Legislative Branch Study Guide (Unit 5 Parts 1-3)

**Part 1: Background Info.**

Bicameral- A legislative body made of two chambers. United States has the House of Representatives and the Senate.

Why did America choose to have a Bicameral system?

* Past governments had this; such as the British Parliament
* Having two houses settled a conflict during the Constitutional Convention
* The two houses would check each other. (Stopping congress from becoming too powerful.

Session- The period of time each year when Congress meets

Special session- session called to deal with an emergency

Term- An assigned period of time for an elected official to serve; session start on the January of odd numbered years.

**House of Representatives**

* Based on **population**
* Census- A count of population. Taken every 10 years
* Has **435 members**

**Qualifications of House of Representatives**

* Must be **25 years old**
* Must be a citizen for at least **7 years**
* Must be a **resident of the state** from which they are elected
* Virginia has **11** representatives (13 members of congress total)

**Senate**

* Equal representation
* 2 Senators for each state (100 members)

**Qualifications of Senate**

* Serve a **six year term**
* Must be at least **30 years old**
* Must be a citizens of the U.S for at least **9 years**
* Must be a resident of the state they represent

**Elections**

Off-year elections- An election for Congress that takes place between Presidential election years.

Gerrymandering- The unfair drawing of district lines, giving a party or group the advantage

**Congress votes in three ways:**

* Trustee- A person who is given power to act for others
* Partisan- A person that votes by the party line
* Politico- A person that tries to balance being a delegate, trustee, and partisan

**Part 2: Congressional Leadership and Roles**

Speaker of the House- The leading officer of the House of Representative; chosen by and from the majority party in the House

President of the Senate- The leading officer of the Senate; the Vice President of the United States

President *Pro Tempore*- The member of the Senate chosen to take the place of the Vice President when he or she is absent

Floor leaders- Political party leaders in Congress

Majority leader- The floor leader of the party that holds the majority of seats in each house of Congress

Minority leader- The floor leader of the party that holds the minority of the seats in each house of Congress

Whip- Assistants to the floor leaders in both houses

Committee chairman- Congress member who leads a standing committee

Party Caucus- A closed meeting of a party’s House or Senate members

**Committees of Congress**

Standing committee- Permanent committee that considers certain topics

Subcommittee- A smaller part of a standing committee

Joint committee- A committee made up of members of both parts of Congress

**Part 3: Taxing, Spending, and Managing**

tax- A charge collected by government on persons or property to meet public needs

**Regulations on taxing**

* Congress may only tax for public purposes (pay debts, or defense)
* Congress cannot tax export
* Direct taxes must be equally divided among the states
* All indirect taxes must be collected at the same federal rate throughout the country. (gas, alcohol, and tobacco)

\*Most of our tax money contributes to **Health**, **Social Security**, and **Public Welfare**

**Domestic Powers**

Copyright- The exclusive right of a person or company to reproduce, publish, and sell a creative work

Patent- A license issued to an inventor granting the exclusive right to use or sell the invention for a limited period of time

**Managing Federal Areas**

Congress manages: **Dockyards, post offices, prisons, D.C, and Territories** (Puerto Rico, Guam, Virgin Islands, etc.)

Naturalization- The process of giving full citizenship to a person born in another country

**Examples of Implied Powers**

* Punish tax evaders
* Establish the Federal Reserve System of banks
* Power to regulate and limit immigration
* Power to draft Americans into the military
* Power to establish a minimum wage
* Ban discrimination in public facilities and workplaces
* Prohibit mail fraud and destruction of mail

**Possible Short Answer Topic:**

Explain the legislative process

How does Gerrymandering affect the legislative process?