

From Bill to Law

Follow the steps a state bill takes before it becomes a law.

CE.3.b "explaining the state lawmaking process;"

NAME _____

DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK _____ Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline each action that moves a bill forward or can stop it, then number the major stages in the order they occur.

How a State Bill Becomes Law

- ① State laws often begin when people ask a legislator to solve a problem. A senator or delegate may sponsor an idea, such as rules for safely disposing of used batteries. The sponsor turns the idea into a bill, which is a written proposal for a law. The bill receives a number and is introduced in one chamber of the state legislature. Most state legislatures have a senate and a second chamber, often called a house of delegates or assembly. Names and detailed rules differ by state constitution.
- ② After introduction, the bill usually goes to a committee. Committee members study it, hear testimony from supporters and opponents, and may change its wording. A committee can recommend that the full chamber consider the bill, or it can stop the bill from moving forward. If the bill reaches the full chamber, legislators debate it and vote. In a two-chamber legislature, a bill that passes one chamber goes to the other chamber, where the committee and voting process occurs again. Both chambers must pass the same version.
- ③ When the chambers pass different versions, lawmakers must settle the differences before the bill can move on. Then the bill goes to the governor. The governor may sign it, veto it, or take another action allowed by that state's constitution. A veto sends the bill back to the legislature. In many states, legislators can override a veto with the larger vote required by their constitution. Once a bill receives the approvals required in that state, it becomes a state law. State constitutions set the exact deadlines and vote rules.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE _____ Use the passage

1 What does a legislator do to turn an idea into a bill and begin the lawmaking process?

2 How can a committee affect a bill after it is introduced?

3 Why must both chambers pass the same version of a bill?

4 What can happen after a governor vetoes a bill?

3 YOUR TURN _____ Your own words

Invent a bill that would improve your community, such as adding shaded benches at public parks. Write five sentences tracing its path through a committee, votes in both chambers, and the governor's decision.

PART 1 • READ AND MARK

Underline each action that moves a bill forward or can stop it, then number the major stages in the order they occur. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 • ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	What does a legislator do to turn an idea into a bill and begin the lawmaking process?	The legislator sponsors the idea, turns it into a written bill, and introduces it in a chamber of the state legislature.
2	How can a committee affect a bill after it is introduced?	A committee studies the bill, hears testimony, and may change its wording. It can recommend the bill to the full chamber or stop it from moving forward.
3	Why must both chambers pass the same version of a bill?	Both chambers must agree on one identical version before the bill can move on to the governor.
4	What can happen after a governor vetoes a bill?	The bill goes back to the legislature. In many states, legislators may override the veto with the larger vote required by the state constitution.

PART 3 • YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

A delegate introduces a bill requiring shaded benches at state parks. A committee hears from park visitors and reviews the cost. The house debates and votes to pass the revised bill. The senate reviews and passes the same version. The governor signs the bill, so it becomes law under the state's required process.

Accept accurate sequences that include introduction, committee review, passage by both chambers in the same version, and action by the governor. Accept state-specific wording when it accurately reflects that state's constitutional rules.