

How a Bill Becomes a Law



Write On
Grade 5

State Standards

- **Governance and Civics**
- **Content Standard: 4.0**
- Governance establishes structures of power and authority in order to provide order and stability. Civic efficacy requires understanding rights and responsibilities, ethical behavior, and the role of citizens within their community, nation, and world.

State Standards

- **Learning Expectations:**
- **4.01 Discuss the structure and purposes of governance.**
- **4.03 Understand the rights, responsibilities, and privileges of citizens living in a democratic republic.**
- **4.04 Recognize how Americans incorporate the principles of the Constitution into their lives.**

In this activity we will:



- Learn facts about how a bill becomes a law.
- Write a paragraph to a representative in Congress in order to inform him/her about a concern your neighborhood has on needed money for saving rural animal shelters.

A member of the House or Senate introduces a bill.



Let's pretend the voters from Senator Jones' state (**constituents**) want a law requiring seatbelts on school buses. He and his staff write a bill, which is a draft (early version) of the proposed law. The bill is then passed out to each Senator.

A Bill is reviewed by committees.



A Standing Committee (a small, permanent group made up of legislators who studies and reports on bills) reviews the bill and does one of three things:

- 1. Sends the bill back with no changes.**
- 2. Makes changes and sends it back.**
- 3. Tables the bill -- In other words, they can do nothing.**

The Bill is reviewed by committees.

If the committee sends it back with no changes, then the bill goes on the Senate's calendar to be voted on. When that day comes, the bill is voted on and over half of the senators (51 of 100) must vote yes to pass it.



The Bill is reviewed by committees.

If the bill is passed by the Senate, it then moves to the other branch of Congress, the House of Representatives. The bill goes to a House committee, which studies the bill, and then is voted on by the representatives. Just as in the Senate, over half of the representatives (218 of 435) must vote yes to pass the bill.



***The House and Senate vote
to approve the bill.
The bill goes to the
President.***



Veto or Sign

If the President vetoes the bill, it returns to congress.

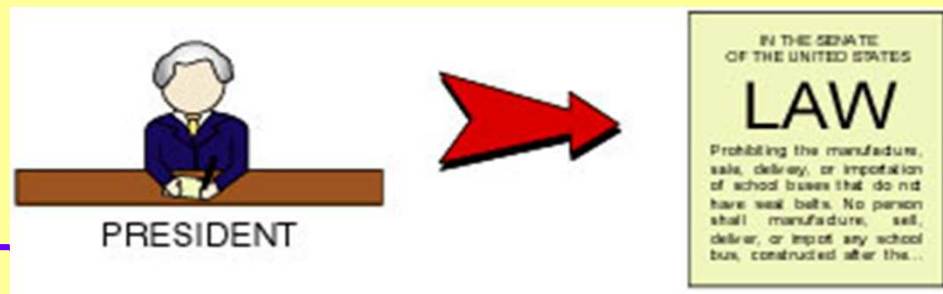
If the President signs The bill, it becomes law.



If the bill gets a 2/3rds majority vote in Congress, it becomes a law.

In this activity we will:

- **Research the following web sites to gather facts about how a bill becomes a law.**
- <http://bensguide.gpo.gov/3-5/lawmaking/laws.html>
- <http://bensguide.gpo.gov/3-5/lawmaking/example.html>
- <http://bensguide.gpo.gov/6-8/lawmaking/index.html>
- <http://www.kidskonnnect.com/Government/GovernmentHome.html>



In this activity we will:

- **Go on the following Web Quest:**
- **Look for information that will help you understand how a bill becomes a law.**
- **Return to the PowerPoint presentation and finish the writing activity.**

<http://www.ccsd.edu/mis/jim/weblessons/fourthgrade/law/index.htm>

http://www.trumanlibrary.org/whistlestop/teacher_lessons/3branches/15c.htm

<http://webpages.acs.ttu.edu/achristi/webquest.html>

<http://clackhi.nclack.k12.or.us/~kunsteld/webquest.html>

Writing Activity

- Now write a paragraph to inform a representative in Congress about needed money for animal shelters.

Extended Activities:

- 5.4.tpi.9. create a proposal and trace the steps of making it into law.
- 5.4.tpi.10. organize a letter writing campaign to elected officials to champion a needed cause;

Credits:

***Harcourt Brace Social Studies
and the following
website***

<http://bensguide.gpo.gov/3-5/lawmaking/example.html>

****A special thanks for the use of this material.***

