

# Unit #4a: Interactions among Branches of Government—Congress

AP US Government & Politics

Mr. Coia

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Period: \_\_\_\_\_

“Congress is the great commanding theater of this nation. It is the place where laws are made.” --Thomas Jefferson

## Thurs 1/3

- New Unit Guide
- Ask 3-5 questions about things you know that you need to know about Congress
- DVD: [The Congress clip 1](#) (25 min)
- Small group discussion on viewing notes
- DVD: [The Congress clip 2](#) (25 min)
- Discuss connection of film and text
- Read AG 7.270 (What Should I Have Learned? section)

HW: AG, 7.234-245; index cards

## Mon 1/7

- Read and mark Unit overview (p. 3)
- Media Bias work (unit 3, p.9-10). Finish all parts.
- Work on index cards

HW: AG, 7.234-245; index cards; notebook prep; Finish Media Bias sheet (if needed).

## Wed 1/9

- **Notebook check**
- Reading Quiz 7.234-245
- Introduction to Congress
- Lecture/Discussion topic: Overview of Congress

HW: AG, 7.245-256; index cards

## Fri 1/11

- Reading Quiz 7.245-256
- **Index cards must be completed**
- Watch: [“Congress Forgets how to make a law”](#)
- Watch: [“I’m Just a Bill”](#) What does this get right? What is missing?
- Lecture/Discussion topic: How a bill becomes a law
- In pairs, write a layman’s guide to how a bill becomes a law. What are the 10 essential steps needed?

HW: AG, 7.256-270

## Tues 1/15

- Reading Quiz 7.256-270
- Create *something* creative to illustrate your knowledge of how a bill becomes a law. No outline. No flowchart. No handwriting. No just-the-usual-type-of-stuff project.

HW: Finish your *something*

## Thurs 1/17

- Bill to Law presentations
- Responding to your 3-5 questions from first class of unit
- Practice FRQs
- *Choose Your Own Adventure* in Reviewing this semester

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**B2: Wed 1/23 0855-1155**

- **Review Session**
- **Semester 1 Exam: ALL UNITS**
  - 60 AP-style MC Questions
  - Two FRQs

**B3: Wed 1/24 1235-1350**

- **Review Session**

**B3: Thurs 1/24 0720-0850**

- **Semester 1 Exam: ALL UNITS**
    - 60 AP-style MC Questions
    - Two FRQs
- .....

## Tues 1/29

Begin unit 4b- The Presidency

## **Notebook and Supply Check**

You'll need the following for our notebook check **Wed 1/9**. Remember, you need ALL the pieces to receive credit. No partial credit offered on this.

You need ***three*** tabs with the following:

### GOV Handouts:

- *Unit Guide 4*
- Unit guide 3
- Conservative/Liberal Chart
- Understanding the Amendments (unit guide 1, p.13)
- Federalist Papers #10, 51, Brutus (unit 1, p. 5-12)
- Key Terms: Foundations of American Democracy (unit 1, p. 5-6)
- Key Terms: American Political Ideologies (unit 2, p. 3-4)
- *Key Terms: Political Participation (unit 3, p.7-8)*
- Chapter 3: Federalism section handout
- AP GOV Syllabus
- Class Rules sheet, initialed

### GOV Classwork:

Notes from lectures, presentations, mini-lessons. Remember you should be taking notes each class period. You will also have at least 25 sheets of loose-leaf paper in your binder, and your pens, pencils, highlighter, etc.

### GOV Outlines:

*Unit 1: Foundations of American Democracy outlines* (this includes all of your SIX outlines put in order with a cover page stapled to the top). This will help you review for semester tests and the AP exam in May.

*Unit 2: American Political Ideologies and Beliefs* (this includes all of your THREE outlines put in order with a cover page stapled to the top). This will help you review for semester tests and the AP exam in May.

*Unit 3: Political Participation outlines* (this includes all FOUR outlines put in order with a cover page stapled on top).

