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| |  |  | | --- | --- | | |  | | --- | | ***Congress*** | | |  | | [**Just the Facts, Please**](http://www.wadsworth.com/politicalscience_d/special_features/ext/amgov/gov_institutions/ia_cong.html#just)**::**[**Exploration**](http://www.wadsworth.com/politicalscience_d/special_features/ext/amgov/gov_institutions/ia_cong.html#exploration) | |  | |  | | **Just the Facts, Please**  1. Using ([http://www.house.gov](http://www.house.gov/)) and ([http://www.senate.gov](http://www.senate.gov/)), answer the following questions regarding Congress.   1. List the members of Congress from your state. Include their district number, party affiliation, ethnic background, gender, occupation, religion, term(s) of office, and committee assignments. 2. Find the House Ways and Means committee. What issues does this committee deal with, and what is the status of each? What is the jurisdiction of its subcommittees? 3. Find the Senate Rules Committee. What is its history and purpose? What was the voting record of your U.S. Senators, during the 106th Congress? 4. Go to the page "Learning About the Senate" and find and take "A Senate Quiz". How many of these questions are answered in your text? 5. Go to the House of Representatives page "Historical Highlights" and chart the allotted number of representatives per session and the breakdown of representatives by political party affiliation. | |  |
|  |  | **Exploration**  1. Go to <http://www.cbo.gov/> and you will find [The Congressional Budget Office](http://www.cbo.gov/)website. This website contains information about CBO’s mission, which "is to provide the Congress with the objective, timely, nonpartisan analyses needed for economic and budget decisions and with the information and estimates required for the Congressional budget process." This statement is found by clicking on the link entitled "About CBO" (left-hand column) at <http://www.cbo.gov/>. Your will find an additional link dealing with CBO’s "[Major Responsibilities](http://www.cbo.gov/respon.shtml)." Hit this link, read through the subsequent outline under "Table of Contents" and answer the following questions:   * What does the CBO do to help the Congress develop a plan for the budget? * How does the CBO help Congress stay within its budget? * How does the CBO help the Congress assess Federal Mandates?   2. Go to <http://www.c-span.org/questions/>. There you will find a heading entitled "This Week’s Questions"—a series of questions with linked answers. Click on the question-answer link that interests you and summarize the relevant facts. Now go back to the original web page and hit "Previous Questions About-Congress" on the left-hand side. You will now see a twelve-part outline.   * Scroll down to "Committees" and summarize the answer to "Are most committee chairmen from the South?" * Now scroll down further to "Members" and summarize the answer to "Who are the most senior members of the House and Senate, and for how long have they served?" * Choose any other three question-answer sets and summarize the appropriate contents of each. * Finally, go back to the original page where you see "submit a question" and the accompanying e-mail address to C-SPAN. Create your own question about Congress and send it through e-mail. Report on what type of response is received from C-SPAN.   3. Go to [http://www.vote-smart.org](http://www.vote-smart.org/) for the Vote-Smart organization’s Internet web site that contains a wealth of information about elected officials. Scroll down and select the link <http://www.vote-smart.org/index.phtml>. Under "2000 Election Study of 12,510 Candidates Found Quality of Campaigns Declining" Click [Get the executive summary and your own candidates' results!](http://www.vote-smart.org/press/quality.html) then go to [Appendix 4 - 2000 Presidential, Congressional and Legislative NPATs](http://www.vote-smart.org/press/appendix4.doc) to see the blank NPAT form.   * Download the blank version and examine the questions on the NPAT. Glance over the form and determine your own stances and priorities on the issues listed. * Go to the left nav bar and click "[Congress](http://www.vote-smart.org/vote-smart/data.phtml?dtype=C)" under the Offices Heading. Select your state and find your congressman to examine how your congressman did on the NPAT. Do you think that this is a useful way to determine a candidate’s stands on the issues?   Were you surprised at the views expressed on your congressperson’s NPAT? How closely do these views represent your own?  ***Goal:****To understand the significance and meaning of "leadership PACs" in Congress.*  4. Go to [*The Hill*](http://www.hillnews.com/) ([http://www.hillnews.com](http://www.hillnews.com/)) (a newspaper covering Congress) and hit the link entitled "Leadership PACs" on the left-hand side of the web page. You will then find two additional links entitled, "What is a leadership PAC?" and "Articles about leadership PACs from *The Hill."*You will also find a long list of specific Leadership PACs with each having a link. After exploring these links, answer or do the following:   * What is a "leadership PAC"? Why do members of Congress form these PACs? * Why are leadership PACs criticized? Why do members of Congress support them? * Click on one specific leadership PAC. What information exists about funding and contributions?   Now click on the "Selected Articles" link and specifically the article on Gore’s leadership PAC, entitled "Gore leadership PAC tops all others with $1.2 million (January 20, 1999)." Answer the following questions based upon this article:   * How much did Gore contribute to federal candidates? * How did Gore’s total compare to House Majority Leader Armey’s total? * Which other prominent members of Congress extensively used their leadership PACs? * Why was there a "discrepancy" between amounts raised and those dispensed to congressional campaigns?   After completing these assignments, what is your own opinion about leadership PACs? Using any search engine, try to find the most recent article available dealing with the pros and cons of these funding vehicles. |  |
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