

MULTIPLE-CHOICE SOLUTIONS

1. **D** The Senate is characterized by its highest positions actually having very little power. By Constitutional provision, the president of the Senate is the vice president of the United States. A vice president can only vote in case of a tie and seldom attends Senate sessions. The Senate selects from among the majority party a largely ceremonial *president pro tempore*, usually the most senior member in the party. The *president pro tempore* is the official chair, but since the job has no real powers, the job of presiding over the Senate is usually given to a junior senator. The real leaders of the Senate are the majority leader and the minority leader. The Senate majority leader is often the most influential person in the Senate, and has the right to be the first senator heard on the floor. The majority leader determines the Senate's agenda and usually has much to say about committee assignments. The majority leader may consult with the minority leader in setting the agenda, but the minority leader generally only has as much say as the majority leader is willing to allow. The Senate also has party whips that serve much the same functions as they serve in the House.
2. **C** The speaker of the House is the most important leadership position in the House, but the position's power is dependent upon support and unity of the majority party. This office is provided for in the Constitution and even though it says, "The House of Representatives shall choose their Speaker and other Officers," in truth the majority party selects its candidate, who almost always is the person selected. The speaker typically has held other leadership positions and is a senior member of the party. Around the turn of the 20th century, the speaker was all-powerful, especially under the leadership of Joe Cannon and Thomas Reed. A revolt by the membership in 1910 gave some powers to committees, but the speaker still has important powers.



3. **B** Congress does not have the authority to fire a bureaucrat. Even those in the executive branch who do have authority often are unable to get rid of employees because of the many protections they have. Civil service rules that are meant to protect workers from partisan politics have made it difficult to fire anyone for poor performance. Congress does have the authority to create, merge or dismantle agencies, and members of Congress often have influence over the appointment of agency heads. The president creates the budget that would determine the budget of agencies and Congress does review and approve it. But in the case described cutting funding would not be recommended as it will need to investigate and determine how to clean up the spill. Congressional committees hold hearings to provide oversight of possible agency abuses but the hearings are held in the open in order to provide transparency of the process.
4. **B** After a bill passes through a standing committee in the House, it goes to the Rules Committee, where a set of rules are devised that govern the way the bill is treated on the floor. A bill is said to be under “closed rules” if a great many restrictions are placed on it, such as strict time limits and the requirement that no amendments may be offered from the floor. A bill under “open rules” would have the opposite situation: generous debate times and amendments permitted from the floor.
5. **A** Both houses of Congress and the president share the responsibility of approving legislation. Even though Congress is charged with passing legislation, the president must sign bills into law. The president is also expected to make policy proposals in many areas. Presidents often initiate foreign policy, economic goals and plans, and programs that improve the quality of life of citizens. Franklin Roosevelt set a precedent when he shepherded his New Deal policies through the legislature, taking responsibility for programs to get the country out of the Great Depression. The Senate, but not the House, is charged with confirming treaties, ambassadors, judges and some heads of the bureaucracy that the president nominates.
6. **C** In the Senate the top leadership position is the majority leader chosen by the members of the majority party. The majority leader schedules floor action on bills, organizes votes on bills, and influences committee assignments. The majority leader in the House is subordinate to the speaker of the House, the true leader of the House. Like the majority leader in the Senate, the majority leader in the House influences committee assignments and organizes votes, but the majority leader in the House does this as an ally to the Speaker. The majority leader of the House may, depending on job performance, become elevated to Speaker of the House.
7. **D** Senators must be 30 years old, have been a U.S. citizen for nine years and must live in the state that he/she represents. Members of the House must be 25 years old, have been a U.S. citizen for seven years, and must live in the state that he/she represents (it is not a Constitutional provision that a member of the House live in the district represented). The president must be 35 years old, be born in the United States, and have been a resident within the United States for fourteen years. The Constitution has no such requirements stated for justices on the Supreme Court.
8. **B** The Constitution prohibits Congress from exercising several powers including to tax articles of export from any state. The shipment of interstate articles may be regulated by Congress such as apples shipped from Washington to Wisconsin. Other powers prohibited to Congress include passing ex-post facto laws, Bills of Attainder, and granting titles of nobility. Congress also may not suspend the right of *habeas corpus* unless public safety demands it.
9. **A** Although the number of Hispanics in the House and Senate has increased from 38 in 2015, to 50 in 2019, the number of African Americans has risen from 48 to 58 during the same period. The groups make up fairly equal percentages of the total American population, so Hispanics are somewhat less well represented than are African Americans.