## **Learning Objectives for this Unit:**

4.1 Describe the different structures, powers, and functions of each house of Congress.

4.2 Explain how the structure, powers, and functions of both houses of Congress affect the policymaking process.

4.3 Explain how congressional behavior is influenced by election processes, partisanship, and divided government.

## Unit 4: Interactions Among Branches of Government Unit Overview

**Because power is widely distributed and checks prevent one branch from usurping powers from the others, institutional actors are in the position where they must both compete and cooperate in order to govern.**

The three key institutions of the federal government are Congress, the presidency, and the courts. The bureaucracy, which implements policy, is seen by some as an extension of the executive branch and by others as, in effect, a fourth branch of government because of the discretion it can exercise in carrying out policy directives. The Constitution grants specific powers to Congress, the president, and the courts, and in addition, each branch exercises informal powers (developed through political practice, tradition, and legislation). Because checks and balances are designed to prevent one branch from becoming too powerful, Congress and the president, for example, will sometimes cooperate and sometimes compete in governance.

The powers of Congress are set forth in Article I of the Constitution. Congress is bicameral, with the Senate representing states and the House of Representatives reflecting each state's population. Congress passes laws that cover a wide range of policy areas, and each chamber has different responsibilities and rules. The federal budget is a good example of how the president and Congress must cooperate and compromise. While Congress is empowered to develop and pass a budget, in the modern era the president typically proposes one, which may lead to ideological debate. There are several reasons it is difficult for Congress to pass legislation, including ideological differences. Much of the work of Congress is done in committees, and congressional committees also exercise oversight to ensure that the bureaucracy is carrying out policies as intended.

The expressed powers of the president are set forth in Article II of the Constitution. The president has a significant degree of informal power, which has grown over time. Under the Constitution, Congress checks the power of the president, and this leads to tension between the two branches over both foreign and domestic affairs. The president and Congress have several interrelated powers. For example, while Congress passes legislation, the president must sign it into law. The president appoints judges and members of the cabinet, who must be confirmed by the Senate. The president also oversees most of the bureaucracy. Technology has impacted the president's use of the "bully pulpit" to influence public opinion. In addition to reaching out to the public through televised press conferences and the State of the Union message, the president is increasingly making use of social media to communicate views to a vast audience.

The federal judiciary, including the Supreme Court, established under Article III, is designed to be an independent branch of government. The Court's most far-reaching power, judicial review, was justified in *Marbury v. Madison* (1803), where the Court declared that it had the constitutional authority to overturn acts of Congress, state laws, or executive action deemed to be unconstitutional. Thus, judicial review serves as an important check on other branches of government. Appointed for life, justices are somewhat insulated from public opinion. It is not surprising that over the years the Court has handed down decisions that have been unpopular and controversial. Congress and the president may influence the Court through the appointment process, by refusing to implement a Court decision, or by passing legislation that changes the Court's jurisdiction.

Using a merit-based civil service system for all staff except top-level political appointees, the federal bureaucracy carries out laws to regulate a wide range of individual and commercial activities. Bureaucrats implement policy using their discretionary and rule-making authority. Both Congress and the president can hold the bureaucracy accountable in policy implementation, and the two branches will sometimes be in conflict over whether or not administrative agencies are carrying out the letter and spirit of the law.

### Essential Questions

- How do the branches of the national government compete and cooperate in order to govern?
- To what extent have changes in the powers of each branch affected how responsive and accountable the national government is in the 21st century?

## **Essential Knowledge for Unit 4: Interactions Among Branches of Government--Congress**

CON-3.A.1: The Senate is designed to represent states equally, while the House is designed to represent the population.

CON-3.A.2: Different chamber sizes and constituencies influence formality of debate.

CON-3.A.3: Coalitions in Congress are affected by term-length differences.

CON-3.A.4: The enumerated and implied powers in the Constitution allow the creation of public policy by Congress, which includes:

- Passing a federal budget, raising revenue, and coining money
- Declaring war and maintaining the armed forces
- Enacting legislation that addresses a wide range of economic, environmental, and social issues based on the Necessary and Proper Clause

CON-3.B.1: By design, the different structures, powers, and functions of the U.S. Senate and House of Representatives affect the policy-making process.

CON-3.B.2: Though both chambers rely on committees to conduct hearings and debate bills under consideration, different constitutional responsibilities of the House and Senate affect the policy-making process.

