

My Capitol

Discover Historic Treasures in Exhibition Hall and Explore the U.S. Capitol Grounds

A GUIDE FOR YOUNG PEOPLE, GRADES 6 AND UP



U.S. CAPITOL
Visitor Center

HOW TO USE THIS GUIDE

- **Exhibition Hall**, located in the Visitor Center, begins on page 3.
- The **U.S. Capitol Grounds**, outside of the building, begins on page 19.

For each tour, you will find a map with **numbered stops**. At each stop . . .

- **Read** the background information in the guide.
- **Use** the questions and activities to help you focus your looking, learning and thinking. You will find the answers to all of the questions beginning on page 25.
- **Talk** with your group about what you see and learn.
- **Take notes** to refresh your memory. Use the blank spaces on pages 18 and 23.
- **Have fun.**



Visitors view a scale model of the Capitol and Grounds in Exhibition Hall.



The United States Capitol

For Teachers and Parents

Designed for children ages 11 and older, this guide is intended as a self-guided tour of Exhibition Hall and the Capitol Grounds. For each of the numbered stops, this guide provides historical background, directed-looking activities, and questions to encourage discussion during the tour or for follow-up at school or home. You will find the answers to all of the questions beginning on page 25.

If your group is larger than 20 students, we suggest dividing it into smaller groups and staggering where each group begins its tour.

PART I

U.S. CAPITOL VISITOR CENTER EXHIBITION HALL

The exhibition is titled *E Pluribus Unum—Out of Many, One*. It tells the story of Congress, the branch of government that makes the nation’s laws. It also tells the story of the Capitol, the home of Congress since 1800. The Capitol is the world’s most recognized symbol of democratic government.

The exhibition displays some of America’s most treasured documents, objects and images. Together they illustrate how Congress works and how Congress and the Capitol have changed and grown along with the nation.

Before you begin your journey, you should know:

- **No photographs.** This helps preserve the documents in the exhibition.
- **Stay** with your teacher or chaperones at all times.
- **Don’t lean** on the walls and cases.
- **You may touch** the model of the Capitol Dome and the architectural elements located near the interactive stations (see map on page 4).

Enjoy the exhibition!



A CLOSER LOOK

Where have you seen the words *E Pluribus Unum* before? These words are Latin for “Out of Many, One” and form the motto that appears on the Great Seal of the United States. The seal—first used in 1782—reflects the ideals the Founding Fathers held for the new nation.

Think about what *E Pluribus Unum* means to you.

