

UNIT 2A: CONGRESS

Interactions among Branches of Gov't Vocab

1. **Pork barrel spending** – Legislation that directs specific funds to projects within districts or states.
2. **Logrolling** – Trading of votes on legislation by members of Congress to get their earmarks passed into legislation.
3. **Constituency** – A body of voters in a given area who elect a representative or senator.
4. **Oversight** – Efforts by Congress to ensure that executive branch agencies, bureaus, and cabinet departments, as well as their officials, are acting legally and in accordance with congressional goals.
5. **Apportionment** – The process of determining the number of representatives for each state using census data.
6. **Redistricting** – States' redrawing of boundaries of electoral districts following each census.
7. **Gerrymandering** – The intentional use of redistricting to benefit a specific interest or group of voters.
8. **Partisan gerrymandering** – Drawing of district boundaries into strange shapes to benefit a political party.
9. **Majority-minority district** – A district in which voters of a minority ethnicity constitute an electoral majority within that electoral district.
10. **Malapportionment** – The uneven distribution of the population among legislative districts.
11. **Incumbency** – Being already in office as opposed to running for the first time.
12. **Incumbency advantage** – Institutional advantages held by those already in office who are trying to fend off challengers in an election.
13. **Speaker of the House** – The leader of the House of Reps, chosen by an election of its members.
14. **House majority leader** – The person who is the second in command of the House of Reps.
15. **Whip** – A member of Congress, chosen by his or her party members, whose job is to ensure party unity and discipline.
16. **Minority leader** – The head of the party with the second-highest number of seats in Congress, chosen by the party's members.
17. **Senate majority leader** – The person who has the most power in the Senate is the head of the party with the most seats.
18. **Committee chair** – Leader of a congressional committee who has authority over the committee's agenda.
19. **Discharge petition** – A motion filed by a member of Congress to move a bill out of committee and onto the floor of the House of Representatives for a vote.
20. **House Rules Committee** – A powerful committee that determines when a bill will be subject to debate and vote on the House floor, how long the debate will last, and whether amendments will be allowed on the floor.
21. **Committee of the Whole** – Consists of all members of the House and meets in the House chamber but is governed by different rules, making it easier to consider complex and controversial legislation.
22. **Hold** – A delay placed on legislation by a senator who objects to a bill.
23. **Unanimous consent agreement** – An agreement in the Senate that sets the terms for consideration of a bill.
24. **Filibuster** – A tactic through which an individual senator may use the right of unlimited debate to delay a motion or postpone action on a piece of legislation.
25. **Cloture** – A procedure through which senators can end debate on a bill and proceed to action, provided 60 senators agree to it.
26. **Veto** – The power of the president to reject a bill passed by Congress, sending it back to the originating branch with objections.
27. **Entitlement program** – Program that provides benefits for those who qualify under the law, regardless of income.
28. **Mandatory spending** – Spending required by existing laws that is "locked in" the budget.
29. **Discretionary spending** – Spending for programs and policies at the discretion of Congress and the president.
30. **Delegate role** – The idea that the main duty of a member of Congress is to carry out constituents' wishes.
31. **Trustee role** – The idea that members of Congress should act as trustees, making decisions based on their knowledge and judgment.
32. **Politico role** – Representation where members of Congress balance their choices with the interest of their constituents and parties in making decisions.
33. **Bipartisanship** – Agreement between the parties to work together in Congress to pass legislation.
34. **Gridlock** – A slowdown or halt in Congress' ability to legislate and overcome divisions, especially those based on partisanship.
35. **Divided government** – Control of the presidency and one or both chambers of Congress split between the two major parties.
36. **Lame duck period** – Period at the end of a presidential term when Congress may block presidential initiatives and nominees.

UNIT 2B: THE PRESIDENCY

Interactions among Branches of Gov't Vocab

1. **Executive branch** – The branch of government charged with putting the nation's laws into effect.
2. **Formal (enumerated) powers** – Powers expressly granted in the Constitution.
3. **Informal powers** – Powers not laid out in the Constitution but used to carry out presidential duties.
4. **Treaty** – An agreement with a foreign government negotiated by the president and requiring a two-thirds vote in the Senate to ratify.
5. **State of the Union Address** – The annual speech from the president to Congress updating that branch on the state of national affairs.
6. **Veto** – Formal rejection by the president of a bill that has passed both houses of Congress.
7. **Pocket veto** – An informal veto caused when the president chooses not to sign a bill within ten days, during a time when Congress has adjourned at the end of a session.
8. **Presidential pardon** – Presidential authority to release individuals convicted from a crime of legal consequences and forgive an individual and set aside punishment for a crime.
9. **Executive privilege** – A right claimed by presidents to keep certain conversations, records, and transcripts confidential from outside scrutiny, especially that of Congress.
10. **Executive agreement** – An agreement between a president and another nation that does not have the same durability in the American system as a treaty but does not require Senate ratification.
11. **Signing statement** – Written comments issued by presidents while signing a bill into law that usually consist of political statements or reasons for signing the bill but that may also include a president's interpretation of the law itself.
12. **Executive order** – Policy directives issued by presidents that do not require congressional approval.
13. **War Powers Resolution** – A law passed over President Nixon's veto that restricts the power of the president to maintain troops in combat for more than sixty days without congressional authorization.
14. **Impeachment** – The process of removing a president from office, with articles of impeachment issues by a majority vote in the House of Representatives, followed by a trial in the Senate, with a two-thirds vote necessary to convict and remove.
15. **Executive Office of the President** – A collection of offices within the White House organization designed mainly to provide information to the president.
16. **Bargaining and persuasion** – Informal tool used by the president to persuade members of Congress to support his policy initiatives.
17. **Bully pulpit** – Presidential appeals to the public to pressure other branches of government to support his policies.
18. **Going public** – A tactic through which presidents reach out directly to the American people with the hope that the people will, in turn, put pressure upon their representatives and senators to press for a president's policy goals.

