is an outline of the basic facts for the Senate and the House of Representatives.

House of Representatives	Senate
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Is known as the lower house</li> <li>• Called a representative</li> <li>• Led by the Speaker of the House</li> <li>• Serve a 2 year term</li> <li>• 435 total members</li> <li>• Representatives per state are based on population</li> <li>• Elected by voters from their congressional district (area they serve)</li> <li>• Must be 25 years old</li> <li>• Must be a U.S. citizen for 7 years</li> <li>• Must live in the state they are elected to represent</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Is known as the upper house</li> <li>• Call a senator</li> <li>• Led by the Vice-President</li> <li>• Serve a 6 year term</li> <li>• 1/3 of the senate is elected every 2 years</li> <li>• 100 total members</li> <li>• 2 senators are elected per state</li> <li>• Elected by voters in the state they represent</li> <li>• Must be 30 years old</li> <li>• Must be a U.S. citizen for 9 years</li> <li>• Must live in the state they are elected to represent</li> </ul>



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### Fill-in-the-Blank

Use the information provided about the legislative branch to fill in the blank in each sentence.

- 1) The first article of the U.S. Constitution describes the \_\_\_\_\_ branch.
- 2) Congress is divided up into two branches or \_\_\_\_\_.
- 3) The main job of the legislative branch is to \_\_\_\_\_ the laws, but this is not its only responsibility.
- 4) The U.S. Constitution has \_\_\_\_\_ articles that describe how the government works.
- 5) \_\_\_\_\_ powers are those that are directly written in the Constitution.
- 6) A member of the Senate is known as a \_\_\_\_\_.
- 7) A member of the House of Representatives is known as a \_\_\_\_\_.
- 8) The three \_\_\_\_\_ of government are discussed in the first three articles in the Constitution.
- 9) Congress has the power to declare \_\_\_\_\_.
- 10) In most situations, both houses have to work \_\_\_\_\_ in order to carry out the powers of Congress.

### True/False

All of the statements below are false. Cross out the false part of each statement and rewrite that section so the statement is true.

- 11) The legislative branch, or Congress, is broken up into 3 parts known as branches.
- 12) The Senate has 435 members
- 13) Representatives serve six year terms and 1/3 are elected every two years.
- 14) The first article of the Constitution describes the executive branch.
- 15) Members of Congress do not need to live in the states that they represent.
- 16) Each amendment describes a different aspect of how the government works.

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### Short Answer

Answer each of the following questions in complete sentences

17) Look at all of the powers listed for the legislative branch. Which one power do you think is the most influential (makes the biggest impact) to the country?

18) Why do you think the Constitution makes both the House of Representatives and the Senate have to work together in order to carry out most of the powers assigned to them?

19) Which house of the Congress do you think is more difficult to become a member of, the Senate or the House of Representatives? Explain your answer.

20) Article 1 of the Constitution is by far the longest of the 7 articles. What can you infer from this information about the importance of the legislative branch? Clearly explain your response.

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Congress Facts

Using any resources you have, fill in the chart below about the two houses of the United States Congress.

<b>United States Congress</b>	
<u>House of Representatives</u>	<u>Senate</u>
_____ House	_____ House
Called a _____	Called a _____
Serve a _____ year term	Serve a _____ year term
Elected every _____ years	_____ is elected every 2 years
Number per state is based on the state _____	_____ from every state
Total number of Representatives in Congress _____	Total number of Senators in Congress _____
Elected by the voters from their _____	Elected by the voters of the _____.
Must be _____ years old _____ years a U.S. citizen Lives in the _____ elected to.	Must be _____ years old _____ years a U.S. citizen Live in the _____ elected to.
Leader is called _____	Leader/presiding officer is the _____