

MAP IT OUT!

Think that government business is something that takes place in a faraway building? Then think again! Check out this page for the many different ways government affects your life every day.

Lucy's heading out to get ice cream. As you help her go from start to finish on the map below, circle 16 different ways that government might affect her life. **HINT:** Use the "Power Up" chart at right for ideas.



Can you think of other ways government changes your everyday life? Write them in the blanks below.

➡	
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illustrations: Steve Skelton cover photography: Photodisc Green/Getty Images, Photodisc Red/Getty Images, Royalty-Free/Corbis

POWER UP

Under the U.S. Constitution, the federal and state governments have separate powers and responsibilities. They also share certain powers. This is called *federalism*.

Federal Government

- ★ Prints money and mints coins
- ★ Sets rules for trade between states and between the U.S. and other countries
- ★ Talks to and makes agreements (called *treaties*) with other nations
- ★ Declares war
- ★ Provides for military forces to defend our nation
- ★ Establishes post offices
- ★ Creates or changes laws as necessary

State Government

- ★ Funds and provides direction for schools
- ★ Operates state prisons
- ★ Sets rules for trade within the state
- ★ Conducts elections and issues licenses
- ★ Establishes local governments
- ★ Approves changes to the Constitution
- ★ Provides for the public's health and safety
- ★ May take any actions that the Constitution does not specifically give to the national government or ban the states from taking

Federal & State Government

In addition to their unique powers, both governments have the power to:

- ★ Collect taxes and borrow money
- ★ Build roads
- ★ Establish courts
- ★ Make and enforce laws
- ★ Create rules for banks and businesses
- ★ Spend money for the good of the people
- ★ Set rules to make sure our air, water and food are as clean and safe as possible

Source: The U.S. Government Printing Office

TEK Extra!

Supplement to TIME FOR KIDS

See inside FOR WAYS YOU CAN BE PART OF OUR DEMOCRACY!

YOUR IDEAS COUNT!

Really! And this guide will show YOU how!

JOIN IN!

GET INVOLVED!

SPEAK UP!



LETTER Know What You're Thinking!

E-mail or old-fashioned snail mail are both great ways to let your voice be heard.

Visit http://congress.indiana.edu/cct_cngrs.php or www.ncsl.org/trust to find out the names and addresses of leaders who represent you in Congress and in your state legislature. Then let them know what's on your mind!



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and

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KEEPING OUR COUNTRY STRONG

What if you never spoke or wrote a single word? Your family and friends would have a tricky time figuring out what you were thinking, right?

The same is true in our country's form of government, *representative democracy*. If we as citizens don't speak up and let our opinions and ideas be heard, then our elected leaders will not know what we want.

Use this guide to see why it's important to let your voice be heard... because your ideas count!



Democracy is the key

If you ever sit down to describe all the qualities, beliefs and values of the American people, you'd better pick a comfortable chair, because you'll be sitting for a long time! The United States is an extremely diverse country full of different views and opinions.

What form of government could possibly represent all these differences and help people live together peacefully and productively? Our Founding Fathers were asking themselves similar questions about 230 years ago, and they came up with an answer: **representative democracy**.

Starting with the idea that everyone is created equal, our early leaders laid the groundwork for a government that is "of, by and for the people."

You're a person, right? So we have a government that is "of, by and for" you. This means that you are a part of a living, breathing thing that must be trusted and cared for.

Our government isn't flawless, but democracy is an important factor in our country's success. Letting every voice be heard helps to make us the greatest nation in the world.

"The day we stop believing in democracy is the day we lose it." —Star Wars: Episode II—Attack of the Clones

WHAT'S IN A NAME?

Legislators: Lawmakers who work in a group called the *legislature*. They are generally called *representatives* and *senators*. Some of them work in Congress and others in legislatures in the 50 state capitols.

Representative Democracy: In our system of government—which is called a *republic*—we elect leaders to learn about our hopes, desires and important issues and to represent our views at local, state and national levels of government. The views of the majority win out, but the rights of the minority are respected.

Top 5 Things

You Need To Know About Our Government

As you explore the ideas in this guide, keep these 5 basics in mind:

1 Your ideas and thoughts on issues count! Legislators care about what you think.

2 Legislators work hard to earn your trust.

3 In a country as large and diverse as ours, compromise is vital to democracy.

4 There is an organized or special-interest group to work on nearly every cause.

5 To stay in office, legislators must keep voters' support.

HELP WANTED!

America needs you! Anyone who meets the qualifications and wants to make a difference in our country can run for office. For example, since 1789, almost 12,000 men and women have served in the U.S. Congress, which is made up of two chambers: the Senate and the House of Representatives. Hundreds of thousands of men and women have served in our state legislatures. Representatives in Congress and in state legislatures include men and women, young and old, of all backgrounds.

What job would you like in our government?

Will you head to Washington, DC, to be a U.S. Representative or a U.S. Senator?

