WHO GOVERN?
1. Are members of Congress representative of the American people?
2. Does Congress normally do what most citizens want it to do?

TO WHAT ENDS?
1. Should Congress run under strong leadership?
2. Should Congress act more quickly?
**Congress Versus Parliament**

- **Congress**
  - Independent representatives of their districts or states
  - Principal work is representation and action

- **Parliament**
  - Loyal to national party leadership
  - Principal work is debate

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### How Things Work

**The Powers of Congress**
The powers of Congress are found in Article I, section 8, of the Constitution.

- To lay and collect taxes, duties, imposts, and excises
- To borrow money
- To regulate commerce with foreign nations and among the states
- To establish rules for naturalization (that is, becoming a citizen and bankruptcy)
- To coin money, sell its value, and punish counterfeiters
- To fix the standard of weights and measures
- To establish post offices and post roads
- To issue patents and copyrights to inventors and authors
- To create courts inferior to (below) the Supreme Court
- To define and punish piracies, felonies on the high seas, and crimes against the law of nations
- To declare war
- To raise and support an army and navy and make rules for their governance
- To provide for a militia (meaning to the states the right to appoint militia officers and to train the militia under congressional rules)
- To exercise exclusive legislative power over the seat of government (the District of Columbia and other places purchased to be federal facilities [Fort, arsenals, dockyards, and “other needful buildings”])
- To “make all laws which shall be necessary and proper for carrying into execution the foregoing powers, and all other powers vested by this Constitution in the government of the United States.” (This “necessary and proper,” or “elastic,” clause has been generously interpreted by the Supreme Court, as explained in Chapter 2.)

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*In January 2011, Democratic Speaker Nancy Pelosi turned over her gavel to Republican John Boehner who became speaker after the large Republican victory in the 2010 election.*
Three powerful Speakers of the House: Thomas B. Reed (1889–1891, 1895–1899) (left), Joseph G. Cannon (1903–1911) (center), and Sam Rayburn (1941–1947, 1949–1953, 1955–1961) (right). Reed put an end to a filibuster in the House by refusing to allow dilatory motions and by counting as "present"—for purposes of a quorum—members in the House even though they were not voting. Cannon further enlarged the Speaker’s power by refusing to recognize members who wished to speak without Cannon’s approval and by increasing the power of the Rules Committee, over which he presided. Rayburn’s influence rested more on his ability to persuade than on his formal powers.

The Evolution of Congress

- Bicameral (two chamber) legislature
- House of Representatives
- Senate
- Centralization vs. decentralization

One of the most powerful Speakers of the House, Henry Clay, is shown here addressing the U. S. Senate around 1850.

A cartoon from Puck in 1890 expressed popular resentment over the “Millionaires Club,” as the Senate had become known.
Who is in Congress?

- Sex and Race
- Incumbency
  - Marginal districts
  - Safe districts
- Party

Source: Congressional Quarterly, various years

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Rep. Paul Ryan (R-WI) in 2011 became the new chair of the House Budget Committee where he oversaw the preparation of a response to Pres. Obama’s budget plan.

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Rep. Gabrielle Giffords (D-AZ) recovering from being shot in the head by a homicidal maniac.
Do Members Represent Their Voters?

- **Representational View**—members vote to please their constituents
- **Organizational View**—members vote to please fellow members of Congress
- **Attitudinal View**—members vote on the basis of their own beliefs
A Polarized Congress

- A more ideological perspective has been brought to Congress.
- Congress’ most liberal members are Democrats.
- Congress’ most conservative members are Republicans.
- Are voters closer to the center of the political spectrum?

The Organization of Congress: Parties and Caucuses

- Party Organization of the Senate
- Party Structure in the House
- The Strength of Party Structures
- Party Unity
- Caucuses
Note: A party vote occurs when the specified percentage (or more) of one party votes against the specified percentage (or more) of the other party.


The Organization of Congress:
Committees

- Standing Committees
- Select Committees
- Joint Committees
- Conference Committees
- House
- Senate

Standing Committees of the Senate

Major Committees
- Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry
- Appropriations
- Armed Services
- Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs
- Budget
- Commerce, Science, and Transportation
- Energy and Natural Resources
- Environment and Public Works
- Finance
- Foreign Relations
- Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions
- Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs
- Judiciary

Minor Committees
- Rules and Administration
- Small Business and Entrepreneurship
- Women's Issues

Select Committees
- Aging
- Ethics
- Indian Affairs
- Intelligence

*Despite the rules, some senators serve on more than two major committees.
Reps. Steve Scalise, R-La., holds a photo of an oil-covered pelican as he questions BP CEO Tony Hayward on Capitol Hill in Washington, June 17, 2010, during the House Oversight and Investigations subcommittee hearing on the role of BP in the Deepwater Horizon explosion and oil spill.

The Organization of Congress: Staff and Specialized Offices

- Tasks of Staff Members
- Staff Agencies
  - Congressional Research Service (CRS)
  - General Accounting Office (GAO)
  - Office of Technology Assessment (OTA)
  - Congressional Budget Office (CBO)
How a Bill Becomes a Law

- Introducing a Bill
- Legislative Productivity
- Study by Committee
- Floor Debate – The House
- Floor Debate – The Senate
- Methods of Voting
Reducing Power and Perks

- Term Limits?
- New Ethics Laws
- Organizational Changes
- Pork-Barrel Legislation
- Franking Privilege

The electronic voting system in the House of Representatives displays each member's name on the wall of the chamber. By inserting a plastic card in a box fastened to the chairs, a member can vote “Yea,” “Nay,” or “Present,” and the result is shown opposite his or her name.

Rules on Congressional Ethics

Senate
- Gifts: No gifts, in money, meals, or things totaling $100 or more from anyone except a spouse or personal friend.
- Lobbyists may not pay for gifts, official travel, legal defense facts, or charitable contributions to groups controlled by senators.
- Fees: No fees for lectures or writing (“honoria”), except that fees of up to $2,600 may go to a senator-designated charity.
- Outside earned income may not exceed 15 percent of a senator’s salary.
- Ex-senators may not try to influence members of Congress for one year after leaving the Senate.

House
- Gifts: No gifts, in money, meals, or things totaling $100 or more from anyone except a spouse or personal friend.
- Lobbyists may not offer gifts or pay for travel, even if a lobbyist is a spouse or personal friend.
- Travel: House members may travel at the expense of others if travel is for officially connected meetings.
- Fees: No honoraria for House members.
- Ex-house members may not lobby Congress for one year after leaving office.
MEMORANDUM

To: Representative Peter Skerry
From: Martha Bayles, legislative aide
Subject: The size of the House of Representatives

The House can decide how big it wishes to be. When it was created, there was one representative for every 30,000 people. Now there is one for every 600,000. In most other democracies, each member of parliament represents far fewer than 600,000 people. Doubling the size of the House may be a way of avoiding term limits.

WHAT WOULD YOU DO?

Arguments for:

1. Doubling the size of the House would reduce the huge demand for constituent services each member now faces.
2. A bigger House would represent more shades of opinion more fairly.
3. Each member could raise less campaign money because his or her campaign would be smaller.
WHAT WOULD YOU DO?

Arguments against:
1. A bigger House would be twice as hard to manage, and it would take even longer to pass legislation.
2. Campaigns in districts of 300,000 people would cost as much as ones in districts with 600,000 people.
3. Interest groups do a better job of representing public opinion than would a House with more members.

WHAT WOULD YOU DO?

Your decision:
Increase size of House?
Do not increase size of House?