
CRASH COURSE: GOVERNMENT AND POLITICS

EPISODE 15: BUREAUCRACY BASICS

STUDENT QUESTIONS

1. What two things do Americans tend to associate bureaucracies with?
2. What do families and bureaucracies both do?
3. What are bureaucracies usually made up of?
4. What is true of both big business and big government?
5. What is the main reason that we have bureaucracies even though people hate them?
6. The federal bureaucracy is technically part of the ----- but it is so big that it dwarfs the ----- and can easily overpower them.
7. Bureaucracies don't just enforce the rules Congress establishes, they -----.
8. How is the rule-making process bureaucracies must follow actually more democratic than the way Congress operates?
9. "Administrative adjudication" is another facet of bureaucracies that raises issues related to an important principle of American government: -----.
10. Many bureaucratic jobs are held by people who have passed civil-service exams to prove they have the needed expertise. However, both ----- and ----- are political positions instead, and are appointed by the President.
11. What does UPS demonstrate?
12. What is the main argument in favor of privatization (replacing government bureaucracies with private companies who will do the job hoping to make a profit)?
13. Probably the main reason we don't change bureaucracies is that doing so is -----.
14. Most of the bureaucrats you actually meet in your daily life, such as those at the DMV, are working for the ----- government.

Extra Credit Questions / Discussion Prompts

- Why is it unlikely that a private company would want to take on the task of inspecting the nation's meat?
- What problems could result from having a private company doing meat inspections? Could these same problems result under the current system where a federal bureaucracy does the job?
- What other government functions do you feel should or should not be privatized?