JOB DESCRIPTION: There are 435 members of the U.S. House of Representatives and 100 members of the U.S. Senate. While each state has two U.S. Senators for a total of 100, states with larger populations send more representatives to the House. In both jobs, be ready to debate ideas and vote on which bills should become the law of our land. The House and Senate must agree on the same law before it can take effect.

QUALIFICATIONS: Interested applicants for both positions must live in the state they represent. U.S. Representatives must be at least 25 years old and a U.S. citizen for the past seven years. U.S. Senators have to be at least 30 and a U.S. citizen for the past nine years.

Or will you stay closer to home to work as a legislator in your state's capitol?

JOB DESCRIPTION: Across the country, there are 7,382 state legislators who meet in our 50 state capitols. Every state has a legislature with a house and a senate, except Nebraska, which has only a senate. As a legislator, you will be concerned with passing laws that ensure the welfare, health and happiness of the people of your state. This includes keeping highways safe and providing universities to educate your state's residents. Another of your main jobs will be to make sure that schools are funded and run properly.

QUALIFICATIONS: In most states, applicants for the state legislature need to be 1) a U.S. citizen and 2) old enough to vote.

work here

or here!



During each Congress that lasts two years, about **10,000 bills** are introduced—but only about **500** become laws.

About **200,000 bills** are introduced in state legislatures every two years, and about **40,000** pass.

are you mythinformed?

Many Americans are skeptical of elected officials. Check out the four myths on these pages and explore the truth for yourself.

MYTH #1

"Legislators don't care what I think."

The Truth

A recent poll found that 3 in 5 Americans believe public officials don't care what they think. But the truth is that legislators are very concerned about what people in their states or districts want and need.

Picture This

Your teacher chooses you to buy a plant for your classroom. What kind of plant? Where should it go? How much can you spend? You want to do a good job but need feedback. You realize that if you are to succeed, it's important to hear what your classmates want. How does this example apply to legislators?

MYTH #2

"Compromise means giving up your beliefs."

The Truth

In a country as diverse as ours, there are many different opinions and disagreement on nearly every issue. Without compromise, nothing could be accomplished. Our legislators try to find common ground in order to pass laws that work well and benefit the largest number of people possible.

Picture This

You and your friends are asked to pick a spot for a fun class trip. Everyone likes to have fun, right? So how can there be a problem? Most of your friends have different ideas of what spots are the most fun. Kids suggest the beach, the amusement park and the zoo, but you can only go to one spot. Some kids' first choices won't be picked, but they will probably still have fun on the trip. What do you think might happen in our government without compromise?

MYTH #3

"Politicians only listen to special-interest groups."

The Truth

About 8 out of every 10 Americans are part of a special-interest group, an organization that wants to change the way things are run in this country. For just about every view that you might have, there's a group out there promoting that view. These special groups aren't the enemy; they are us!

Picture This

You wish your school served vegetarian lunches, but you think your lone opinion doesn't matter. Your school council has already formed a special group to get vegetarian meals on the menu. You realize that if you join the group and go together to the principal, you will have a stronger impact than if just one person speaks up. How does this example apply to our system of government?



Don't myth out!

MYTH #4

"Elected officials do whatever they want and don't have to listen to anyone."

The Truth

Legislators run for office every few years. Every vote that representatives and senators make is on the record and published. At any time, people can ask them why they voted a certain way. If the voters don't agree with legislators' actions, they can choose not to re-elect them. This means legislators have accountability—they must answer to their voters.

Picture This

Last year, you voted for a class president who promised that he would help to clean up the school playground. You and your friends have noticed that he never kept his promise. Will you re-elect the class president this year? What is the connection here to representative democracy?

take a page from his book



Representative Tom Davis

Who says kids can't work in government? About 100 high school juniors serve as pages, or messengers, for the U.S. House and U.S. Senate every year. These kids run errands, answer phones and deliver messages. They might put in several miles a day on their feet!

Competition for the approximately 66 House and 30 Senate positions is fierce! But that wasn't a problem for **Representative Tom Davis** from Virginia. By the time Rep. Davis was in the seventh grade, he could name every member of the House of Representatives. He served as a U.S. Senate page from 1963 to 1967.

Visit www.house.gov/petri/kelly_1.htm to read what a real House page had to say about her experience.

spin out

People in entertainment know that conflict can make a story more interesting to audiences. That's one reason why they often create movies or TV shows that show politicians in negative ways. "Real-life" stories usually focus on the misbehavior of a few, while the many good deeds of others go unnoticed.



How do you think this affects the way Americans feel about their leaders?

hear! hear!

Circle the words from the list below that appear in our puzzle. The leftover letters spell the answer to our riddle.

- | | |
|------------|--------|
| DEMOCRACY | POLICY |
| COMPROMISE | BILLS |
| ELECT | DEBATE |
| HOUSE | IDEAS |
| SENATE | STATE |
| LEGISLATE | YOU |
| LAWS | TERM |
| OPEN MIND | ISSUES |
| LEAD | |

Y S E N A T E Y S E
O C Y B E O C W S H
U U A R I A I T O
R S M R L L M V A U
T A O O C O L I T S
C E P C R O E S E E
E D O P E N M I N D
L I M E T A B E D A
E O I S S U E S D E
C E T A L S I G E L

RIDDLE:

What do government officials want to hear?

answer: _____



DID YOU KNOW?

