5.5 US Congress: Structure and Formal Powers of the House and Senate: 10-minute Pack

EDEXCEL 9PL0 · about 10 minutes

Total Marks

Name: _____ Date: ____ / ____ / _____

Answer ALL questions. For levels-marked questions, write extended, well-structured responses with accurate factual detail and clear evaluation. At least three questions require full-sentence answers: the 12-mark source question and the final 30-mark essay, and the 9-mark explanatory question where requested.

1 State the number of voting members in the United States House of Representatives.

(Total for Question 1 is 1 mark)

2 State the current size of the United States Senate and how many senators represent each state.

(Total for Question 2 is 1 mark)

3 This question asks about term lengths: state the constitutionally specified term length for a member of the House of Representatives.

(Total for Question 3 is 1 mark)

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4 Explain, with two reasons, how the different term lengths of House members and Senators affect the nature of their constituencies and electoral incentives. Refer to term lengths of 2 years and 6 years.

(Total for Question 4 is 3 marks)

5 This question asks about Congress's role in impeachment under the Constitution. Explain the distinct roles of the House of Representatives and the Senate in the impeachment process, and state the vote thresholds required in each chamber where relevant.

(Total for Question 5 is 4 marks)

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Mark scheme · 5.5 US Congress: Structure and Formal Powers of the House and Senate: 10-minute Pack

Question 1

identifies that the House of Representatives has 435 voting members cao **B1**

Answer: 435 voting members in the House of Representatives.

Question 2

identifies that the Senate has 100 members, two from each state cao **B1**

Answer: 100 senators, two from each state.

Question 3

states that House members serve two-year terms cao **B1**

Answer: Two years.

Question 4

states that 2-year House terms make Representatives more frequently accountable to voters, increasing short-term electoral incentives **B1**

states that 6-year Senate terms allow Senators to plan longer-term policy work and reduce immediate electoral pressure **B1**

connects these differences to constituency representation, e.g. House members represent smaller districts and campaign more often, while Senators represent entire states and can adopt broader, longer-term positions **B1**

Answer: Two-year House terms make Representatives face voters more often, creating stronger short-term electoral incentives and responsiveness to district-level concerns. Six-year Senate terms reduce the frequency of campaigning, allowing Senators to pursue longer-term policy goals and take positions for a statewide electorate rather than a smaller district.

Question 5

identifies that the House of Representatives has the sole power to impeach, meaning to bring formal charges **B1**

identifies that impeachment in the House is decided by a simple majority vote **B1**

identifies that the Senate has the sole power to try impeachments and to convict or acquit **B1**

identifies that conviction in the Senate requires a two-thirds majority of Senators present **B1**

Answer: The House of Representatives has the sole power to impeach, that is to bring formal charges against a federal official, and this requires a simple majority vote in the House. The Senate has the sole power to try impeachments and to convict or acquit; conviction in the Senate requires a two-thirds majority of Senators present.

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