UNIT 2C: THE JUDICIARY

Interactions among Branches of Gov't Vocab

1. **Federal judiciary** – The branch of the federal government that interprets and applies the laws of the nation.
2. **Supreme Court** – The highest level of the federal judiciary, which was established in Article III of the Constitution and serves as the highest court in the nation.
3. **Original jurisdiction** – The authority of a court to act as the first court to hear a case, which included the finding of facts in the case.
4. **Appellate jurisdiction** – The authority of a court to hear and review decisions made by lower courts in the system.
5. **Federalist #78** – Argument by Alexander Hamilton that the federal judiciary would be unlikely to infringe upon rights and liberties but would serve as a check on the other two branches.
6. **Marbury v. Madison (1803)** – A Supreme Court decision that establishes judicial review over federal laws.
7. **Judicial review** – The authority of the Supreme Court to strike down a law or executive action if it conflicts with the Constitution.
8. **Criminal law** – A category of law covering actions determined to harm the community.
9. **Civil law** – A category of law covering cases involving private rights and relationships between individuals and groups.
10. **Federal district courts** – The lowest level of the federal judiciary; these courts usually have original jurisdiction in cases that start at the federal level.
11. **Federal courts of appeals** – The middle level of the federal judiciary; these courts review and hear appeals from the federal district courts.
12. **Precedent** – A judicial decision that guides future courts in handling similar cases.
13. **Stare decisis** – The rule of precedent, whereby a rule or law contained in a judicial decision is commonly viewed as binding on judges whenever the same question is presented.
14. **Majority opinion** – Binding Supreme Court opinions, which serve as precedent for future cases.
15. **Concurring opinion** – An opinion that agrees with the majority decision, offering different or additional reasoning, that does not serve as precedent.
16. **Dissenting opinion** – An opinion that disagrees with the majority opinion and does not serve as precedent.
17. **Judicial restraint** – A philosophy of constitutional interpretation that justices should be cautious in overturning laws.
18. **Judicial activism** – A philosophy of constitutional interpretation that justices should wield the power of judicial review, sometimes creating bold new policies.

UNIT 2D: THE BUREAUCRACY

Interactions among Branches of Gov't Vocab

1. **Federal bureaucracy** – The departments and agencies within the executive branch that carry out the laws of the nation.
2. **Bureaucrat** – An official employed within a government bureaucracy.
3. **Political patronage** – Filling of administrative positions as a reward for support, rather than solely on merit.
4. **Pendleton Act** – An act of Congress that created the first U.S. Civil Service Commission to draw up and enforce rules on hiring, promotion, and tenure of office within the civil service (also known as the Civil Service Reform Act of 1883).
5. **Federal Civil Service** – The merit-based bureaucracy, excluding the armed forces and political appointments.
6. **Spoils system** – A system of public employment based on rewarding party loyalists and friends.
7. **Merit System** – A system of hiring and promotion based on competitive testing results, education, and other qualifications rather than politics and personal connections.
8. **Iron triangle** – Coordinated and mutually beneficial activities of the bureaucracy (federal department or agency), Congress (congressional committee), and interest groups to achieve shared policy goals.
9. **Issue network** – Webs of influence between interest groups, policymakers, and policy advocates.
10. **Implementation** – The bureaucracy's role in putting into action the laws that Congress has passed.
11. **Bureaucratic discretion** – The power to decide how a law is implemented and what Congress meant when it passed the law.
12. **Regulation** – The process through which the federal bureaucracy makes rules that have the force of law, to carry out the laws passed by Congress.
13. **Bureaucratic adjudication** – When the federal bureaucracy settles disputes between parties that arise over the implementation of federal laws or determines which individuals or groups are covered under a regulation or program.
14. **Department** – Usually the largest organization in government with the largest mission; also the highest rank in Federal hierarchy.
15. **Independent (stand-alone) agency** – A government entity that is independent of the legislative, executive, and judicial branches.
16. **Independent regulatory commission** – A government agency or commission with regulatory power whose independence is protected by Congress.
17. **Government corporation** – A government agency that operates like a business corporation, created to secure greater freedom of action and flexibility for a particular program.
18. **Hatch Act** – Federal statute barring federal employees from active participation in certain kinds of politics and protecting them from being fired on partisan grounds.
19. **Oversight** – Legislative or executive review of a particular government program or organization. Can be in response to a crisis of some kind or part of routine review.
20. **Public policy** – A specific course of action that government takes to address a problem.
21. **Policy agenda** – The list of issues that the federal government pays attention to.
22. **Think tank** – A nongovernmental organization that seeks to influence public policy through research and education.