

US CONGRESS AND COMMITTEES

Objectives: To understand the legislative process, and to explore the variety of committees of the House and Senate and analyze their purpose and significance.

First, watch the 9 short video clips entitled The Legislative Process, located here <https://www.congress.gov/legislative-process>. Take notes on any information you did not already know.

Next, go to the US House of Representatives Home Page at <http://thomas.loc.gov> OR the US Senate Home Page at www.senate.gov. Select one of the standing committees, special/select committees, or subcommittees and click on the link.

1. Committee Name _____
2. Who is the CHAIR of the committee? Briefly describe why you think this person was selected as the chairperson.
3. Who is the RANKING MEMBER of the committee? What does this term mean? What role does the minority party play on a committee?
4. Click on some of the links in “News” and “Key Issues.” Identify and explain the variety of issues the committee examines.
5. If a committee “favors” a bill, what are the four actions the committee takes before sending the bill to the full Senate? See “About the Senate Committee System” at http://www.senate.gov/general/common/generic/about_committees.htm.
 - 1.
 - 2.
 - 3.
 - 4.
6. Explain the most interesting or surprising thing you learned from the committee information.
7. Last, click on “Frequently Asked Questions About Committees.” Select five questions that you do not know the answer to, or that you would like to learn more about. Report what you discovered here:
 - 1.
 - 2.
 - 3.
 - 4.
 - 5.

US SENATORS AND LEGISLATION IN THE 114TH CONGRESS (2015-2016)

For the purpose of this exercise, use FLORIDA, a state with a split delegation including Senators Bill Nelson (D) and Marco Rubio (R).

Go to the US Senate website at www.senate.gov. Click on Senators, then “Choose a state,” scroll to Florida, and click on one Senator’s name.

1. Read through the Senator’s biography. Why do you think this person is qualified to be senator? Don’t just list everything; answer the question.

2. Examine a couple of the Senator’s recent press (also called media) releases under “Newsroom.” What issues concern the Senator, and do you believe these issues are significant, also? Why or why not?

3. Find and click on the link “Constituent Services.” This is often called CASEWORK. What does the Senator do on behalf of his constituents?

4. On what committees does this senator serve? This is listed under “About Bill” or “About Marco.” Are these committee assignments most helpful to the residents of Florida? Why or why not?

5. Last, look under “Track Record,” then “Sponsored Legislation” for Bill Nelson, or “Fighting For Florida,” then “Marco’s Blog.” Notice the generational/age difference in the two Senators websites? For either Senator, find a bill he sponsored or co-sponsored.
 - a. Name of bill/legislation:

 - b. Describe the major idea(s) behind this proposed law: