

U.S. CONGRESS

What is the U.S. Congress?

Congress is the legislative branch of government. It is made up of two houses: the Senate and the House of Representatives. The capitol building is where Congress meets in Washington, D.C. People in Congress usually belong to either the Republican or Democratic party.



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Senate: 100 members, 2 Senators elected from each of the 50 states

House of Representatives: 435 members, elected from the states. The number of representatives that each state gets is figured out from the population of the state. The house is led by the **Speaker of the House**.

What can Congress do?

- make new laws
- borrow money
- declare war
- set up courts
- ratify (approve) treaties that the President makes
- confirm Supreme Court Justices
- impeach federal officials (*House of Representatives*)
- amend the Constitution

Who can be a member of Congress?

House of Representatives:

- at least 25 years old
- U.S. citizen for at least 7 years
- Live in the state where elected

Senate:

- at least 30 years old
- U.S. citizen for at least 9 years
- Live in the state where elected

Making Laws:

A law starts out as a **bill** that is introduced by a member of Congress. Each bill is given to one or more committees. If the committees approve the bill, it will go to the full Senate or House. Both houses of Congress will look at the bill, debate it, vote on it and approve it or reject it. Once both houses have approved a bill, it is sent to the U.S. President. The President can sign it back into law or veto it for change.



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Try This

Circle the jobs that members of Congress can do.

Impeach

Change the Constitution

Cut the President's salary

Use government money to buy a new house

Make laws

Burn down homes of people who don't pay taxes

Propose a new bill

Declare war

Borrow money

Draw an X through people who could not serve as a U.S. Senator.

25 year old woman

35 year old man

35 year old citizen of Ghana

50 year old resident of France

40 year old resident of Texas

20 year old resident of Ohio

55 year old citizen of Italy

Draw lines through the following branches of government.

Senator

President

Speaker of

judge

Representative

Congress

branch of



PREVIEW

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