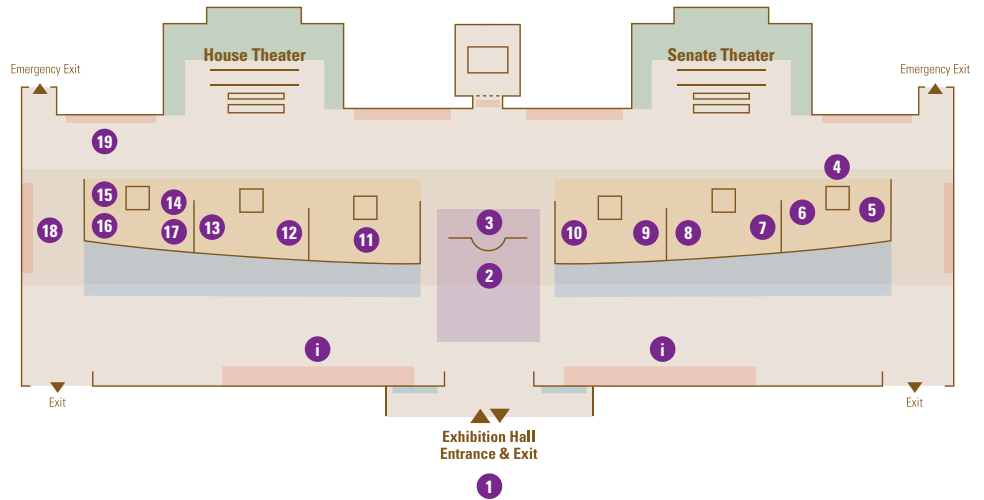
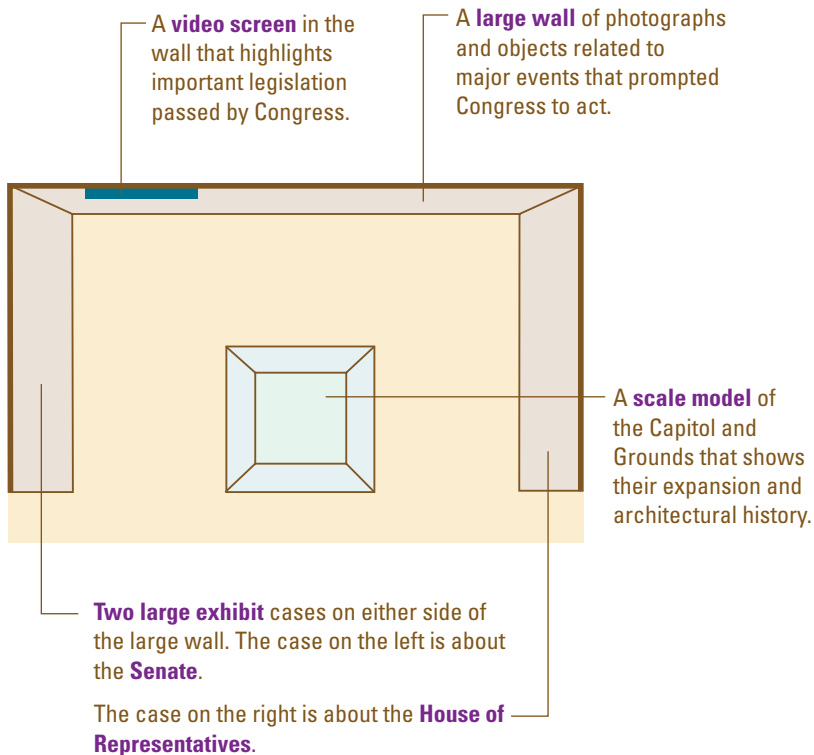
Search for the Great Seal throughout the exhibition. See how many you find.



Map of Exhibition Hall

Your tour of *E Pluribus Unum—Out of Many, One* begins with the model for the Statue of Freedom at the entrance to Exhibition Hall. Once you are inside the exhibition, look at the map and the legend on the opposite page.

Stops 4-17 tell the history of Congress and the Capitol during a particular time period. Each stop includes:



Stops

- 1 Plaster Model for the Statue of Freedom
- 2 The Dome: An Architectural Masterpiece
- 3 Inside the Dome: An Artistic Masterpiece
- 4 A Home for Congress
- 5 The Senate Sets Up Shop
- 6 The House Sets Up Shop
- 7 Senate Chamber Desks
- 8 House Chamber Desks and Chairs
- 9 First Full-Term African American Senator: Blanche Bruce
- 10 First African American Representative: Joseph Rainey
- 11 Challenges of a Growing Nation
- 12 First Woman Elected to the Senate: Hattie Caraway
- 13 First Woman Elected to the House: Jeannette Rankin
- 14 First Woman Elected to the House and the Senate: Margaret Chase Smith
- 15 First Asian American Woman Elected to Congress: Patsy Mink
- 16 First African American Woman from the South in Congress: Barbara Jordan
- 17 Civil Rights for All Americans
- 18 The Constitution and Congress
- 19 Working at the Capitol
- i Interactive Stations



Statue of Freedom on top of the U.S. Capitol Dome.

STOP 1

Plaster Model for the Statue of Freedom

This is a full-size plaster model for the bronze Statue of Freedom that is on top of the Capitol Dome. Designed by **Thomas Crawford**, the statue depicts a female figure representing freedom. In her right hand, Freedom holds a sword (a symbol of war). In her left hand she holds a wreath of laurel leaves (a symbol of peace) and a shield (a symbol of protection). Together, the symbols represent the ideal that freedom can triumph in both war and in peace.

Making the Statue of Freedom

- The sculptor, Thomas Crawford, created the plaster model in his studio in Rome, Italy.
- The model was shipped in six crates to a foundry (a factory for casting metal) near Washington, D.C.
- At the foundry, Clark Mills cast in bronze the five pieces that made up the statue.
- Phillip Reid, an enslaved African American worker, assisted Clark Mills in casting the Statue of Freedom.
- Piece by piece, the statue was raised to the top of the Dome and assembled there.
- The last piece, the head, was bolted in place on December 2, 1863.

