

## **HMDC Elementary Model Congress Class (Fall 2024)**

Activity: US Congress (Simulation)

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### **What Are Political Parties?**

Think of political parties like teams. Each team has different ideas about how to solve problems. In the United States, there are two main teams:

#### 1. Democratic Party

- Believes the government should help solve many problems
- Wants to protect the environment
- Wants everyone to have access to healthcare
- Wants to make sure big companies follow rules to protect people

#### 2. Republican Party

- Believes people and businesses should solve most problems without government help
- Wants lower taxes
- Wants states to make more decisions instead of the federal government
- Wants fewer rules for businesses

### **How to Pick Your Party:**

- Think about what problems worry you most
- Think about how you would fix these problems
- Look at which party's ideas match your own ideas
- Remember: You don't have to agree with everything your party believes

### **What Are Committees?**

Committees are like small work groups. Each group focuses on one type of problem. For example:

#### 1. Education Committee

- Works on school problems
- Thinks about how to help students
- Decides if schools need more money

#### 2. Health Committee

- Works on hospital and doctor problems
- Thinks about how to keep people healthy
- Decides if we need new health rules

#### 3. Environment Committee

- Works on protecting nature
- Thinks about clean air and water
- Decides how to stop pollution

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### **What You Do in a Committee:**

- Learn about your committee's topic
- Read new ideas (bills) about your topic
- Help make these ideas better
- Vote yes or no on these ideas

### **How an Idea Becomes a Law**

#### 1. Write Your Idea (Called a Bill)

- Find a problem that needs fixing
- Write down how to fix it
- Get other people to support your idea

#### 2. Share Your Idea

- Tell your committee about your idea
- Explain why it's important
- Answer questions about your idea

#### 3. Committee Votes

- Committee members read your idea
- They might make changes
- They vote yes or no

#### 4. Congress Votes

- If committee says yes, all of Congress votes
- Everyone discusses your idea
- They vote yes or no

#### 5. President Decides

- If Congress says yes, the President looks at your idea
- President can say yes (sign it) or no (veto it)
- If President says yes, your idea becomes a law!

### **Who/What Are Constituents?**

Constituents are the people you represent. They are:

- People who live in your area
- People who voted for you
- People who need your help
- People whose problems you try to fix

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### **How to Write a Bill**

Here's a simple example:

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Title: The Clean Parks Bill

Problem: Our parks are dirty and unsafe at night

How to Fix It:

1. Hire more people to clean the parks
2. Put up lights so people can see at night
3. Add more trash cans
4. Start a program where people can volunteer to help clean

When It Starts: January 1, 2025

Money Needed:

- \$500,000 to hire workers
- \$100,000 for lights
- \$50,000 for trash cans

...

### **How to Give Your Speech**

Your speech should be 1-2 minutes and answer these questions:

1. What is the problem?
2. How will you fix it?
3. Why should others support your idea?

Example Speech:

"Honorable chair, distinguished colleagues. I want to discuss our parks. They are very dirty, and people don't feel safe there at night. My bill will fix this by hiring more workers to clean the parks and adding lights so people can see at night. This will make our parks better for everyone. Please support this bill to help make our community better."

### **Tips to Do Well**

1. Study your topic carefully
2. Keep your ideas simple and clear
3. Practice your speech many times
4. Be ready to answer questions
5. Listen to other people's ideas
6. Be willing to work with others to make your idea better