10. **C** It is important to note that Congress has become less male and less white. Between 1950 and 2014, the number of women senators rose from 2 to 20, and female representatives have increased from 10 to 88. The mid-term election in 2018 had a record number of women candidates for Congress which resulted in higher numbers of women being elected. The 116th Congress has 131 women compared with 58 African Americans, 50 Hispanics and 96 with military experience.
11. **D** The number of Representatives with military service has decreased from the period of 2015 to 2019. There were 81 serving in 2015, 76 in 2017 and 78 in 2019. The chart does not provide information on any correlations between age/length of service in the House and military service, so we cannot assume that there are any.
12. **C** Although Congress is organized formally through its party leadership and committee systems, equally important is the informal network of caucuses, groupings of members of Congress sharing the same interests or points of view. There are roughly more than one hundred of these groups, and their goal is to shape the agenda of Congress, which they do by elevating their issues or interests to a prominent place in the daily workings of Congress. Caucus members keep track of legislation important to the caucus, gain information on the issues, and leadership experience by participating in caucuses. Members are also better able to explain their positions on bills that affect their constituents.
13. **A** Standing committees are designed to handle the process of considering and revising bills. However, the number of bills proposed during a legislative session is constantly rising, so that today most revisions are done by sub-committees. The general procedure is for committee chairmen to divert bills to sub-committee chairmen, who in turn have a large say in how serious consideration a bill actually gets. The “marking up” process occurs among subcommittee members, and the bill is then presented to the full committee, and eventually to the floor for vote from the full membership. Of course, a bill may die at any given step, so that only a few make it through the entire process.
14. **B** Marking up a bill occurs in sub-committees as the members amend and rewrite a bill after they have researched and reviewed the bill. After the bills are “marked-up” they are presented to the full committee for its consideration. If the committee approves of the bill it will then be presented to the floor for a vote from the full membership.
15. **C** For many years states often drew districts of unequal sizes and population. As a result, some citizens had better access to their representatives than others did. After the Supreme Court ruling in *Baker v. Carr* (1962), which permitted voters to challenge the constitutionality of voting districts in the courts, the problem was addressed by the Supreme Court in the 1964 case, *Wesberry v. Sanders*. In *Wesberry*, the Court ordered that districts be drawn so that one person’s vote would be as equal as possible to another (the “one man one vote” decision).
16. **A** The Supreme Court, in *Baker v. Carr* (1962), permitted voters to challenge the constitutionality of voting districts in the courts. The case was based on a challenge of Tennessee voters who complained that the state had not conducted a redistricting since 1901. The decision set an important precedent as two cases in 1964 (*Wesberry v. Sanders* and *Reynolds v. Sims*) required the establishment of electoral districts of equal population on the principle of “one man one vote.”