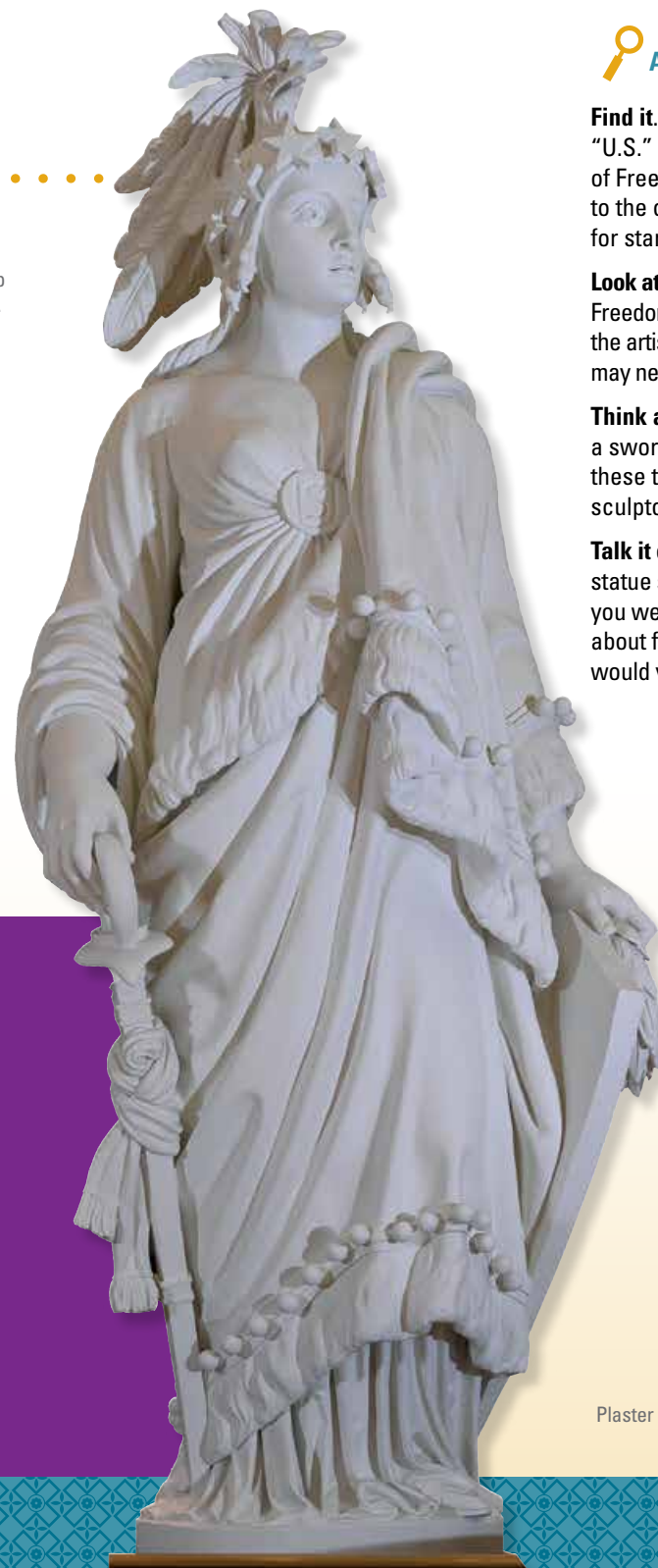
A CLOSER LOOK

Find it. Where are the initials “U.S.” on the model for the Statue of Freedom? Also find a reference to the original 13 states. (Hint: Look for stars and stripes.)

Look at it. What do you see on Freedom’s head? Why do you think the artist chose this symbol? (You may need to take a few steps back.)

Think about it. Freedom is holding a sword and shield. In choosing these things, what was the sculptor saying about freedom?

Talk it over. Which elements of the statue symbolize freedom to you? If you were asked to design a statue about freedom, what symbols would you include?



Plaster model for the Statue of Freedom



Thomas U. Walter



Construction of the Dome



Model of the U.S. Capitol Dome; cutaway model of the Dome.