Derrick Seaver was just **18 years old** when he became an Ohio State Representative in 2000!

we the people



Where in the world can you find a **nurse**, **protest marcher**, **cattle rancher**, **police officer** and **Olympic athlete** working together to find solutions to our nation's problems? In our federal and state legislatures! State and national legislators are regular men and women who come from all sorts of backgrounds and life experiences. See for yourself by reading about these lawmakers from around the nation.



State Senator Cindy Hyde-Smith

home on the range

Mississippi State Senator Cindy Hyde-Smith is a cattle rancher who "herd" a calling to public service.

"Ranching reminds me of politics," Hyde-Smith says. "There are many elements and conditions you can't always control. In both, you have to be ready to seize any advantage and build on every opportunity." To kids with questions about government or issues, Hyde-Smith says, "Don't be afraid to ask for help or approach an elected official."

nursing new ideas

Maryland State Delegate Shirley Nathan-Pulliam was born in Jamaica and went to nursing school in England. Later, she moved to the U.S., became a citizen and realized that she could make positive changes as a member of her state legislature!



AP Photo/J. Scott Applewhite

U.S. Senator Susan Collins

all in the family

Politics runs in Senator Susan Collins' family. Not one but both of her parents served as mayor of her hometown—a small city in northern Maine called Caribou. Back in 1844, Collins' ancestors started a lumber business in Caribou. Thanks to the efforts of Collins' brothers, that business is still going strong!

Funding for education—especially reading programs—is one of Senator Collins' top priorities. "The best way to ensure that no child is left behind is to ensure that every child can read," she says. With Collins leading the way, total federal funding for education has nearly doubled during her time in the Senate.

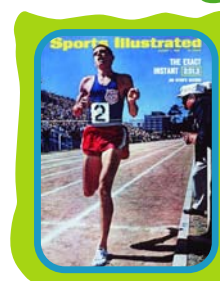


State Representative Rene Garcia

a voice for young people

Florida State Representative Rene Garcia has a surprising group of fans: kids. Even though they're too young to vote, students at Hialeah Middle School saw a problem in their community and convinced Garcia to take the problem to the Florida legislature. The students drafted a bill—which Garcia then sponsored—that calls for the creation of drug-free zones around public parks, schools and libraries. Though this bill failed the first time it was voted on, it passed the next year. "I was amazed by the students' persistence," says Garcia. "They wouldn't give up!" Garcia remembers what it's like for young people trying to make their voices heard. He was still in college—studying political science—when he was first elected to the Hialeah City Council!

breaking a world record



When he was 17, Jim Ryun became the first high school student ever to run the mile in under four minutes. Two years later, he set a record for the world's fastest mile with a time of 3 minutes, 51.3 seconds. Ryun competed in three Olympics and appeared on seven *Sports Illustrated* covers. Now a fifth-term Congressman

from Kansas, he's still running—to hearings of the Armed Services, Budget and Financial Services Committees of Congress!

officer of the law

Washington State Senator Jerome Delvin not only upholds laws as a police officer, but he also helps make them!

"After almost 20 years of being a police officer," Delvin says, "I wanted to make some of our laws better, especially the laws that affect kids. Now I help make laws, and I'm still a police officer. Sometimes I even get to enforce the laws I helped make."

"Kids' voices count! I even helped pass a law that made a dragonfly the official state insect of Washington. The idea came from a group of younger students who worked with adults at their school and in their community to suggest it to the legislature."

doing what's right

The son of Alabama sharecroppers, **John Lewis is a U.S. Representative from Georgia** who has devoted much of his life to the civil rights movement. He has organized lunch-counter sit-ins, marched, protested and been beaten and imprisoned—all in the name of equal rights.

Below left: U.S. Representative Lewis (far left) next to Martin Luther King, Jr. Below right: U.S. Representative Lewis today



A DAY IN THE LIFE

Soccer practice! Homework!
Think you've got a busy day? Check out this sample daily schedule for a state legislator:

8:30 a.m.
Breakfast with Governor

9:30 a.m.
Meeting with party members regarding state budget

10:00 a.m.
Talk with reporter about land use & water resources bill

11:00 a.m.
Senate in session—discuss use of cell phones while driving

12:00 p.m.
Lunch with teachers' group

1:00 p.m.
Discuss energy crisis with merchants at shopping center in district

2:00 p.m.
Meet with Restaurant Association about food safety

3:00 p.m.
Meeting with members of bicycle helmet-safety group

4:30 p.m.
Discuss new relief bill with statewide charity organization

5:00 p.m.
Briefing by the Taxation Committee

6:00 p.m.
Reception/fund-raiser for fellow representative

8:00 p.m.
Dinner with mayor from district