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

1. 
2. 
3. 
4. 
5. 
6. 
7. 
8. 
9. 
10. 
11. 
12. 

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

**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/tct_cng3s.php](http://congress.indiana.edu/tct_cng3s.php) or [www.ncsl.org/trust](http://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!

**Funded by the U.S. Department of Education by Act of Congress**
There are 435 members of the U.S. citizen and lawmakers who work in a group called the House of Representatives. 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. 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 us make the greatest nation in the world. Our government isn’t flawless, but democracy is an important factor in our country’s success. Letting every voice be heard helps us make the greatest nation in the world.

**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, you’ll 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 capital?

**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’ll be concerned with passing laws that ensure the safety, 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.

---

**Did You Know?**

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.

---

**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.

---

**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.
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?

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

**answer:**

**Why do you think?**

**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?

**Q: What do government officials want to hear?**

**answer:**

**Why do you think?**

**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?

**Q: What do government officials want to hear?**

**answer:**

**Why do you think?**

**CIRCLE THE WORDS FROM THE LIST BELOW THAT APPEAR IN OUR PUZZLE.**

**DEMONSTRATE**

**POLICY**

**COMPROMISE**

**ELECT**

**SHOE**

**S E N A T E**

**D E B A T E**

**H A U R I E I T O**

**C H E M I C T E R M**

**C O M P L A I N T S**

**D E E P E N M I D N E D**

**L I M E T E D E D**

**E D O P E N M I N D**

**M A N E D I S S E S**

**S E R V E R T E D A**

**C E T A L S I G E L**

**RIDDLE:**

What do government officials want to hear?

**answer:**

**Why do you think?**

**DID YOU KNOW?**

Derrick Seaver

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

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.”

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!

A DAY IN THE LIFE

2:00 p.m. Meeting 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
6:30 p.m. Reception/fundraiser for fellow representative
8:00 p.m. Dinner with mayor from district
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
2:00 p.m. Meet with Restaurant Association about food safety
8:30 a.m. Breakfast with Governor
9:30 a.m. Meeting with party members regarding state budget
10:00 a.m.
Soccer practice! Homework!

Kid’s voices count! 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.

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!

Budget and Financial Services Committees of Congress!

A voice for young people

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!

Ryun competed in three Olympics and set a record for the world’s fastest 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!

A DAY IN THE LIFE

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

6:30 p.m.
Reception/fundraiser for

fellow representative

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

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

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

8:30 a.m.
Breakfast with Governor

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

10:00 a.m.
Soccer practice! Homework!

Kid’s voices count! 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.

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!

Budget and Financial Services Committees of Congress!

A voice for young people

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!

Budget and Financial Services Committees of Congress!

A voice for young people

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!

Budget and Financial Services Committees of Congress!

A voice for young people

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!

Budget and Financial Services Committees of Congress!

A voice for young people

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!

Budget and Financial Services Committees of Congress!

A voice for young people

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!

Budget and Financial Services Committees of Congress!

A voice for young people

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!

Budget and Financial Services Committees of Congress!

A voice for young people

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!

Budget and Financial Services Committees of Congress!

A voice for young people

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!

Budget and Financial Services Committees of Congress!

A voice for young people

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!

Budget and Financial Services Committees of Congress!

A voice for young people

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!

Budget and Financial Services Committees of Congress!