

The Legislative Branch

The **legislative**, or lawmaking, branch of the U.S. government is called Congress. Congress is made up of two houses, or groups: the Senate and the House of Representatives. To learn about the differences and similarities between the two houses, study the Venn diagram. Then answer the questions.

Senate

Members are called senators.

There are 100 senators—two from each state.

Senators are elected to serve six-year terms.

Senators must be at least 30 years old.

To run for office, senators must have been U.S. citizens for at least nine years.

The Vice President of the United States is the leader of the Senate.

Both

Members write bills and vote on whether or not a bill should become a law.

Members meet in the U.S. Capitol Building, in Washington, D.C.

Members must live in the state they represent.

Members are elected by people from their state.

Members serve in Congress.

House of Representatives

Members are called representatives.

There are 435 representatives.

The number of representatives from each state is determined by that state's population.

Representatives are elected to serve two-year terms.

Representatives must be at least 25 years old.

To run for office, representatives must have been U.S. citizens for at least seven years.

Representatives elect their leader. He or she is called the Speaker of the House.

1.	True or false: Members of the Senate and members of the House of Representatives meet in
	separate buildings.

2. How many more representatives are there than senators?

3. In which house of Congress is the U.S. Vice President the leader? ______

4. California is the state with the most people, and Wyoming is the state with the fewest people. Does California have more than, fewer than or the same number of senators as Wyoming? Explain.

5. Tax bills can be proposed in the House of Representatives, but not in the Senate. Add a star to the section of the diagram where this information should appear.

BONUS When the Constitution was being written, some people wanted a state's number of Congress members to be based on population. Other people wanted every state to have the same number of Congress members. What was decided? Do you think this compromise is fair? Explain your answer on the back of this page.