

Senate Simulation

Student Directions Sheet

Purpose: To allow students to experience the congressional process and obtain an understanding of the basic process utilized to pass a bill.

1. Writing a Bill- each student will be required to write a bill on the given worksheet.
 - a. Choose a topic
Suggestions: gun control, capitol punishment, mandatory sentencing, insanity defense, illegal aliens, environment, immigration, abortion, direct presidential election, tobacco and alcohol taxes, campaign finance, welfare reform, defense, gay rights, education. (**no** constitutional amendment propositions)
 - b. Remember when you write your bill that it must be for the best welfare of the **entire nation**, it must not favor a particular region, state, or political party.
 - c. As you write your bill you also will be organizing your arguments for the floor debate. Be sure you can document your evidence in favor of passage of your bill.
 - d. Parts of a bill: (see bill worksheet)
 - A description of what the bill will do (definitions)
 - Who the bill will effect
 - The controlling executive agency
 - Penalties

2. Caucus Meeting- Each student will choose their party affiliation and draw their seniority (years experience in the Senate). Each party will then meet to establish party leadership including whip, and committee membership. The caucus will also discuss strategy for simulation.

3. Formal Introduction- Each student will formally introduce their bill by reading it in front of the Senate.

4. Standing Committee- The committee must consider and discuss whether there is a need for the legislation before it. It will make changes to the bills, combine similar bills, or simply disregard a bill (kill it). You must give justification for any bills that are killed. Any bills with changes must be rewritten and include all *new* authors. It then will be reported to the leadership to be put on the Senate Calendar.

5. Senate Debate- The Senate will meet as a whole for debate and voting on legislation. See *Simulation Floor Procedures* as how to conduct business.
 - a. Bills will be addressed in the order in which they are on the calendar.
 - b. The *sponsor* of the bill will read it and be the authority on the bill.
 - c. You may argue for or against passage of any of the bills that you are interested in.
 - d. Arguments must be relevant and easily understood.
 - e. You will refer to one another as “Senator _____ (last name)”
 - f. Unlike the real Senate, there will be no filibusters.