STOP 2

The Dome: An Architectural Masterpiece

The U.S. Capitol Dome may be America’s most famous landmark. Designed by **Thomas U. Walter**, a Philadelphia architect, it is the second dome that has crowned the Capitol. The proportions of the original dome became too small when the Capitol’s two wings were enlarged to accommodate more senators and representatives.

Unlike the original wooden dome, the new dome was made of cast-iron, making it fireproof. By the time the Capitol Dome was completed in 1866, close to nine million pounds of iron had been lifted into place by steam-powered cranes.

Neoclassical Architecture

The Capitol is an example of the **neoclassical** (“new” classical) style of architecture. Neoclassical buildings were inspired by the architecture of ancient Greece and Rome. In addition to a dome, they are likely to have:

- Columns
- A crowning statue
- Many small windows
- Balustrades (repeating small posts like a porch rail)
- Pilasters (flat columns)



Find the neoclassical features listed above on the scale model. It’s okay to touch it.



A CLOSER LOOK

Find the answer. How tall is the U.S. Capitol Dome?

Look at it. The lights inside the model cycle on and off every two minutes.

Look more closely at the top of the dome under the Statue of Freedom. Lanterns there light up at night when either the Senate or the House holds an evening session.

Talk it over. What does your state capitol building look like? How is its architecture the same or different from that of the U.S. Capitol?

Think about it. What other buildings have you seen that have a dome? What does a dome tell you about the building’s importance? See if you can name five other Washington, D.C., buildings or monuments that have domes.

STOP 3

Inside the Dome: An Artistic Masterpiece

This side of the model shows the inside of the Capitol Dome. Look for the painting on the Dome's ceiling. It is called *The Apotheosis of Washington* and honors **George Washington** as a national hero.

The Apotheosis was painted in 1865 by the Italian artist Constantino Brumidi and took him 11 months to complete. Brumidi moved to the United States in 1852 from Italy, where he had painted murals in the Vatican and in Roman palaces.

How was *The Apotheosis* painted?

The Apotheosis is a **fresco**, which means “fresh” in Italian. A fresco is done by applying paint to wet plaster. Once dry, the painting becomes part of the wall. This painting technique was most popular during the Italian Renaissance. For example, Michelangelo used fresco to create the Vatican Sistine Chapel ceiling in the 1500s.

What does the painting mean?

Look at the photograph of *The Apotheosis of Washington* on the wall to the left of the model.

“Apotheosis” means elevating a person to the rank of a god or the **glorification of a person as an ideal**. Brumidi combined Greek and Roman gods and goddesses with important Americans and American achievements to create an American work of art. The group of figures in the center of the painting includes George Washington. The groups that line the perimeter of the fresco represent six themes:

1. **War:** Armed Freedom defeats Tyranny and the power of kings.
2. **Science:** Minerva teaches Benjamin Franklin and other inventors.
3. **Marine:** Neptune and Venus hold a telegraph cable being laid under the Atlantic Ocean.
4. **Commerce:** Mercury hands money to Robert Morris, a financier of the American Revolution.
5. **Mechanics:** Vulcan forges a cannon and steam engine.
6. **Agriculture:** Ceres sits on a reaper invented by Cyrus McCormick to harvest grain.



The Apotheosis of Washington

A CLOSER LOOK

Look at the photograph of *The Apotheosis of Washington* and . . .

- **Find George Washington.** Notice the 13 women that surround him. What do you think the women symbolize? (Hint: Why is the number 13 important in American history?)
- **Look for the rainbow** that arches beneath President Washington's feet. Why do you think the artist included a rainbow?
- **Find the “Science” group.** Benjamin Franklin is standing to the right of Minerva, the Roman goddess of science. What did Franklin invent?
- **Find the “War” group.** The central figure represents Freedom. Name the elements that resemble those you saw in the model of the Statue of Freedom in Stop 1.
- **Think about it.** What does *The Apotheosis of Washington* tell you about the way America wanted to present itself to the world in the 1850s? What themes would you pick to represent America today?

