

ADVANCED PLACEMENT UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT AND POLITICS

Politics of Committees

Congressional committees are where the work gets done in Congress. Almost all significant decisions concerning legislation are hashed out in committee. Even though there are many similarities between various committees, all committees are unique in nature.

With a partner, find out the following information about your assigned committee. Once you have gathered the required information, create a PowerPoint presentation that encompasses that information and be prepared to present it to class.

- When was your committee established? Why was it established?
- What is the primary area of focus of your committee? What issues does it deal with and what are its primary responsibilities?
- What is the status of your committee? Is it relatively young or been around for over 100 years? Is it one of the most important committees, do all of the members covet a position on this committee or is it a committee specific to a particular policy issue?
- What does the membership look like today? Who is the Chair (and what party), who are the senior members, and who are the new members? Where are they from? What is the proportion of majority to minority members? What are the politics and political preferences of the leaders and other members? Are there significant conflicts between various members?
- What is the role of committee staff? Who are they, what is their background and experience? How significant is their input? Do they play a leading role in committee decisions or are they primarily used for information gathering and research?
- How significant are lobbying groups to your committee? What roles do they play in the committees' everyday work? Can you find a money trail? Is there undue pressure on committee members because of the presence of these groups?
- Can you identify the "iron triangle" or "issue network" that surrounds your committee? Where do these people come from? What are their titles and how much political clout do they have? How have these people evolved over the years?
- What, historically, have been the policy preferences of your committee? Have these preferences been effected by the change in power caused by the 1994 election?

Your Committee: _____

Your Team: _____ **AND** _____

PowerPoint Due Date: _____

Presentation Date: _____