

## COMPARING THE HOUSE AND SENATE

### Performance Standard 14B.H

Construct a poster and write a description on the powers and responsibilities assigned to both houses of the U. S. Congress accordingly:

- *Knowledge:* Describe the structure and principal powers and responsibilities of the U. S. Senate and U.S. House of Representatives; describe the locations, sources, and balance of power of the two Houses.
- *Reasoning:* Identify the similarities and differences between the two Houses' powers and responsibilities.
- *Communication:* Produce a poster and essay that are well-focused, well-organized, and well-detailed; express all ideas in a way that provides evidence of knowledge and reasoning processes.

### Procedures

1. *In order to understand the structures and functions of the political systems of Illinois, the United States and other nations (14B)*, students should experience sufficient learning opportunities to develop the following skills:
  - Identify, compare, and contrast the powers and responsibilities of the members of the House of Representatives and Senate within the United States Congress.
  - Identify how the structural differences would affect the powers and responsibilities of the House and Senate and their individual members.
  - Describe the locations, sources, and balances of power in and between the two Houses.
2. Have students review and discuss the assessment task and how the rubric will be used to evaluate their work.
3. Have each student construct a poster and write a description on the powers of the U.S. Senate and the U.S. House of Representatives. The poster should include:
  - Structures of the U.S. Senate and U.S. House of Representatives, and
  - Principal powers of each House, pointing out similarities and differences.
4. Ask each student to address the following in the description:
  - What are the locations, sources, and balance of power in and between the two Houses?
  - Which House is more powerful, what makes it more powerful, and why was Congress designed in such a way?
5. (Optional) Have each student present the information orally, using the poster as a visual aid.
6. Evaluate each student's work using the Social Science Rubric as follows and add the scores to determine the performance level:
  - *Knowledge:* The description on the poster of the structure and principal powers and responsibilities of the U.S. Senate and U.S. House of Representatives and the description in the essay of the locations, sources, and balance of power between the two Houses were complete and correct.
  - *Reasoning:* The analysis of the similarities and differences between both Houses depicted on the poster and the conclusion in the essay to the question, "Which House is more powerful, what makes it more powerful, and why was Congress designed in such a way?" were logical and thorough.
  - *Communication:* Poster and essay were well-focused, well-organized, and well-detailed; knowledge and reasoning were accurately and effectively communicated in the poster and essay.

### Examples of Student Work follow

### Time Requirements

- Four to five class periods

### Resources

- Textbooks
- Internet, e.g., [www.vote-smart.org](http://www.vote-smart.org)
- Periodical articles
- Encyclopedias
- Social Science Rubric

"Meets"

Qualifications

- 30 yrs.
- 9 yrs. as citizen
- 100 total members

- \* Approve treaties by  $\frac{2}{3}$
- \* Have impeachment trials
- \* Can appoint high gov. officials by majority

Senate

Senate = More powerful

Qualifications

- 25 yrs.
- citizen for 7 yrs.
- 435 total members

- \* Can impeach high gov. officials
- \* Bills for raising revenue start here

House of Rep.

# BALANCE OF CONGRESS'

## POWERS, RESPONSIBILITIES, & QUALIFICATIONS

"Exceeds"

# ☆ Congress ☆



## House of Representatives

### Structure

- 2 yr term
- must be a 7 yr U.S. citizen
- must live in district/state representing
- must be 25 yrs old
- contains 435 members
- led by Speaker of House
- elected by the people of the state

### Powers

- majority elects Speaker and officers
- has the sole power to impeach
- debate usually limited to one hour
- referral of bills hard to challenge
- power to begin tax bill
- breaks tie in electoral college
- Rules Committee powerful
- controls time of debate, admissibility of amendments
- non-germane amendments may not be introduced
- usually considered first by Committees

## Senate

### Structure

- 6 yr term
- must be a 9 yr U.S. citizen
- must live in state representing
- must be 30 yrs old
- contains 100 members
- led by Vice President (Chief)

### Powers

- must live in state representing
- are the judge of the elections, returns and qualifications
- majority vote constitutes a quorum to do business
- may determine the rules of its proceedings, punish its members and expel a member
- bills must pass through
- power to borrow money on the credit of the United States
- power to regulate commerce with foreign nations, the several states and Indian tribes
- members are chosen by the people
- Senators have one vote each
- Senate chooses officers and a President pro tempore
- has sole power to try impeachments
- referral of bills easily challenged
- Rules Committee weak
- has few limits on debate time or amendments
- unlimited type of debates unless challenged by unanimous vote or invoking cloture
- non-germane amendments may be introduced
- easily bypassed by Committees (Orders)

The Senate is the more powerful house. This can be inferred by the qualifications required to become a senator, which are more strict than that of the House of Representatives. The Senate also is more stable and formal, and powers are equally distributed. The Senate also is more powerful because its members have longer terms. The Senate was created in this manner because our founding fathers believed that one house needed to be more experienced. They wanted to include the people through the House of Representatives, but needed a knowledgeable house to control the decisions.

Text of Poster  
Comparing House and Senate  
Exceeds Poster

## House of Representatives

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- must be a 7 yr U.S. citizen
- must live in district/state representing
- must be 25 yrs. Old
- contains 435 members
- led by Speaker of House
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### Powers

- Majority elects Speaker and officers
- Has the sole power to impeach
- Debate usually limited to one hour
- Referral of bills hard to challenge
- Power to begin tax bill
- Breaks tie in Electoral College
- Rules Committee powerful
  - Controls time of debate, admissibility of amendments
- Non-germane amendments may not be introduced from floor
- Usually considered first by committees

## Senate

### Structure

- 6 yr term
- must be a 9 yr U.S. citizen
- must live in state representing
- must be 30 yrs old
- contains 100 members
- led by Vice-President (Cheney)

### Powers

- Senators have one vote each
- Senate chooses officers and a President pro tempore
- Has sole power to try impeachments
- Referral of bills easily challenged
- Rules Committee weak
  - Has few limits on debate time or amendments
  - Unlimited time of debates unless challenged by unanimous vote or invoking cloture.
- Non-germane amendments maybe introduced (riders)

- Easily by passed by committees

#### Both

- Must live in state representing
- Are the judge of the elections, returns and qualifications
- Majority vote constitutes a Quorum to do business
- May determine the Rules of its Proceedings, punish its members, and expel a member
- Bills must pass through both
- Power to borrow money on the credit of the United states
- Power to regulate commerce with foreign nations, the several states, and Indian Tribes
- Members are chosen by the people

#### Bottom of page

The Senate is the more powerful house. This can be inferred by the qualifications required to become a Senator, which are more strict than that of the House of Representatives. The Senate also is more stable and formal and powers are equally distributed. The Senate also is more powerful because the members have longer terms. The Senate was created in this manner because our Founding Fathers believed that one House needed to be more experienced. They wanted to involve the people through the House of Representative, but needed a knowledgeable House to control the decisions.