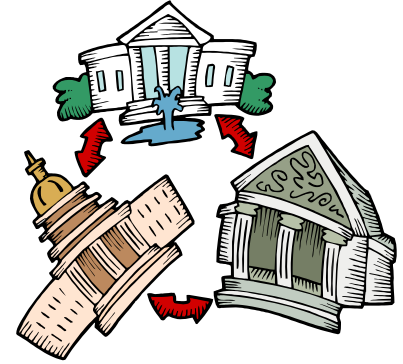


The American Citizen
Chapter 13: The Lawmaking Process
Vocabulary Terms Key Concepts



Learning these terms and concepts is necessary to understand the basic principles of government. In this course, you must be able to recognize definitions of these terms for classroom lecture/discussions and (eventually) quizzes and tests.

apartheid

The policy of the all-white government of South Africa by which racial groups were separated

appropriations

Congressional grants of money set aside for a specific purpose

bill

A proposed law

calendar

A formal schedule of bills or resolutions to be considered by Congress

cloture

A vote of three-fifths of the Senate to end debate and call for a vote on a bill (and kill off a "filibuster")

conference

A temporary committee made up of members of both houses of Congress whose job is to reconcile Senate and House versions of the same bill

discharge petition

A request by a majority of the members of the House that a bill be released by a committee to the floor, so that it might be voted on

filibuster

A tactic used in the Senate to monopolize debate in an effort to delay or block passage of a bill

floor action

Discussing and voting on legislation (that usually takes place between Tuesday morning and Thursday afternoon)

floor leader

A political party spokesperson who leads the action of his or her party on the floor

joint session

A congressional session in which both houses meet together

lame duck

An incumbent in public office who has been defeated in his or her re-election race (usually in November elections), but has not yet left office (called this because he/she has little real political power by this time)

log-rolling

One of the major traditions in Congress, a type of reciprocity, is the mutual exchange of political favors -- "you support my bill, I'll support yours"

Majority Leader

The floor leader of the House or Senate who represents the political power of the majority party

Minority Leader

The floor leader of the House or Senate who represents the political power of the minority party

pigeonhole

To kill a bill by refusing to take action on it or pass it out of a committee in Congress

recess

To take a temporary break in a legislative session.

resolution

A formal statement by Congress expressing a legislative decision or opinion.

rider

An amendment added to a bill that has nothing to do with the subject of a bill.

Rules

This congressional committee is the "traffic cop" of the House of Representatives, because its consent is necessary for a bill to be taken from the House calendar, it can take bills out of order, schedule bills for debate, and set a time limit for debate and adding amendments.

sanctions

A way for the government to punish or show disapproval of another nation's actions or policies, often in the form of economic and trade restrictions

select

A temporary congressional committee created for a specific purpose that will not be handled by a standing committee.

seniority

Length of service, whether in Congress or on a committee

special session

An emergency congressional meeting called by the President when Congress is adjourned or in recess

Speaker

The leader who presides over the House of Representatives

sponsor

The member of Congress who introduces a bill

standing

A large, permanent congressional committee that deals with bills about particular subjects (such as agriculture)

subcommittee

A smaller division of a large standing congressional committee

table

To make a parliamentary motion to kill a bill.

whip

The assistant floor leader for both major political parties in Congress.