

How a Bill Becomes a Law: Chain of Events Map

Materials

From Bill to Law:
Senate reproducible
Chain of Events Map
reproducible
overhead projector
and transparency

Skills Objectives

Recognize cause-and-effect relationships.
Understand chronological order or sequence.

A **Chain of Events Map** is a tool that allows students to show information in steps or stages, specifically to describe a sequence of events. This organizer guides students to visualize how one action or event leads to the next and, finally, to the outcome.

1. Begin the lesson by demonstrating the concept of a chain of events. Tell students to imagine that they are planting a tomato garden: *First, you prepare the soil. Then, you plant the seeds. Next, you water the seeds every day. Finally, the plants sprout.* Ask students what happens next. Answers might include: *The plant grows larger. It blooms and produces tomatoes.* Point out the logical progression of steps from beginning to end.

2. Give students one copy of the **From Bill to Law: Senate reproducible (page 66)** and two copies of the **Chain of Events Map reproducible (page 67)**.

Ask a volunteer to read aloud “How a Bill Becomes a Law” while the rest of the class follows along.

3. Place a transparency of the Chain of Events Map on the overhead. Tell students to review “How a Bill Becomes a Law,” and choose the most important steps to write in their first Chain of Events Map. Model how to fill in the first couple of steps on the transparency, or fill in the first and last step. The first step should be: *Senator introduces the bill.* The last step should be: *President signs the bill into law.*

4. Before they begin, make sure students understand that each



event must lead logically to the next. Allow them to discuss which steps belong in the other boxes, and in what order.

- Note that the process of a bill becoming law is different in the House of Representatives than it is in the Senate. Allow access to the Internet or arrange a trip to the library so students can conduct research about that process. Invite them to complete their second Chain of Events Map about the House of Representatives.
- When the assignment is complete, initiate a class discuss by comparing the two maps. Prompt students with questions such as: *Why do you think the process is different in the Senate than it is in the House of Representatives? Why do both chambers have to approve a bill before it can be sent to the President? Do you agree with the process? Why or why not?*

Extended Learning

Ask students to perform a vocabulary word search through newspapers and magazines for the terms *legislation*, *revision*, *amendment*, *debate*, *quorum*, *filibuster*, *compromise*, and *veto*. Invite them to share their findings with the class.

Name _____ Date _____

Chain of Events Map

Directions: In the top scroll, write the first event that sets the action in motion. Then write the rest of the important events in order. End with the event that concludes the action.

Process: _____

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Reproducible
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From Bill to Law: Senate

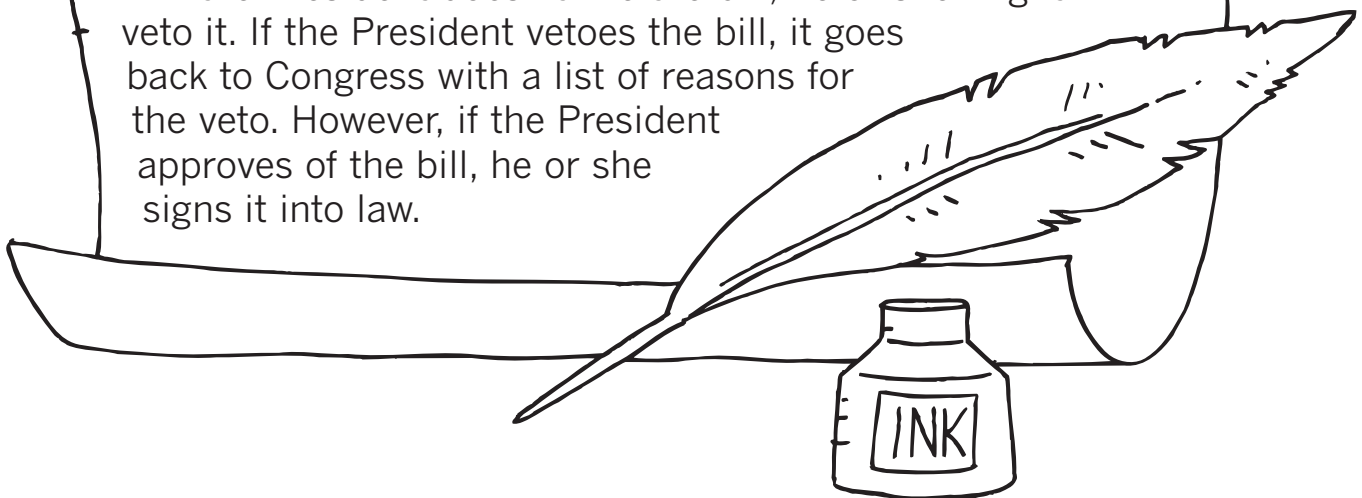
How a Bill Becomes a Law

When a Senator introduces a bill in the Senate, the bill is assigned a number and copies of it are made. The bill is then sent to committee and placed on the calendar. At that point, a bill can be assigned to a subcommittee who may hold hearings and recommend changes. The findings are reported to the full committee and a vote is taken.

If the bill is approved, the committee prepares a report explaining why they favor the bill. Committee members who oppose a bill sometimes write a dissenting opinion as well. The report goes back to the whole chamber and is placed on the calendar for debate.

In the Senate, debate is usually unlimited. Members can speak as long as they want. Finally, they vote on the bill. If the bill is approved, it goes to the House of Representatives. If either chamber of Congress (the Senate or House) does not pass the bill, the bill dies. If they both pass the bill, then the bill goes to the President.

If the President doesn't like the bill, he or she might veto it. If the President vetoes the bill, it goes back to Congress with a list of reasons for the veto. However, if the President approves of the bill, he or she signs it into law.



Chain of Events Map

Directions: In the top scroll, write the first event that sets the action in motion. Then write the rest of the important events in order. End with the event that concludes the action.

Process: _____

