

Bill to Law

Trace how Article I gives Congress a role in making federal laws.

CE.2.b “explaining the legislative branch and the lawmaking process as explained in Article I of the Constitution of the United States;”

NAME _____

DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK _____ Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline each action that moves a bill toward becoming a law. Circle each group or person that takes an action in the lawmaking process.

Congress at Work

- ① The Constitution creates Congress in Article I. Congress is the legislative branch, the part of the national government that makes laws. It has two chambers: the House of Representatives and the Senate. House members represent districts within states and serve two-year terms. Each state has two senators, who serve six-year terms. This design gives states equal representation in the Senate while representation in the House is based on population. To become a federal law, a proposal called a bill must move through both chambers.
- ② A bill may be introduced in either chamber, except bills for raising revenue, which must begin in the House. Usually, a committee studies the bill and may revise it. If the chamber debates and passes the bill by a majority vote, it goes to the other chamber for a similar process. Both chambers must approve the same version. Congress may use a conference committee to work out differences. The bill is then sent to the president, who may sign it into law or veto it.
- ③ Article I also gives Congress important powers. It can collect taxes, borrow money, regulate commerce among the states, declare war, and make laws needed to carry out its listed powers. The president does not make a bill into law alone, because Congress writes and passes bills. A veto can stop a bill unless two-thirds of both the House and Senate vote to override it. This shared process creates checks and balances. It requires elected representatives, and sometimes the president, to agree before a national law takes effect.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE Use the passage

1 How is representation in the House different from representation in the Senate?

2 What must both chambers do before a bill can be sent to the president?

3 What special rule applies to bills for raising revenue?

4 What can Congress do if the president vetoes a bill?

3 YOUR TURN Your own words

Invent a bill about a national issue. In four sentences, explain where it is introduced, how a committee and both chambers handle it, and what the president does at the end.

PART 1 • READ AND MARK

Underline each action that moves a bill toward becoming a law. Circle each group or person that takes an action in the lawmaking process. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 • ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	How is representation in the House different from representation in the Senate?	House members represent districts, and the number of representatives is based on population. Each state has two senators.
2	What must both chambers do before a bill can be sent to the president?	Both the House and Senate must approve the same version of the bill.
3	What special rule applies to bills for raising revenue?	They must begin in the House of Representatives.
4	What can Congress do if the president vetoes a bill?	Congress can override the veto if two-thirds of both the House and Senate vote to do so.

PART 3 • YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

A bill proposes funding for water-bottle filling stations in national parks, and a representative introduces it in the House. A committee studies the bill and makes revisions. The House and Senate debate and pass the same version. The president signs the bill, so it becomes law.

Accept equivalent descriptions of the House and Senate, bill process, and veto override. For Part 3, accept any realistic national bill that accurately includes introduction, committee action, approval by both chambers, and a presidential action.