Two Paths to Law

Trace how bills move through Congress and the Indiana General Assembly.

USG.3.5 "Explain how a bill becomes law in the legislative process of the United States and the state of Indiana."

NAME _____ DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

YOUR JOB Number the actions in order for each bill's path, starting a new list for Indiana. Circle the votes needed to override a veto in each government.

From Proposal to Law

1. Imagine Congress proposes a bill to fund safer school bus stops across the country. A member introduces the bill in either the U.S. House or Senate. A committee studies it, may hold hearings, and can change its wording. If the committee advances the bill, the full chamber debates and votes on it. After that chamber passes it, the other chamber also sends it through a committee and a floor vote. A bill must pass both chambers, but the two chambers may approve different versions. Those differences must be settled before the bill can go to the president.

2. Suppose the House version pays for signs, while the Senate version also pays for lights. Lawmakers work out one final text, sometimes through a conference committee, and both chambers must approve that same text. The president can sign the bill into law or veto it and send it back to Congress. Congress can override a veto with a two-thirds vote in each chamber. If it cannot, the veto stops the bill. A president may also let a bill become law without a signature under certain conditions. Neither chamber can send its own version straight to the president.

3. Indiana could consider a different bill requiring new safety rules at school bus stops within the state. A legislator introduces it in the Indiana House of Representatives or Senate. Like Congress, each chamber uses committees, debates, and votes. If the chambers pass different texts, they must agree on identical wording before sending the bill to the governor. The governor can sign or veto it. Indiana lawmakers can override a veto with a majority of the elected members in each chamber, a lower fraction than Congress requires. Both systems give two chambers a say, then give the executive a decision.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. Trace the federal bill from its introduction through the votes needed before it can reach the president.

2. If the House and Senate pass the two different bus-stop proposals in the passage, what must happen before the bill goes to the president?

3. Trace the Indiana bill from introduction to a possible governor's signature. What must happen if the state chambers pass different texts?

4. If both executives veto the bills, how could each legislature still make its bill law? Compare the votes required.

3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

Consider two new proposals: a federal grant for school library books and an Indiana rule requiring schools to report library book spending. In one paragraph, trace how each proposal could become law, including what happens if the chambers disagree or an executive vetoes the bill.

Two Paths to Law

PART 1 · READ AND MARK

Number the actions in order for each bill's path, starting a new list for Indiana. Circle the votes needed to override a veto in each government. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 · ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	Trace the federal bill from its introduction through the votes needed before it can reach the president.	**A member introduces it in either chamber. A committee considers it, and the full chamber votes. The other chamber considers it in committee and votes; both chambers must approve the same text.**
2	If the House and Senate pass the two different bus-stop proposals in the passage, what must happen before the bill goes to the president?	**Lawmakers must settle the differences, possibly through a conference committee, and both chambers must approve one final text.**
3	Trace the Indiana bill from introduction to a possible governor's signature. What must happen if the state chambers pass different texts?	**A legislator introduces the bill. Committees and both chambers consider and vote on it. If the texts differ, the chambers must agree on identical wording before the bill reaches the governor for a possible signature.**
4	If both executives veto the bills, how could each legislature still make its bill law? Compare the votes required.	**Congress needs a two-thirds vote in each chamber to override a presidential veto. Indiana needs a majority of the elected members in each chamber to override a governor's veto.**

PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

For the federal grant bill, a member introduces it in either chamber of Congress. Committees review it, and the House and Senate each debate and vote. If they pass different versions, both must approve one final text before it goes to the president, who may sign or veto it. Congress can override a veto by a two-thirds vote in each chamber. For the Indiana reporting bill, a state legislator introduces it, and committees and both state chambers consider and vote on it. They must agree on identical wording before it reaches the governor, who may sign or veto it. A veto override requires a majority of the elected members in each Indiana chamber.

Accept either chamber as the starting point in each legislature. Responses should distinguish approval of identical text from the later executive decision and state the different veto-override requirements.