17. **B** *Federalist #51*, written by James Madison, explains how the structure of the new government under the Constitution provides a system of checks and balances between the departments (branches) in order to control concentrated power. Madison also states that “the legislative authority necessarily predominates. The remedy for this inconveniency is to divide the legislature into difference branches...” He means that the legislature will be bicameral or divided in order to prevent the legislature from becoming so powerful that it would dominate the executive and judiciary.
18. **A** *Federalist #51*, written by James Madison, stresses the fact that the structure of the new government provides ways to divide government power to prevent government abuse of power. “We see it particularly displayed in all the subordinate distributions of power, where the constant aim is to divide and arrange the several offices in such a manner as that each may be a check on the other that the private interest of every individual may be a sentinel over the public rights.” In this particular passage from *Federalist #51* Madison assures the people that a focus of the framers was to design the government so that the branches will have power to check on the other branches to ensure that the power of the central government will have a constant way to balance that power. This will ensure that rights of the people will be protected.
19. **C** The president makes treaties with foreign nations, but only with the “advice and consent” of the Senate. Two-thirds of the Senate must approve a treaty; a president’s signature is not enough to make it binding. This provision is a check of the executive by the legislature. However, presidents have gotten around this provision by using executive agreements made between the president and other heads of state. Such agreements do not require Senate approval, although Congress may withhold funding to implement them. Whereas treaties are binding on future presidents, executive agreements are not.
20. **D** The Appropriations Committee is responsible for funding programs within the limits of the legislation. A member of the committee would be in a position to ensure that funds are sent to his/her district since the committee would have to clear any specific spending proposals. Since appropriations approval is done annually, membership on this committee provides many opportunities for committee members to send money back to their districts.
21. **D** The Senate does not have a Rules Committee; the House does, primarily because its larger size does not lend itself to open debate. The Rules Committee in the House plays a key role in shaping legislation because it sets very important rules for debate when the bill is presented to the House after it leaves the committee. A closed rule (sometimes called a “gag rule”) sets strict time limits on debates and forbids amendments from the floor, except those from the presenting committee. Under a closed rule, members not on the committee have little choice but to vote for or against the bill as it is. An open rule permits amendments and often has less strict time limits, allowing for input from other members. The committee allows open rules whenever it does not think it important to restrict the discussion/revisions from the entire membership. No time limits are set on debate in the Senate which permits the possibility of a filibuster—when a Senator or Senators continue talking in order to prevent a vote on the bill. A filibuster can only be stopped by a vote of cloture which takes 60 members to approve.
22. **B** The states of Texas and Florida will gain the largest advantage in the Electoral College due to an increased number of electoral votes. Texas gained four electoral votes and Florida gained two. Some other states gained an advantage such as Georgia, Utah and Arizona but Texas and Florida has the greater advantage as they had a larger increase in House districts and representatives which translates into increased electors in the Electoral College.



23. **A** Reapportionment of House members and, therefore electors, takes place after the census which takes place every 10 years—the first one took place in 1790. Once the population count is made the 435 members of the House is reapportioned to the states based on the number of people gained or lost in the states. The 435 member House was set in 1911 due to the population increase. More recently those gaining in population have been in the south and west; whereas the states in the northeast and northern midwest have been losing population. Once representatives have been reapportioned each state must examine its house district maps and determine state redistricting based on the census results.
24. **C** The cartoon expresses the belief that Congress is unconcerned about the costs of pork projects. The member of Congress indicates he has no intention of ending pork. The size of the pig indicates the amount of pork that continues to go to interest groups who, in turn, support the re-election of members of Congress. This means that expensive projects may be put in the budget and passed on to the taxpayer. Many of these projects benefit narrow local interests. One example is the Transportation Equity Act, 2005 which included the “Bridge to Nowhere” that became very controversial. It provided a bridge for a small city in Alaska (about 9000) residents) to an island (about 50 residents) where the airport was located. Criticisms ranged from the cost of the project (approximately \$200 million), the small number of people immediately impacted, to the fact that a ferry service already existed. The “Bridge to Nowhere” is just one example of multiple pork programs that members from both parties try to get sent back to their constituents.
25. **B** One of the problems reflected in the cartoon is that pork projects benefit special interests and members of Congress. Congress members bring projects back to their constituents that help them get reelected. Critics point out that such actions do not insure that federal money goes to the places where it is most needed, but to districts or states whose representatives are most aggressive or most in need of votes. An example was the mammoth 2005 Consolidated Appropriations Act, which funded about 11,000 projects, from building a Civil War Theme Park, renovating and building museums and health care facilities, constructing several different halls of fame, and funding community swimming pools and parking garages. The act was criticized largely because so much of the money went to constituencies well represented on the Appropriations Committees in Congress. The law also emphasizes another problem with pork—the fact that special interests benefit from pork. Special interest groups support the reelection of Congress members in order to continue receiving support for their special projects.