

## The legislative branch of U.S. government

**Directions:** Read the informational (expository) text below about one of the 3 branches of government. You will use this information to fill in a chart about the 3 branches of government. Please highlight key terms or small phrases which list important information about each branch.

The United States government is divided into 3 branches of parts. They each have specific jobs that they perform. There is a separation of powers between the 3 branches which means that they each have certain powers that the other branches do not have and cannot violate or take away. The U.S. Constitution describes each branch and the powers they possess. No one branch has all power and they check and balance the power of one another. The final authority in our country is the U.S. Constitution.

The legislative branch's main job is to make the laws for the nation. They are headed up by Congress. Congress is divided into 2 major parts: the House of Representatives, which is made up of 435 men and women, and the Senate, which is made up of 100 senators. Each state no matter their size is given 2 senators, but those states which are bigger in population have more representatives they are provided. For example, California has the same amount of senators (2) as Alaska, but California is allotted 53 representatives contrasted to Alaska having only one representative due to its much smaller population. Representatives serve for 2 year terms in the House and can run for reelection as many times as they want while senators serve for 6 year terms in the Senate and can also run for reelection an unlimited number of times.

Congress has various powers that they possess. Some of them are the following:

- a. The power to declare war against another country- only Congress can vote to do this.
- b. Collect taxes- Congress is in charge of this important function to provide money for the government
- c. Print money- - only the U.S. Congress has this authority
- d. Control commerce (trade) with other nations.