

16-How Congress Works

Congressional Rules

- Developed to help Congress operate
- House has more rules than Senate
Why?-
- Parliamentary Procedure-system of rules and traditions which keeps the debate orderly

Congressional Leadership

- Majority Leader**-the majority party chooses one of its members to be their floor leader
- Minority Leader**-the minority party chooses one of its members in each house to be their floor leader

Congressional Leadership

- Party whips**-responsible for gathering and tracking votes, second highest ranking member of their party in House and Senate
- Majority whip, minority whip

House Leaders

- Speaker of the House-basically runs the House of Representatives
 - sets up the calendar and schedules bills for debate
 - third in line for Presidency

Senate Leaders

- Vice President-official leader but only votes when there is a tie and is rarely present
- President Pro-Tempore-mostly symbolic position given to the longest serving member of the majority party

Support

- personal staff of each member of Congress
- Committee staff who function as experts in the committees area
- Library of Congress-largest collection of information in the world
- General Accounting Office-investigates and reports on gov't spending
- Government Budget Office--predicts the costs of gov't programs

Congressional Committees

- developed committees to divide the workload of Congress
- standing committees-- Permanent committees of Congress who study, revise, and pass legislation
- select committees--committees which study more temporary problems in society
- joint committees-- committees which involve members of both Houses of Congress meeting together

Committee Membership

- Usually based on **seniority**-Term that refers to how long a member has been in Congress and is important in assigning committee memberships
- Party leaders make committee assignments
- majority party of each house appoints the chairperson of each committee