Two Ways to Count

How states gained a voice in Congress

5.C.5.3.B "state representation in Congress, presented by opposing Virginia and New Jersey Plans, and resolved by the Great Compromise, creating a bicameral legislature"

NAME _____ DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline the rule for state representation in each plan. Circle the two rules in the Great Compromise to show how the delegates settled their disagreement.

A Disagreement in Philadelphia

1. In 1787, delegates gathered in Philadelphia to write a new plan for the United States government. One argument could change who held power in Congress: How many lawmakers should each state send? Virginia had many people, while New Jersey had fewer. Delegates from large and small states worried that the other side's rule would leave them with too little say when laws were made.

2. The Virginia Plan called for a Congress with two houses. In both houses, a state's number of representatives would be based on its population. That would give larger states more seats. The New Jersey Plan offered a different rule: each state would have an equal vote in a one-house Congress. Small states liked that rule because a large state's population would not give it more power.

3. After weeks of debate, delegates reached the Great Compromise. Congress would have two houses, called the House of Representatives and the Senate. In the House, states with more people would get more representatives. In the Senate, every state would get two senators, no matter its population. This bicameral legislature, or two-house lawmaking body, gave large states a stronger voice in one house and small states equal standing in the other.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. How did the Virginia Plan and the New Jersey Plan differ in the number of houses and the rule for each state's voice?

2. Why might a small state favor the New Jersey Plan over the Virginia Plan?

3. Which idea from each plan became part of the Great Compromise?

4. Under the Great Compromise, how would Virginia's and New Jersey's representation compare in each house?

3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

Imagine Pine State has 20,000 people and Oak State has 100,000 people. Write three sentences explaining how the Great Compromise gives each state a voice in Congress and why people in both states might support it. Name both houses and explain how seats are decided in each.

ANSWER KEY

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GRADE 5 · 5.C.5.3.B

PART 1 · READ AND MARK

Underline the rule for state representation in each plan. Circle the two rules in the Great Compromise to show how the delegates settled their disagreement. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 · ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	How did the Virginia Plan and the New Jersey Plan differ in the number of houses and the rule for each state's voice?	**The Virginia Plan had two houses with representation based on population in both. The New Jersey Plan had one house where each state had an equal vote.**
2	Why might a small state favor the New Jersey Plan over the Virginia Plan?	**An equal vote for every state would keep larger states from having more power because of their population.**
3	Which idea from each plan became part of the Great Compromise?	**The Virginia Plan's idea of two houses with population-based representation shaped Congress and the House. The New Jersey Plan's idea of equal state representation shaped the Senate.**
4	Under the Great Compromise, how would Virginia's and New Jersey's representation compare in each house?	**Virginia would have more representatives in the House because it had more people. Both states would have two senators.**

PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

Pine State would have fewer seats than Oak State in the House of Representatives because Pine has fewer people. Both states would have two senators in the Senate. Pine's residents might like equal Senate seats, while Oak's residents might like having more House seats because of their larger population.

Accept answers that correctly connect population-based House representation to the Virginia Plan and equal Senate representation to the New Jersey Plan. For Your Turn, students need not calculate a number of House seats.