Teacher’s Guide

Why Do We Have a House and Senate, Anyway?

Time Needed: One Class Period

Materials Needed:
Student worksheets
Overhead transparencies

Copy Instructions:
Half sheet activity (double-sided; class set)
Voting activity worksheet (class set)
Application activity (double-sided; class set)

Learning Objectives. Students will be able to:
• Model the lawmaking process by participating in a role-play activity
• Model the effect of unicameral and bicameral voting systems
• Analyze the effect of a unicameral versus a bicameral system

STEP BY STEP

☐ PREPARE by deciding in advance how you will split the class into groups. First, you will need to assign each student to the role of either “teacher” or “student.” You will need more students than teachers. Next, you need to create groups of students and groups of teachers. You will need more groups of teachers than groups of students. If your class is small, it’s okay to have only one teacher in each “group.”

☐ ANTICIPATE by having students complete the half-sheet activity. Review the answers to the questions about Congress.

☐ EXPLAIN that the class will be doing a role-play activity to model the way Congress works.

☐ ASSIGN each student a role of “student” or “teacher” according to your pre-class preparation. Give each student a Role Card so they won’t forget their roles.

☐ DISTRIBUTE one voting activity worksheet to each student. Ask students to check their role and complete the Cell Phone Policy questionnaire. Be sure students stay in their roles when answering the questionnaire.

☐ PROJECT the “Battle of the Plans” transparency. Poll the “students” and “teachers” on each question and mark the winning answers on the transparency to create two separate “bills” about a cell phone policy.

☐ CONDUCT two rounds of voting and record the results on the transparency. In the first round, each person gets 1 vote. In the second round, each group gets 1 vote. (“Students” should win the first round and “teachers” should win the second.)

☐ PROJECT the “Compromise” transparency. For each question, help the class decide on a compromise. Write the compromise on the transparency.

☐ CONDUCT the final vote. Explain that in order to “pass,” the compromise plan must win both rounds. (If it fails, discuss with the class what additional compromise might help.)

☐ DISTRIBUTE one “Large vs. Small States” worksheet to each student.

☐ READ the table and directions with the class.

☐ ALLOW students to complete both sides of the worksheet. You may wish to work through the worksheet together as a class.

☐ CLOSE by asking students to make comparisons between how Congress works (compromise between large and small states) and how the teacher/student voting activity worked.

This lesson plan is part of the Legislative Branch series by iCivics, a nonprofit organization dedicated to advancing civic education. For more resources, please visit www.icivics.org/teachers, where you can access the state standards aligned to this lesson plan. Provide feedback to feedback@icivics.org.

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Why Do We Have a House and Senate? Name:

Test Your Knowledge. Use the word bank to complete the following sentences. You will have words left over!

one  carry out laws  Senate  population
two  bill  interpret laws  legislative
three  President  make laws  executive

1) Congress is in the _________________________ branch.
2) Congress’ main job is to ______________________________.
3) Congress is divided into two houses: the _______________ and the House of Representatives.
4) Each state has _________ Senators.
5) A state’s number of members in the House of Representatives is based on its _________________.
6) A draft of a law is called a ________________.
Give Your Opinion! Answer these questions about the cell phone policy at your school.

1) Does your school have a cell phone policy?
   A. Yes  B. No

2) From your perspective as a student, how would you rate how your school handles cell phones?
   Fair ★★★★★ Unfair

3) If you were a teacher at your school, which of the following statements would you agree with?
   A. I enforce the school’s rules on cell phones, so they are not a problem.
   B. Cell phones are sometimes a problem in the classroom.
   C. I hate cell phones in the classroom and wish I could get rid of them all!
   D. It doesn’t bother me if students use cell phones in my classroom.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Teacher 1</th>
<th>Teacher 2</th>
<th>Teacher 3</th>
<th>Teacher 4</th>
<th>Teacher 5</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Student A</td>
<td>Student B</td>
<td>Student C</td>
<td>Student A</td>
<td>Student B</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student C</td>
<td>Student A</td>
<td>Student B</td>
<td>Student C</td>
<td>Student A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student B</td>
<td>Student C</td>
<td>Student A</td>
<td>Student B</td>
<td>Student C</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student A</td>
<td>Student B</td>
<td>Student C</td>
<td>Student A</td>
<td>Student B</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**Why Do We Have a House & Senate, Anyway?**  

**TWO METHODS OF REPRESENTATION: TEACHERS VS. STUDENTS**

**Your Role.** Check the correct box for the role you have been assigned:  
☐ Student  ☐ Teacher

**Cell Phone Policy.** *Staying in your role,* read the questions below and circle the answers that a person in your role would choose.

1. When may cell phones be used?  
   - ☐ Before and after school only  
   - ☐ Anytime a student wants

2. When is texting allowed?  
   - ☐ Texting is allowed for family emergencies only  
   - ☐ Students may text anytime if they need to

3. May students listen to music on cell phones during class?  
   - ☐ No, never  
   - ☐ Yes, anytime

4. What should happen if a student makes a cell phone call during class?  
   - ☐ The office keeps the phone until a parent or guardian picks it up  
   - ☐ The teacher asks the student to wait for an appropriate time that won’t disrupt class

5. May students use the Internet on their cell phones during class?  
   - ☐ No, because the teacher can’t control what the students are looking at  
   - ☐ Yes, because school computers aren’t always available

**Voting.** Your teacher will now lead you through TWO rounds of voting.

**What Happened?**

**Round 1**

1. In round 1, who got a vote?  
   - ☐ Each person got 1 vote  
   - ☐ Each group got 1 vote

2. Which side benefited from this?  
   - ☐ The side with more people  
   - ☐ The side with more groups

3. Which side had more people?  
   - ☐ Teachers  
   - ☐ Students

4. When the group with more people wins a vote, this is similar to what happens in:  
   - ☐ The Senate  
   - ☐ The House of Representatives

**Round 2**

1. In round 2, who got a vote?  
   - ☐ Each person got 1 vote  
   - ☐ Each group got 1 vote

2. Which side benefited from this?  
   - ☐ The side with more people  
   - ☐ The side with more groups

3. Which side had more groups?  
   - ☐ Teachers  
   - ☐ Students

4. When each group gets an equal number of votes, this is similar to what happens in:  
   - ☐ The Senate  
   - ☐ The House of Representatives

Voting Activity Worksheet
# Battle of the Plans

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1. When may cell phones be used?</th>
<th>Teacher Plan</th>
<th>Student Plan</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Before &amp; after school</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anytime</td>
<td>☑</td>
<td>☑</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>2. When is texting allowed?</th>
<th>Teacher Plan</th>
<th>Student Plan</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Family emergencies</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anytime</td>
<td>☑</td>
<td>☑</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>3. May students listen to music on cell phones during class?</th>
<th>Teacher Plan</th>
<th>Student Plan</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Never</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anytime</td>
<td>☑</td>
<td>☑</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>4. What should happen if a student makes a cell phone call during class?</th>
<th>Teacher Plan</th>
<th>Student Plan</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Office holds phone</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher asks student to wait</td>
<td>☑</td>
<td>☑</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>5. May students use the Internet on their cell phones during class?</th>
<th>Teacher Plan</th>
<th>Student Plan</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>☑</td>
<td>☑</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

## Round 1
Each *person* gets one vote.

## Round 2
Each *group* gets one vote.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Teachers’ Plan</th>
<th>Students’ Plan</th>
<th>Winner!</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Teachers</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Winner!

**Why House & Senate/Transparency #1**
## Compromise Proposals

1. When may cell phones be used?

2. When is texting allowed?

3. May students listen to music on cell phones during class?

4. What should happen if a student makes a cell phone call during class?

5. May students use the Internet on their cell phones during class?

### Final Vote

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Round 1</th>
<th>Round 2</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Each person gets one vote. (Advantage: Students)</td>
<td>Each group gets one vote. (Advantage: Teachers)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teachers</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Students</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Pass?  
☐ Yes ☐ No

☐ Yes ☐ No

___ Compromise plan passed both rounds. It wins!  
___ Compromise plan did not pass both rounds. It fails.
Why Do We Have a House & Senate, Anyway?

