

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.

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 _____.



Anticipation Activity p.1

Why Do We Have a House and Senate? Name: _____

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Anticipation Activity p.1

Why Do We Have a House and Senate? Name: _____

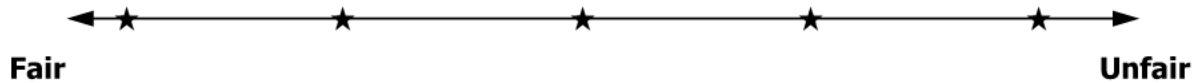
Give Your Opinion! Answer these questions about the cell phone policy at your school.



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?



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.

Why Do We Have a House and Senate? Name: _____

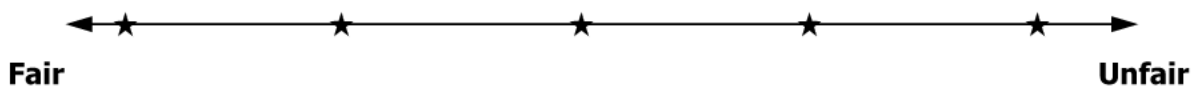
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Teacher 1	Teacher 2	Teacher 3	Teacher 4	Teacher 5
Teacher 1	Teacher 2	Teacher 3	Teacher 4	Teacher 5
Student A	Student B	Student C	Student A	Student B
Student C	Student A	Student B	Student C	Student A
Student B	Student C	Student A	Student B	Student C
Student A	Student B	Student C	Student A	Student B

Why Do We Have a House & Senate, Anyway? Name: _____

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? | <input type="radio"/> Before and after school only | <input type="radio"/> Anytime a student wants |
| 2. When is texting allowed? | <input type="radio"/> Texting is allowed for family emergencies only | <input type="radio"/> Students may text anytime if they need to |
| 3. May students listen to music on cell phones during class? | <input type="radio"/> No, never | <input type="radio"/> Yes, anytime |
| 4. What should happen if a student makes a cell phone call during class? | <input type="radio"/> The office keeps the phone until a parent or guardian picks it up | <input type="radio"/> 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? | <input type="radio"/> No, because the teacher can't control what the students are looking at | <input type="radio"/> Yes, because school computers aren't always available |

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



What Happened?

Round 1

- In round 1, who got a vote?
 Each person got 1 vote
 Each group got 1 vote
- Which side benefited from this?
 The side with more people
 The side with more groups
- Which side had more people?
 Teachers
 Students
- When the group with more people wins a vote, this is similar to what happens in:
 The Senate
 The House of Representatives

Round 2

- In round 2, who got a vote?
 Each person got 1 vote
 Each group got 1 vote
- Which side benefited from this?
 The side with more people
 The side with more groups
- Which side had more groups?
 Teachers
 Students
- When each group gets an equal number of votes, this is similar to what happens in:
 The Senate
 The House of Representatives



BATTLE OF THE PLANS

	Teacher Plan	Student Plan
1. When may cell phones be used?	<input type="checkbox"/> Before & after school <input type="checkbox"/> Anytime	<input type="checkbox"/> Before & after school <input type="checkbox"/> Anytime
2. When is texting allowed?	<input type="checkbox"/> Family emergencies <input type="checkbox"/> Anytime	<input type="checkbox"/> Family emergencies <input type="checkbox"/> Anytime
3. May students listen to music on cell phones during class?	<input type="checkbox"/> Never <input type="checkbox"/> Anytime	<input type="checkbox"/> Never <input type="checkbox"/> Anytime
4. What should happen if a student makes a cell phone call during class?	<input type="checkbox"/> Office holds phone <input type="checkbox"/> Teacher asks student to wait	<input type="checkbox"/> Office holds phone <input type="checkbox"/> Teacher asks student to wait
5. May students use the Internet on their cell phones during class?	<input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Yes

	Round 1 Each <i>person</i> gets one vote.	Round 2 Each <i>group</i> gets one vote.
Teachers' Plan		
Students' Plan		
	Winner! <input type="checkbox"/> Teachers <input type="checkbox"/> Students	Winner! <input type="checkbox"/> Teachers <input type="checkbox"/> Students



COMPROMISE!

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

	Round 1 Each <i>person</i> gets one vote. (Advantage: Students)	Round 2 Each <i>group</i> gets one vote. (Advantage: Teachers)
Teachers		
Students		
	Pass? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	Pass? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> 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? Name: _____

TWO METHODS OF REPRESENTATION: LARGE STATES VS. SMALL STATES

	2008 Population	House of Representatives: Number of Votes	Senate: Number of Votes
California	36,756,666	53	2
Texas	24,326,974	36	2
New York	19,490,297	27	2
Hawaii	1,360,301	2	2
Delaware	897,934	1	2
Alaska	710,231	1	2
Wyoming	563,626	1	2

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:

State	# House Votes
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	+

Total YES votes: _____

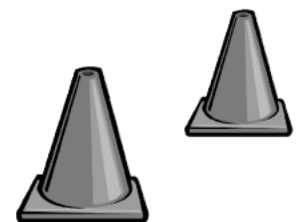
Add up the number of House votes from the small states here:

State	# House Votes
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	+

Total NO 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

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."

	House Vote	Senate Vote
Add up the number of "Yes" votes		
Add up the number of "No" votes		
	Pass? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	Pass? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
Will your bill become law? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes! It passed both houses. <input type="checkbox"/> No! It failed the <input type="radio"/> House <input type="radio"/> Senate.		

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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:

State	# House Votes
<u>California</u>	<u>53</u>
<u>Texas</u>	<u>36</u>
<u>New York</u>	+ <u>27</u>

Total YES votes: 116

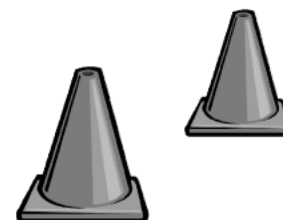
Add up the number of House votes from the small states here:

State	# House Votes
<u>Hawaii</u>	<u>2</u>
<u>Delaware</u>	<u>1</u>
<u>Alaska</u>	<u>1</u>
<u>Wyoming</u>	+ <u>1</u>

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

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.

- The more roadways a state has, the more money it gets.
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(Student answers will vary.)

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It might be opposed because...

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	House Vote	Senate Vote
Add up the number of "Yes" votes	<i>(Student answers will vary depending on which state they thought might vote "no.")</i>	
Add up the number of "No" votes		
	Pass? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	Pass? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
Will your bill become law? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes! It passed both houses. <input type="checkbox"/> No! It failed the <input type="radio"/> House <input type="radio"/> Senate.		