CON-3.B.3: Chamber-specific procedures, rules, and roles that impact the policy-making process include:

- Number of chamber and debate rules that set the bar high for building majority support
- Roles of Speaker of the House, President of the Senate, party leadership, and committee leadership in both chambers
- Filibuster and cloture
- Holds and unanimous consent in the Senate
- Role of Rules Committee, Committee of the Whole, and discharge petitions in the House
- Treaty ratification and confirmation role of the Senate

CON-3.B.4: Congress must generate a budget that addresses both discretionary and mandatory spending, and as entitlement costs grow, discretionary spending opportunities will decrease unless tax revenues increase or the budget deficit increases.

CON-3.B.5: Pork barrel legislation and logrolling affect lawmaking in both chambers.

CON-3.C.1: Congressional behavior and governing effectiveness are influenced by:

- Ideological divisions within Congress that can lead to gridlock or create the need for negotiation and compromise w Gerrymandering, redistricting, and unequal representation of constituencies have been partially addressed by such Court decisions as Baker v. Carr (1961), which opened the door to equal protection challenges to redistricting and stated the “one person, one vote” doctrine, and the no-racial gerrymandering decision in Shaw v. Reno (1993)
- Elections that have led to a divided government, including partisan votes against presidential initiatives and congressional refusal to confirm appointments of “lame-duck” presidents of the opposite party
- Different role conceptions of “trustee,” “delegate,” and “politico” as related to constituent accountability in each chamber

## KEY TERMS: INTERACTION AMONG BRANCHES--CONGRESS

1. **Appropriation:** money that Congress has allocated to be spent.
2. **Appropriations Committee:** congressional committee that deals with federal spending.
3. **Casework:** personal work done by a member of Congress for his constituents.
4. **Closed rule:** Rules Committee rule that bans amendments to a bill.
5. **Cloture:** Senate motion to end a filibuster that requires a 3/5 vote.
6. **Conference committee:** works out a compromise between differing House-Senate versions of a bill.
7. **Constituents:** the people who are represented by elected officials.
8. **Discharge petition:** a motion to force a bill to the House floor that has been bottled up in committee.
9. **Filibuster:** nonstop Senate debate that prevents a bill from coming to a vote.
10. **Finance Committee:** Senate committee that handles tax bills.
11. **Franking privilege:** allows members of Congress to send mail postage free.
12. **Gerrymandering:** redrawing district lines to favor one party at the expense of the other.
13. **Hold:** Senate maneuver that allows a Senator to stop or delay consideration of a bill or presidential appointment.
14. **Impeachment:** House action that formally charges an official with wrongdoing. Conviction requires 2/3 vote from the Senate.
15. **Legislative oversight:** ongoing process of congressional monitoring of the executive branch to ensure that the latter complies with the law.
16. **Legislative veto:** process in which Congress overturned rules and regulations proposed by executive branch agencies. Struck down in 1983.
17. **Logrolling:** when two members of Congress agree to vote for each other's bill.
18. **Mark up:** committee action to amend a proposed bill.
19. **Open rule:** House Rules Committee rule that allows amendments to a bill.
20. **Pocket veto:** presidential killing of a bill by inaction after Congress adjourns.
21. **Pork barrel:** wasteful congressional spending, e.g. funding for a Lawrence Welk museum in North Dakota.
22. **Quorum:** minimum number of members needed for the House or Senate to meet.
23. **Reapportionment:** reallocation of House seats to the states on the basis of changes in state populations, as determined by the census.
24. **Redistricting:** redrawing of congressional district boundaries by the party in power of the state legislature.
25. **Rider:** amendment to a bill that has little to do with that bill. Also known as a **nongermane amendment**.
26. **Rules Committee:** the "traffic cop" of the House that sets the legislative calendar and issues rules for debate on a bill.
27. **Seniority system:** tradition in which the Senator from the majority party with the most years of service on a committee becomes the chairman of that committee.
28. **Standing committees:** the permanent congressional committees that handle legislation.
29. **Sunset laws:** laws that automatically expire after a given time.
30. **Ways and Means Committee:** House committee that handles tax bills.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**DVD Viewing Guide for *The Congress* by Ken Burns**

AP US Government & Politics

**Before we begin our study of Congress, ask 3-5 questions that you know that you need to know about this institution.**

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.

For each DVD clip this unit, complete the section as you watch

*The Congress* clip 1

List 3-5 important people, events, procedures, problems, checks, etc. from this section of the documentary

Quotation from this section to remember:

*The Congress* clip 2

List 3-5 important people, events, procedures, problems, checks, etc. from this section of the documentary

Quotation from this section to remember:

