

Vocabulary

1. the House of Representatives – Палата Представителей
2. the introduction of a bill to the Congress – внесение законопроекта на рассмотрение Конгресса
3. a constituent – избирательный округ
4. an appropriate committee – соответствующий комитет
5. a subcommittee – подкомитет
6. to move a bill forward – продвигать законопроект
7. consideration – рассмотрение, обсуждение
8. to introduce an amendment – внести поправку
9. to pass both houses of the Congress – пройти обсуждение в обеих палатах Конгресса
10. to sign a bill into law – поставить подпись на законопроекте, сделав его тем самым законом

1. Прочитайте текст и ответьте на вопросы.

1. What is the legislative body in the USA? What does it consist of?
2. What are the steps in the legislative process?
3. What are the sources of bills?
4. Who can introduce the legislation?
5. What options has the President upon receiving a bill?

The Congress of the United States is the highest lawmaking body in the United States and one of the oldest national legislatures in the world. The U.S. Congress consists of two houses - the Senate and the House of Representatives. A member of the Senate is referred to as a senator, and a member of the House of Representatives is called a representative or congressman or congresswoman.

The general process for making a bill into a law is described in the Constitution. The first step in the legislative process is the introduction of a bill to the Congress. Bills originate from several different sources: from individual members of the Congress, from a member of a constituent or a group of constituents, from one or more state legislatures, or the President or his administration, but only members of the Congress can introduce legislation.

After being introduced, a bill is referred to the appropriate committee for review. There are 17 Senate committees, with 70 subcommittees, and 23 House committees, with 104 subcommittees. A bill is first considered in a

subcommittee, where it may be accepted, amended, or rejected. If the members of the subcommittee agree to move a bill forward, it is reported to the full committee, where the process is repeated again. If the full committee votes to approve the bill, it is reported to the House or the Senate.

When the bill comes up for consideration, the House has a very structured debate process. Each member who wishes to speak has only a few minutes, and the number and kind of amendments are usually limited. In the Senate, debate on most bills is unlimited - Senators may speak to issues other than the bill under consideration during their speeches, and any amendment can be introduced. A bill must pass both houses of the Congress before it goes to the President for consideration. Once debate has ended and any amendments to the bill have been approved, the full membership will vote for or against the bill.

The bill is then sent to the President. When receiving a bill from the Congress, the President has several options. If the President agrees with the bill, he or she may sign it into law. If the President disagrees with the bill, he may veto it and send it back to the Congress. The Congress may override the veto with a two-thirds vote of each chamber, at which point the bill becomes law and is printed.

2. Выразите согласие/несогласие со следующими утверждениями, используя следующие речевые модели.

Model: a) I fully agree with the statement.

b) I am afraid, I can't agree with it.

1. The Senate is the main legislative body of the USA.
2. The Constitution of the USA sets forth the general process for making a bill into law.
3. The first step in the legislative process is voting.
4. In the House of Representatives, debate on most bills is unlimited.
5. All bills must pass both houses of the Congress before it goes to the President.
6. Upon receiving a bill from the Congress, the President has to sign it.
7. The Congress has no right to override the presidential veto.

Vocabulary

1. the House of Lords – Палата лордов

2. the House of Commons – Палата общин
3. similar – подобный, схожий
4. scrutiny – тщательная проверка
5. a life peer – пожизненный пэр (титул и привилегии не передаются по наследству)
6. a hereditary peer – потомственный пэр (титул и привилегии передаются по наследству)
7. to proceed to committee stage – перейти на стадию обсуждения в комитете
8. to propose further amendments – предлагать дальнейшее внесение поправок
9. to reach agreement – достигнуть соглашения
10. the Royal Assent – королевская санкция

3. Прочитайте текст и ответьте на вопросы.

1. What is the legislative body in the UK? What does it consist of?
2. What are the steps in the legislative process?
3. What are the sources of bills? Who can introduce the legislation?

Legislation in the United Kingdom

In Great Britain laws are made in Parliament at Westminster. The British Parliament consists of the monarch, the House of Lords, and the House of Commons. Their work is similar: making laws (legislation), checking the work of the government (scrutiny), and debating current issues. The House of Lords is composed of life peers and hereditary peers. The House of Commons is composed of Members of Parliament (MPs).

The idea for a new law can come from a variety of sources: bills may be introduced by any member of either House (a "Private Member's Bill"), a Minister of the Crown (a "Government Bill"), by the general public ("Public Bills"), by an individual or small group of individuals (a "Private Bill").

First reading is the first stage of a Bill's passage through the House of Commons - usually a formality, it takes place without debate. The short title of the Bill is read out and then the Bill is printed. The Bill is published as a House of Commons paper for the first time.

The next stage is second reading, the first opportunity for MPs to debate the general principles and themes of the Bill. Once second reading is completed

the Bill proceeds to committee stage. Committee stage is where detailed examination of the Bill takes place, clause by clause, determining the intent and impact of the Bill's language. This is therefore often considered the most important step in the parliamentary process for researchers aiming to determine legislative intent. It is at this stage that amendments are made. If the Bill has been amended the Bill is reprinted before its next stage.

Once committee stage is finished, the Bill returns to the floor of the House of Commons for its report stage, where the amended Bill can be debated and further amendments proposed. All MPs can suggest amendments to the Bill or new clauses (parts) they think should be added.

Report stage is normally followed immediately by debate on the Bill's third reading. Amendments (proposals for change) cannot be made to a Bill at the third reading in the Commons.

The process in the House of Lords is very similar to the process in the House of Commons. The Bill will have the pro forma first reading, then the second reading. After the second reading the Bill will normally be referred to a Committee of the Whole House. The Bill then passes through a consideration stage and the third reading. In the House of Lords amendments may be made in the Committee of the Whole House, the consideration stage, and the third reading (this is different from the House of Commons where no amendments can be made in the third reading).

If the Bill is started in the Commons it goes to the House of Lords for its first reading. If the Bill is started in the Lords it returns to the House of Lords for consideration of any amendments the Commons has made. Both Houses must agree on the exact wording of the Bill. A Bill may go back and forth between each House until both Houses reach agreement.

When a Bill has completed all its parliamentary stages in both Houses, it must have the Royal Assent before it can become an Act of Parliament. The Royal Assent is the monarch's agreement to make the Bill into an Act and is a formality. When Royal Assent has been given to a Bill, the announcement is usually made in both Houses by the Lord Speaker in the Lords and the Speaker in the Commons.

4. Закончите предложения согласно содержанию текста и переведите их на русский язык.

1. The British Parliament consists of

2. During the first reading the short title of the Bill
3. The second reading is the first opportunity
4. The committee stage is
5. Once the committee stage is finished, the Bill returns to the floor of the House of Commons for its report stage, where
6. The report stage is followed by
7. The process in the House of Lords is
8. The Royal Assent is... .
9. When the Royal Assent has been given to a Bill,

5. Прочитайте текст и ответьте на вопросы.

1. When was the US Constitution adopted?
2. What does the US Constitution consist of?
3. How are the first 10 amendments to the US Constitution called?
4. What rights and liberties are protected under the Bill of Rights?
5. What kind of trial is guaranteed by the Bill of Rights?
6. What are the key features of the US Constitution?
7. What are the three branches of power according to the Constitution?
8. Is there a strict separation of powers in the USA?
9. Does any branch have more power than the others?
10. What duties does every branch have regarding the other branches under the principle of checks and balances?

The US Constitution

The form of the US government is based on the Constitution of 1787 which was adopted after the War of Independence. The US Constitution consists of 7 articles and 27 amendments. The first 10 amendments are called the Bill of Rights and were adopted in 1791 under popular pressure.

The Bill of Rights is a series of limitations on the power of the United States federal government, protecting the natural rights and liberties, property including freedom of religion, freedom of speech, a free press, free assembly, and free association, as well as the right to keep and carry arms.

In federal criminal cases, it requires indictment by a grand jury for any capital crime, guarantees a speedy, public trial with an impartial jury composed of members of the state in which the crime occurred.

A key feature of the US Constitution is federalism – the division of power between the national government and the states. Another major feature of the Constitution is the principle of the separation of powers within the national government. According to this principle the executive, legislative and judicial branches exercise powers that are largely separate and distinct. There is not a strict and complete separation of powers, the powers of the three branches overlap. Each branch has its own responsibilities, but no branch has more power than the other branches. There is the system of checks and balances. Under this principle each branch has certain duties to check the powers of the other branches. This system was meant to protect against the extremes since it makes compromise and consensus necessary.

The legislative branch is called the Congress which consists of the Senate and the House of Representatives. It is the responsibility of the Congress to propose and pass laws. In the system of checks and balances, Congress can refuse to approve Presidential appointments and can override presidential veto.

The executive branch consists of the President, the Vice President, the Cabinet and the 13 Departments, and also the independent agencies. Its responsibility is to enforce laws. According to the principle of checks and balances, the President has the power of veto to reject the bill of the Congress. He also appoints all Supreme Court Justices.

The judicial branch consists of the Supreme Court, 11 Circuit Courts of Appeals and 94 District Courts. This branch explains and interprets laws and makes decisions in lawsuits. It has the power over the other two branches and according to the principle of checks and balances can declare their actions and laws unconstitutional in case they violate the principles of the Constitution.

6. Выразите согласие/несогласие со следующими утверждениями, используя следующие речевые модели.

Model: a) I think it is true. The text tells us that ...

b) To my mind, it is false because ...

1. The US Constitution was adopted in 1918 after the World War I.
2. The first 10 amendments are called the Bill of Rights.
3. The Bill of Rights sets forth the structure of the Federal Government.
4. The key features of the US Constitution are federalism, the separation of powers and the system of checks and balances.

5. The legislative branch has more powers than the others.
6. The powers of the three branches don't overlap.
7. The system of checks and balances was meant to protect against the extremes.
8. The responsibilities of the Congress are to protect the rights of citizens and enforce laws.
9. The executive branch consists of the President, the Vice President, the Cabinet and the 13 Departments, and also the independent agencies.
10. The judicial branch explains and interprets laws and makes decisions in lawsuits.

7. Прочитайте текст и ответьте на вопросы.

1. What makes the UK Constitution different from other constitutions?
2. What are the sources of the UK Constitution?
3. What is the core principle of the UK Constitution?
4. What bodies represent the three branches of power (executive, legislative and judiciary)?

The British Constitution

The British Constitution is unwritten unlike the constitution in America or the proposed European Constitution, and as such, is referred to as an uncoded constitution in the sense that there is no single document that can be identified as Britain's constitution. The British Constitution can be found in a variety of documents. The main ones are: Statutes (the Magna Carta of 1215 and the Act of Settlement of 1701), Acts of Parliament; customs and traditions, political conventions, case law; constitutional matters decided in a court of law.

Since the English Civil War, the core principle of the British constitution has traditionally been the doctrine of parliamentary sovereignty, according to which the statutes passed by Parliament are the UK's supreme and final source of law. It follows that Parliament can change the constitution simply by passing new Acts of Parliament to be followed by the Royal Assent. There is some debate about whether this principle remains entirely valid today, in part due to the UK's European Union membership.

According to the doctrine of parliamentary sovereignty, Parliament may pass any legislation that it wishes. There are many Acts of Parliament which themselves have constitutional significance. For example, Parliament has the

power to determine the length of its own term. However, the Sovereign retains the power to dissolve Parliament at any time on the advice of the Prime Minister.

Parliament also has the power to change the structure of its constituent Houses and the relation between them. Parliament consists of the Sovereign, the House of Commons and the House of Lords. All the legislation must receive the approval of the Sovereign (the Royal Assent). Following the accession of the UK to European Economic Community (now the European Union) in 1972, the UK became bound by European law and more importantly, the principle of the supremacy of European Union law.

The House of Commons alone possesses the power to pass a motion of no-confidence in the Government, which requires the Government either to resign or seek fresh elections. Such a motion does not require passage by the Lords, or the Royal Assent. Parliament traditionally also has the power to remove individual members of the government by impeachment. By the Constitutional Reform Act 2005 it has the power to remove individual judges from office for misconduct.

The executive power in the United Kingdom is exercised by the Sovereign through Her Majesty's Government. The monarch appoints the Prime Minister as the head of Her Majesty's Government in the United Kingdom. The Prime Minister then selects the other Ministers which make up the Government. As in some other parliamentary systems of government, the executive is accountable to Parliament.

The Courts of the United Kingdom are divided into three separate jurisdictions serving England and Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland, since the United Kingdom does not have a single unified judicial system.

The Constitutional Reform Act 2005 created a new Supreme Court of the United Kingdom to take over the judicial functions of the House of Lords and devolution cases from the Judicial Committee of the Privy Council. The Supreme Court began its work in 2009, and serves as the highest court of appeal in England, Wales and in Northern Ireland, and for civil cases in Scotland. The High Court of Justiciary remains the court of last resort in Scotland for criminal cases.

8. Выразите согласие/несогласие со следующими утверждениями.

1. The British Constitution is unwritten unlike the Constitutions of the USA and the proposed European Constitution.
2. The British Constitution can be found in a variety of documents.
3. Amendments to the British Constitution need the approval of both Houses of Parliament, but they do not need the Royal Assent.
4. Parliamentary sovereignty has always been the core principle of the British Constitution.
5. The Sovereign has no power to dissolve Parliament.
6. Parliament has no power to change the structure of its houses.
7. The British Parliament consists of the House of Commons and the House of Lords.
8. The European law has priority over the UK law.
9. The executive power in the United Kingdom is exercised by the Sovereign.
10. The Constitutional Reform Act 2005 created a new Supreme Court of the United Kingdom.

9. Прочитайте текст о различных типах конституций и переведите его.

Types of Constitutions

A Constitution is a system which establishes the fundamental rules and principles which a state will use to govern and regulate.

There are several types of constitutions: written/unwritten, rigid/flexible, federal/unitary. The term written constitution is used to describe a constitution that is entirely written, that is codified in one single document. Written constitutions normally consist of a ceremonial preamble, which sets forth the goals of the state and the motivation for the constitution, and several articles containing the substantive provisions.

The term unwritten constitution is used to describe a constitution in which no single, formal document delineates the powers of a government. Instead, an unwritten constitution comprises the body of a country's laws, enacted over time, with an emphasis on political precedent and parliamentary procedure, to create a framework in which a limited government operates. Unwritten constitutions can contain written sources: e.g. constitutional statutes enacted by

the Parliament; and also unwritten sources: constitutional conventions, customs and traditions.

Many historians use the term “rigid” to describe the Constitution because in such constitution there are provisions in writing that cannot be legally changed with the same ease and in the same manner as ordinary laws. On the other hand, the Constitution is called “flexible” because it is an unwritten document that can be changed by an act of Parliament or through a process of amendment.

The federal constitution establishes the division of authority between the Federal Government and the component units of the government. In a federal constitution, sovereignty is invested in the central government. It allows a limited amount of government among units.

The unitary constitution relates to the parliament. It follows parliamentary system of power. The unitary constitution establishes a unitary system of government where a central government does exist. Although units are associated with that government, sovereignty is controlled by the central government.