Learning Objectives. Students will be able to:

- Simulate the law-making process of the US Congress.
- Explain the role of compromise in the lawmaking process.
- Make connections between bill amendments and the values it represents.
- Evaluate cause and effect relationships.

**Time Needed:** Approx. 3 class periods

**Materials/Equipment:**
- Microsoft PowerPoint
- Access to iCivics.org for game play
- Interactive white board *(optional but ideal)*
- Teaching bundle PowerPoint presentation
- Student worksheets

**Copy Instructions:**
Student Activities *(2 pages; class set)*
Assessment *(1 page; class set)*

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**Preparation**

Download the PowerPoint presentation. It contains all the activities for the teaching bundle.

Photocopy and distribute the paper version of the student activities if you want students to have them. (You can teach the bundle without paper if you wish.)

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**1. Starter Activity**

Display the “Bicameral Brainstorm” activity slides.

Ask students to brainstorm their ideas on the paper handout, then call on students to write their ideas on the board.

Save a copy of the slide with the students’ ideas if you are using an interactive whiteboard.

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**2. Mini-Lesson**

Display the first slide in “The Lawmaking Process” activity, pausing for discussion.

Ask students to fill in the thought bubbles on their handout for activity two.

Display the remaining “The Lawmaking Process” slides, stopping to discuss each, and allowing time for students to note each step on activity three in their handout.

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**4. Game**

Direct students to iCivics.org and have them play the game LawCraft. Alternatively, you can try having the class play as a group using your interactive whiteboard.

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**5. Follow-Up Activity**

Display the first “A Tale of Two Bills” activity slide and read through the contents.

Call on students to come to the board and identify the areas of the bill that can considered common ground. (If you wish, have them complete the paper version first.)

Display the second, empty bill slide and ask the students to determine what a new compromise bill would contain.

Call on students to come to the board and add the language to the slide. (They may do this on their hand out first.)

Discuss the areas of compromise that were easier or harder. Ask students to discuss why compromise is important between the chambers of Congress.

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**6. Assessment**

Work through the Mini Quiz slides, pausing to discuss and review with each slide.

Distribute and assign the paper version of the assessment if you wish.

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1. **Bicameral Brainstorm.** What do you already know about the United States Congress? Fill in the Venn diagram with as much as you can remember.

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SENATE          HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

BOTH
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2. **Where do bills come from?** Use what you have learned from the lesson to fill in the missing information.

Can you think of any more sources for the idea behind a bill? List them here:
3. The Lawmaking Process. Keep track of the seven steps that a bill takes before it becomes a law. Title each step, and note the actions taken.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Step 1</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Step 2</td>
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<td>Step 3</td>
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<td>Step 4</td>
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<td>Step 5</td>
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<tr>
<td>Step 6</td>
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<tr>
<td>Step 7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

4. A Tale of Two Bills. Use the Senate and House bill to create a compromise version below. Make sure to have two items from the originals!

Compromise Bill
A. House or Senate or Both? Read each statement and place the correct letter in the diagram to show where it applies.

A. Members of this chamber represent entire states.
B. Members of this chamber represent a district within a state.
C. A bill must pass this chamber before it is sent to the president.

B. Missing Pieces. Complete each statement with the missing word or number, using the word bank.

51 bicameral 66 constituents

1. Congress is made of two chambers, the Senate and House of Representatives. Another word for two chambers is ______________.
2. The lowest percentage of support a bill can receive and still pass the House or Senate is ________%.
3. Members of the Congress represent the voters back home. These voters are called ________________.
4. If the president vetoes a bill, it can still become law if it gets ____% support in both the House and Senate.

C. Multiple Choice. Select the best answer for each question.

____ 5. Which of these is not a source of ideas for new bills?
   a. Letters and messages from citizens
   b. Interest Groups
   c. Top Secret Congress to-do list

____ 6. Which is an example of compromise?
   a. One side wins everything, and the other side loses everything
   b. Both sides give up a little and agree on items they have in common

D. True or False? Select the best answer for each question. Write true or false in the space provided.

_______ 7. If the House and Senate version of a bill do not agree, it is thrown in the trash.
_______ 8. Congress is made up of two chambers, the Senate and House of Representatives.
_______ 9. The President of the United States has the final say on whether a bill becomes a law.

Select one false statement and rewrite it, correcting the mistake below.
A. House or Senate or Both? Read each statement and place the correct letter in the diagram to show where it applies.

A. Members of this chamber represent entire states.
B. Members of this chamber represent a district within a state.
C. A bill must pass this chamber before it is sent to the president.

B. Missing Pieces. Complete each statement with the missing word or number, using the word bank.

bicameral 51 66 constituents

1. Congress is made of two chambers, the Senate and House of Representatives. Another word for two chambers is **bicameral**.
2. The lowest percentage of support a bill can receive and still pass the House or Senate is **51**%.
3. Members of the Congress represent the voters back home. These voters are called **constituents**.
4. If the president vetoes a bill, it can still become law if it gets **66**% support in both the House and Senate.

C. Multiple Choice. Select the best answer for each question.

C. 5. Which of these is not a source of ideas for new bills?
   a. Letters and messages from citizens
   b. Interest Groups
   c. Top Secret Congress to-do list

B. 6. Which is an example of compromise?
   a. One side wins everything, and the other side loses everything
   b. Both sides give up a little and agree on items they have in common

D. True or False? Select the best answer for each question. Write **true** or **false** in the space provided.

true 7. If the House and Senate version of a bill do not agree, it is thrown in the trash.
false 8. Congress is made up of two chambers, the Senate and House of Representatives.
false 9. The President of the United States has the final say on whether a bill becomes a law.

Select one false statement and rewrite it, correcting the mistake below.

*If the House and Senate version of a bill do not agree, it is sent to a COMPROMISE COMMITTEE. CONGRESS has the final say on whether a bill becomes law. (Power of a veto override.)*
1. **Bicameral Brainstorm.** What do you already know about the United States Congress? Fill in the Venn diagram with as much as you can remember.

*Answers will vary, but here are some suggestions.*

- **SENATE**
  - 100 Senators
  - 2 per state
  - 6 year terms
  - represent whole states

- **HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES**
  - 435 representatives
  - 2 year terms
  - represents a district

- **BOTH**
  - bicameral
  - elected
  - Capitol
  - Make bills
  - State representation depends on population

2. **Where do bills come from?** Use what you have learned from the lesson to fill in the missing information.

- Citizen letters and emails
- Challenges facing the nation
- Interest groups
- Research on issues

Can you think of any more sources for the idea behind a bill? List them here:

*Answers will vary*
3. The Lawmaking Process. Keep track of the seven steps that a bill takes before it becomes a law. Title each step, and note the actions taken.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Step 1</th>
<th>The Proposal: get an idea and write a proposal, then get support</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Step 2</td>
<td>The Introduction: bill gets a number, read aloud, send to committee</td>
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<tr>
<td>Step 3</td>
<td>The Report: if approved, committee sends to whole chamber for debate</td>
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<td>Step 4</td>
<td>The Floor Debate: bill is read, debated on the floor, changes are suggested</td>
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<tr>
<td>Step 5</td>
<td>The Vote: updated bill read again, vote is held (yea, nay, present)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Step 6</td>
<td>The Delivery: bill goes to other chamber, it’s read-debated-updated-vote is held (Steps 2-5)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Step 7</td>
<td>The Vote (Part 2): if approved in both chambers it goes to president to sign/veto, 2/3 override of veto possible</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

4. A Tale of Two Bills. Use the Senate and House bill to create a compromise version below. Make sure to have two items from the originals!

**Compromise Bill**

*Students may come to their own conclusions, but here is a hint:*

- Provide a tax credit to electric vehicle buyers (discuss difference in $ amount, split the difference, go with the lower/ higher number?)
- Lower pollution rates of cars and trucks (discuss if they should go with more or fewer details)