

## Law Makers and Legislatures Reading Questions

**Preview:** Look at graphic and answer the following questions:

- Learn the inner workings of Capitol Hill.
- Hire legislative assistants.
- Request membership to important committees.
- Join a group with other members of Congress that deals with policies related to local issues.
- Introduce a bill to Congress.
- Respond to constituent e-mails.
- Set aside money for local projects.
- Raise funds for reelection.

1. To be an effective legislator, which of these tasks do you think is the most important? Why?
2. Which of these tasks do you think is the least important? Why?
3. What other tasks do you think should be on an effective legislator's to-do list?
4. Check the box next to the task you think you know the most about already. Circle the task you want to learn more about the most.

**As you complete the Reading Notes, use these terms in your answers:**

constituent  
pork standing  
committee  
joint committee

conference committee  
appropriations  
joint resolution  
casework

**Introduction**

1. Which qualities described in the section do you think are most important for an effective legislator?
2. Why?

**Section 2**

1. List two formal and two informal qualifications for a member of Congress today (not 40 or 50 years ago). Do you think the informal qualifications for education and occupation help make an effective legislator? Why or why not?
2. Study the apportionment map in Section 2, and record information about any change to apportionment in your state. Then describe the process that determined why your state gained or lost representatives or why it stayed the same.
3. Explain the difference between a delegate and a trustee. Which do you think makes a more effective legislator, and why?
4. Create a bar graph or circle graphs to show the percentage of incumbents who have been reelected in the House and Senate since 1945. List three factors that help explain your graph or graphs

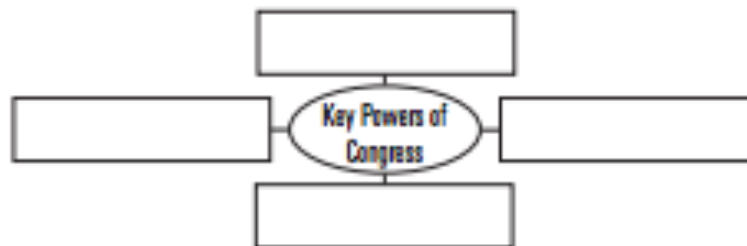
**Section 3**

1. Fill in the blanks to complete this analogy: The Senate “cools” legislation from the House like a \_\_\_\_\_ cools \_\_\_\_\_. Create a simple illustration for your analogy. Finally, list at least two important differences between the House and the Senate that might allow the Senate to “cool” legislation from the House.
2. Which leadership position in Congress has the most power? List some specific powers of that position.
3. Create a simple table listing the five types of committees in Congress. Include these things in your table for each type of committee: • an appropriate symbol • one or two of the committee’s important functions • a concrete example of that type of committee (if possible)

4. Sketch a simple graph showing what has happened to the size of House and Senate staff since 1930. Then list two or three important jobs congressional staffers do.
5. Suppose you are a member of Congress and want to create a new caucus. Come up with a creative name for your caucus, and explain what issues or topics your caucus would focus on.

### **Section 4**

1. According to Article I of the Constitution, what are the specific, or enumerated, powers of Congress? What part of the Constitution allows Congress to broaden its power beyond those enumerated powers?
2. Create a simple diagram that shows the six ways in which Congress checks the other two branches of government. Label each check, and indicate which other branch each check applies to.
3. Draw the spoke diagram below in your notebook. Fill in each rectangle with a key power of Congress. From each of those key powers, add at least two more spokes with important pieces of information about that power of Congress.
4. Create a political cartoon that shows why casework is such an important aspect of being an effective legislator.



### **Section 5**

1. Create a Venn diagram comparing state legislatures with Congress. Identify at least three significant similarities and at least four important differences between the two. Be specific.
2. Overall, do you think term limits are a good idea? Why or why not?