From Bill to Law

Trace a proposal through Congress and the presidency.

9-12.GOV.33 "Describe the process of how a bill becomes law."

NAME _____ DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

YOUR JOB Number the major steps in the bill's path from introduction to the president's decision. Underline the sentence that explains why the House and Senate vote on a shared version.

A Safer Bus Stop Proposal

1. After a series of dangerous crossings near school bus stops, a representative proposes a federal grant program to help communities build safer waiting areas. The representative writes a bill and introduces it in the House of Representatives. A bill is a proposal, not a law. House leaders send it to a committee that handles transportation issues. Committee members study the plan, hear testimony from experts and families, and suggest changes. The committee may vote to send a revised bill to the full House, or it may leave the bill there. In this case, the committee approves the revised bill.

2. The full House debates the bus stop bill and votes to pass it. Next, the Senate considers the bill. Its transportation committee reviews the proposal, and senators debate and vote on the Senate floor. The Senate passes a version that sets a different limit on grant amounts. That difference matters: the two chambers must approve the same exact wording before the bill can go to the president. Lawmakers work out a shared version, sometimes through a conference committee. Both the House and the Senate then vote again on that version. Here, both pass it, so the bill reaches the president.

3. The president can sign the bus stop bill, making it law, or veto it and return it to Congress with objections. In this case, the president vetoes it because the grants would cost more than expected. Congress can still make the bill law if two thirds of the members voting in each chamber vote to override the veto. The House reaches that threshold, but the Senate does not, so this bill does not become law. A president can also allow a bill to become law without signing it after ten days, excluding Sundays, if Congress remains in session.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. After the representative proposes the grant program, what steps bring the bill to a vote by the full House?

2. Trace the bill's path from its first House vote through the Senate vote.

3. Why do lawmakers work out a shared version of the bill, and what happens to that version?

4. After the president vetoes this bill, what must Congress do to make it law? Explain why that does not happen here.

3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

Imagine a bill that would fund repairs to aging public water pipes. In five sentences, trace one possible path from introduction to becoming law, including committee work, approval of identical wording by both chambers, and a presidential action.

From Bill to Law

PART 1 · READ AND MARK

Number the major steps in the bill's path from introduction to the president's decision. Underline the sentence that explains why the House and Senate vote on a shared version. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 · ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	After the representative proposes the grant program, what steps bring the bill to a vote by the full House?	**The representative introduces the bill in the House. A committee studies it, suggests changes, and votes to send a revised bill to the full House.**
2	Trace the bill's path from its first House vote through the Senate vote.	**The full House debates and passes the bill. A Senate committee reviews it, then senators debate and pass a different version.**
3	Why do lawmakers work out a shared version of the bill, and what happens to that version?	**The House and Senate passed versions with different grant limits, but they must approve identical wording. Both chambers vote on the shared version and pass it.**
4	After the president vetoes this bill, what must Congress do to make it law? Explain why that does not happen here.	**Two thirds of the members voting in each chamber must vote to override the veto. The House reaches that threshold, but the Senate does not, so the bill does not become law.**

PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

A senator introduces a bill to help cities replace aging water pipes, and a Senate committee studies it and proposes changes. The full Senate debates and passes the revised bill. A House committee reviews it, but the full House passes a version with different funding rules. Lawmakers settle on one text, and both chambers vote to pass that identical version. The president signs the bill, so it becomes law and can support pipe repairs.

Accept either chamber as the starting point if the sequence is accurate. For Part 3, the presidential action must result in a law, and both chambers must approve identical wording.