

The **law-making process** in the United States **refers to the steps required**₂ for a **bill** to become a **law**.

- ▶ A **bill** is a **written proposal for a new law**.
- ▶ A **law** is a **rule that people in a country must follow**.

1. Someone decides that there needs to be a new law and **drafts**₃ a **bill**.
2. The **bill** is **introduced** into the House of Representatives or the Senate.
3. The House and the Senate **debate**₄ the **bill**.
4. The House and the Senate **vote** on the **bill**.
5. The **President of the United States** must sign the **bill** for it to become a law.
6. The President can **veto** the bill to **stop it from becoming law**.

1

Elizabeth Smart, a former kidnapping victim, helped draft a bill to protect other children from kidnappers.

2

The bill was introduced into the Senate.

3

The bill was debated by the Senate and the House.

4

The bill passed a vote by both the Senate and the House.

5

On April 30, 2003, the PROTECT Act of 2003 was signed into law by the president.

CFU

What is a difference between a bill and a law?

Describe the process a bill must go through in order to become a law?

What is the difference between step **4** and **5** of the law making process?

In your own words, what is the law-making process?

1. Read the question.
2. Read the text.
3. Answer the question. (write)
4. Cite evidence to support your answer. (underline)

The Law-Making Process

¹When a new law is needed, a bill must be drafted. ²Anyone may draft a bill. ³Bills are most often drafted by congressional aides.¹ ⁴The bill must then be introduced into Congress.

⁵Bills may only be introduced into the House or the Senate by a Congressman or a Senator. ⁶Once it is introduced, a bill is given a number, labeled with the sponsor's name, and sent off to be copied. ⁷After this, the bill is sent to one of several committees for debate.

1	Who can draft a bill?	
2	The bill is introduced into the Senate or the House .	
	Who can introduce a bill?	

The Law-Making Process (continued)

⁸Bills must go through several different debates before they can be made into law.

⁹The first group of legislators² that debate the bill is a committee. ¹⁰A committee is a small group of Senators or members of the House that debate specific issues. ¹¹There are committees for many different things including agriculture, defense, and national resources. ¹²The committee then decides on one of three things to do with the bill.

3	The bill is debated.	
	Who debates the bill first?	

1. Read the question.
2. Read the text.
3. Answer the question. (write)
4. Cite evidence to support your answer. (underline)

The Law-Making Process (continued)

¹³If they cannot agree on the bill, it will be tabled₃. ¹⁴If a majority of the committee agrees on the bill, it will be sent to the floor₄. ¹⁵If the committee believes that the bill needs to be changed, it will usually be reintroduced.

¹⁶Some small changes, called amendments, may be made to the bill before it is sent to the floor.

3	The bill is tabled .	
	Why would a bill be tabled?	
	The bill is passed .	
	What happened to the bill?	
	The bill must be changed .	
	What happens to the bill?	

Skill Closure

1. Read the question.
2. Answer the question. (write)

1. If a committee does not agree on the bill, what happens?

2. If the President does not agree on the bill, what happens?

Concept Closure

Write an explanation.

Elias said the law will go to committee after being drafted. Is he incorrect?

Summary Closure

What did you learn today about describing the basic law-making process in the United States?

Word Bank

Bill
Senate
House
President
Veto
Table
Passed
Changed

Read the question and identify what information you are looking for. Then, go back and read the text.

Joaquin feels that there should be a law prohibiting teenagers from viewing violent movies. Describe each step of the law-making process Joaquin must go through to create a new law.

- 1. Describe the process of drafting the bill.**
- 2. Describe the process of introducing a bill.**
- 3. Describe the debate process of the bill.**
- 4. Describe the voting process of the bill.**
- 5. Describe the two decisions the President can make about the bill.**
- 6. Which step of the law-making process do you feel is most important? Why?**

1. After a bill goes through the correct committee, what is the next thing that happens?

Sally said, "After the bill goes to the correct committee, the Senate and the House have debates on the bill and can make any changes necessary before they vote on the bill." Why is her answer incorrect? Explain.

2. After a bill is drafted, what is the next thing that happens?

Roberto said, "After the bill is drafted, it is tabled until Congress has time to discuss the bill." Why is his answer incorrect? Explain.

3. Mayor Rasmussen drafted a bill to protect the wildlife of the Central Valley in California. Which of these could be the next step?

- A Have Mayor Rasmussen introduce the bill to the House.
- B Have the bill introduced to the Senate by Senator Feinstein.
- C Have the president introduce the bill.
- D Have Congressman Costa introduce the bill to the House.

4. A bill was vetoed by the president. What must happen for the bill to become a law?

- A The bill fails and is no longer looked at.
- B Congress can rewrite the bill.
- C The bill must be amended in the Senate.
- D The bill must go back to the Congress where the Senate and the House can vote to override the veto.

5. Xong decides that a new law needs to be created to protect exotic birds from poachers.

What would you suggest his first step should be? Can Xong carry out that step on his own? Explain.

6. Senator Alex Padilla decides that a new law needs to be created to adjust federal speed limit guidelines, making the speed limit slower in cities.

What would you suggest his first step should be? Can the senator carry out that step on his own? Explain.