

The Structure of Congress

Lesson 4 *Congressional Committees*

I. Purpose of Committees

- A. committee, issues
- B. bills
- C. hearings

II. Kinds of Committees

- A. standing committees
- B. Subcommittees
- C. select committees
- D. Joint committees, authority
- E. conference committee

III. Choosing Committee Members

- A. committees, influence
- B. standing committees
- C. seniority system

Summary and Reflection

The four types of congressional committees are standing committees and their related subcommittees, which continue from one legislative session to the next; select committees, which are temporary and study one specific issue; joint committees, which are composed of members from both the House and the Senate and study a particular topic or bill; and conference committees, which are temporary and work out a compromise bill from two different versions of a bill passed by the House and the Senate. Committees allow members of Congress to divide their work among smaller groups, enabling Congress to perform its function despite the large number of bills that are considered each term.