**TWO METHODS OF REPRESENTATION: LARGE STATES VS. SMALL STATES**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>State</th>
<th>2008 Population</th>
<th>House of Representatives: Number of Votes</th>
<th>Senate: Number of Votes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>California</td>
<td>36,756,666</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Texas</td>
<td>24,326,974</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New York</td>
<td>19,490,297</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hawaii</td>
<td>1,360,301</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Delaware</td>
<td>897,934</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alaska</td>
<td>710,231</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wyoming</td>
<td>563,626</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2010 population data from www.census.gov

**A One-Chamber Congress.** Imagine that Congress is considering a bill that would give money to states to improve roadways. The more people a state has, the more money it will get. Would the bill pass if there was only one house in Congress? Using the table above, answer these questions to find out:

Representatives from large states would vote [ ] yes [ ] no on this bill.

Representatives from small states would vote [ ] yes [ ] no on this bill.

**If we only had a House of Representatives . . .**

Add up the number of House votes from the large states here:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>State</th>
<th># House Votes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>+</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Total YES votes: ______

Who Would Win?

- [ ] Large States
- [ ] Small States

**If we only had a Senate . . .**

Write the total number of Senate votes from the large states here:

YES votes: ______

Write the total number of Senate votes from the small states here:

NO votes: ______

Who Would Win?

- [ ] Large States
- [ ] Small States

Application Activity p.1
Why Do We Have a House & Senate, Anyway? Name:

Compromise! Look at this list of compromise bills. Check the three that you think both large-population and small-population states would be most likely to support. Circle the one you like best.

- The more roadways a state has, the more money it gets.
- The worse the state’s roads are, the more money it gets.
- Every state gets the same amount of money.
- The more cars are registered in the state, the more money it gets.
- The larger a state’s physical size, the more money it gets.
- States with more large cities get more money.
- States apply to receive money for specific projects, not just a lump sum.

Now imagine that Congress is considering the bill you circled above. In the spaces below, explain why the states would support this bill.

FOR
Both large and small-population states would support this bill because...

AGAINST
One state that might not support the bill is ___________________.
It might be opposed because...

A Two-Chamber Congress. It’s time to vote! This bill must pass both the House and the Senate to become law. Tally up the votes, assuming the state you identified as being against the bill will vote “no.”

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<tr>
<th></th>
<th>House Vote</th>
<th>Senate Vote</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Add up the number of “Yes” votes</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Add up the number of “No” votes</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Pass? ☐ Yes ☐ No  Pass? ☐ Yes ☐ No

Will your bill become law? ☐ Yes! It passed both houses. ☐ No! It failed the ☐ House ☐ Senate.
Two Methods of Representation: Large States vs. Small States

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A One-Chamber Congress. Imagine that Congress is considering a bill that would give money to states to improve roadways. The more people a state has, the more money it will get. Would the bill pass if there was only one house in Congress? Using the table above, answer these questions to find out:

Representatives from large states would vote yes no on this bill. Representatives from small states would vote yes no on this bill.

If we only had a House of Representatives . . .

Add up the number of House votes from the large states here:

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<th>State</th>
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</tr>
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<tbody>
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</tr>
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<td>36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New York</td>
<td>+ 27</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Total YES votes: 116

Add up the number of House votes from the small states here:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>State</th>
<th># House Votes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Hawaii</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Delaware</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alaska</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wyoming</td>
<td>+ 1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Total NO votes: 5

Who Would Win?

☑️ Large States
☐ Small States

If we only had a Senate . . .

Write the total number of Senate votes from the large states here:

YES votes: 6

Write the total number of Senate votes from the small states here:

NO votes: 8

Who Would Win?

☐ Large States
☑️ Small States

Application Activity p.1
Why Do We Have a House & Senate, Anyway?  Name: **Teacher Key**

Compromise! Look at this list of compromise bills. Check the three that you think both large-population and small-population states would be most likely to support. Circle the one you like best.

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Both large and small-population states would support this bill because...

(Student answers will vary.)

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One state that might not support the bill is _________________.

It might be opposed because...

(Student answers will vary.)

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<tr>
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<th>House Vote</th>
<th>Senate Vote</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Add up the number of “Yes” votes</td>
<td><em>(Student answers will vary depending on which state they thought might vote “no.”)</em></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Add up the number of “No” votes</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pass?</td>
<td>❑ Yes ❑ No</td>
<td>Pass? ❑ Yes ❑ No</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Will your bill become law? ❑ Yes! It passed both houses. ❑ No! It failed the ❑ House ❑ Senate.