

House and Senate Differences

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES	SENATE
Constitutional Differences	
Members chosen from local districts	Members chosen from an entire state
Two-Year Term	Six-Year Term
Originally elected by voters	Originally (until 1913) elected by state legislatures
Must be a citizen for at least 7 years	Must be a citizen for at least 9 years
Must be 25 years old at time of taking office	Must be 30 years old at time of taking office
Must be a resident of the state from which elected	Must be a resident of the state from which elected
May impeach federal officials	May convict federal officials of impeachable offenses
Process and Culture	
435 Voting Members, plus delegates from the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico, Guam, American Samoa, and the Virgin Islands – all based on local populations as declared in the previous Census	100 Members Only two members from each of the 50 States
More formal rules due to the above	Fewer rules and restrictions
Debate Limited	Debate extended
Less prestige and individual notice	More prestige and media attention
More partisan	More individualistic
Specific Powers	
Originate bills for raising revenue	Has power to advise president on, and to content to, presidential appointments and treaties

Special Rules for the House of Representatives: To control the agenda and allow fair time to the assembly, for each bill the House has a **Rules Committee** – a standing committee that provides special rules under which specific bills can be debated, amended, and considered by the House. For each major bill, the Rules Committee normally proposes a **Rule** – the conditions for debate for one piece of legislation. This divides the time between the majority and minority parties and often allows them to act more quickly on legislation than in the Senate.

Special Rules for the Senate: For legislation to reach the floor there must first be a **Unanimous Consent Agreement** – an agreement on the rules of debate for proposed legislation that has to be approved by all members. The tradition of the **Filibuster** – unlimited debate as a delaying tactic to block a bill is often used. This technique has led to **Unorthodox Lawmaking** – the use of the out-of-the-ordinary tactics to pass legislation. Under Senate Rule 22, debate may be ended by invoking **Cloture**, which shuts off discussion on a bill. This is if 16 senators sign a petition of request after two days of debate has elapsed and 3/5 of the entire membership (60 votes) vote to agree. After cloture is invoked, each senator may speak on a bill for a maximum of one hour before a vote is taken. The final vote must take place within 100 hours of debate after cloture has been imposed.