STOP 4

A Home for Congress

One of Congress's first tasks was to find a home for the new United States government. In 1790, during its second session, Congress authorized a 10-mile-square area on the Potomac River that included land in Maryland and Virginia as the nation's capital. The site, which was selected by President George Washington, was called "The Federal City." From the start, however, Thomas Jefferson referred to it as "Washington."

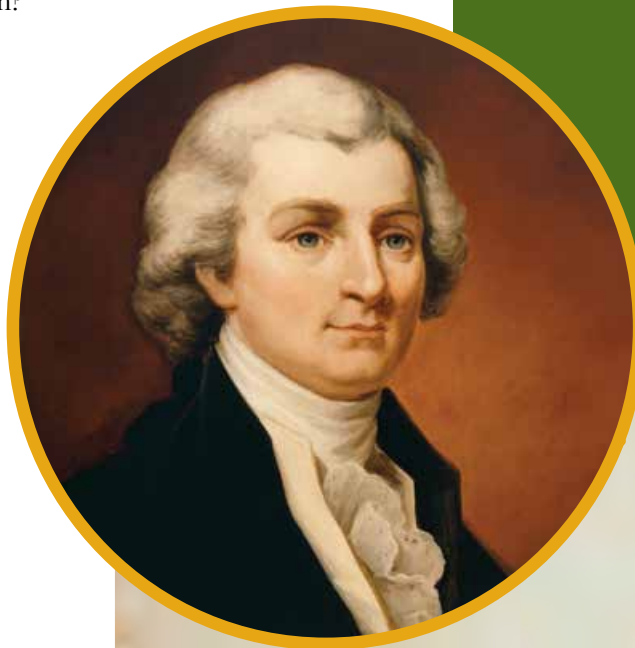
Test your history and geography.

Name the 13 original states from north to south. Where was Washington, D.C., located in relationship to the states? Why do you think that location was chosen?

A Design for the Capitol

In 1792, Secretary of State Thomas Jefferson proposed that a design contest be held for the new Capitol. None of the entries pleased President Washington, so no prizes were awarded.

In 1793, however, after the competition had closed, **Dr. William Thornton**, a physician and amateur architect, presented a plan. His design had the classical elegance and grand scale that Washington wanted, and Thornton became the architect of the new Capitol.



Left to right: Dr. William Thornton; model of Capitol Grounds in 1814
Below: Thornton's winning design of the Capitol

A CLOSER LOOK

Think about it. The Constitution calls for Congress to have two legislative bodies: the House of Representatives and the Senate. How does Dr. Thornton's design for the Capitol reflect that?

Look at the model of the Capitol (1814). Two wings of the Capitol had been completed. No dome had been built—only a temporary connection between the wings.

Notice the area around the Capitol. Would you call it urban or rural? How does it differ from today?



STOP 5

The Senate Sets Up Shop

With 22 members attending, the Senate began its first session on April 6, 1789, in New York City. Two days later, the members elected a Secretary of the Senate, who was responsible for keeping a journal of day-to-day activities. He also bought supplies, managed payrolls and paid bills.

For Congress' first 125 years, U.S. senators were elected by state legislatures, which often sent the senators instructions on how to vote.

A CLOSER LOOK

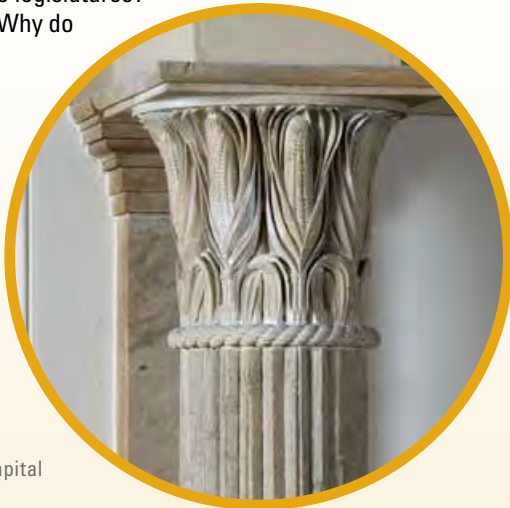
Look in the case for it. *The Journal of the First Session of the Senate* shows 19 rules that the Senate adopted for conducting business.

Also locate the Senate Payment Ledger. This volume records the payments made to senators for their salaries and travel expenses.

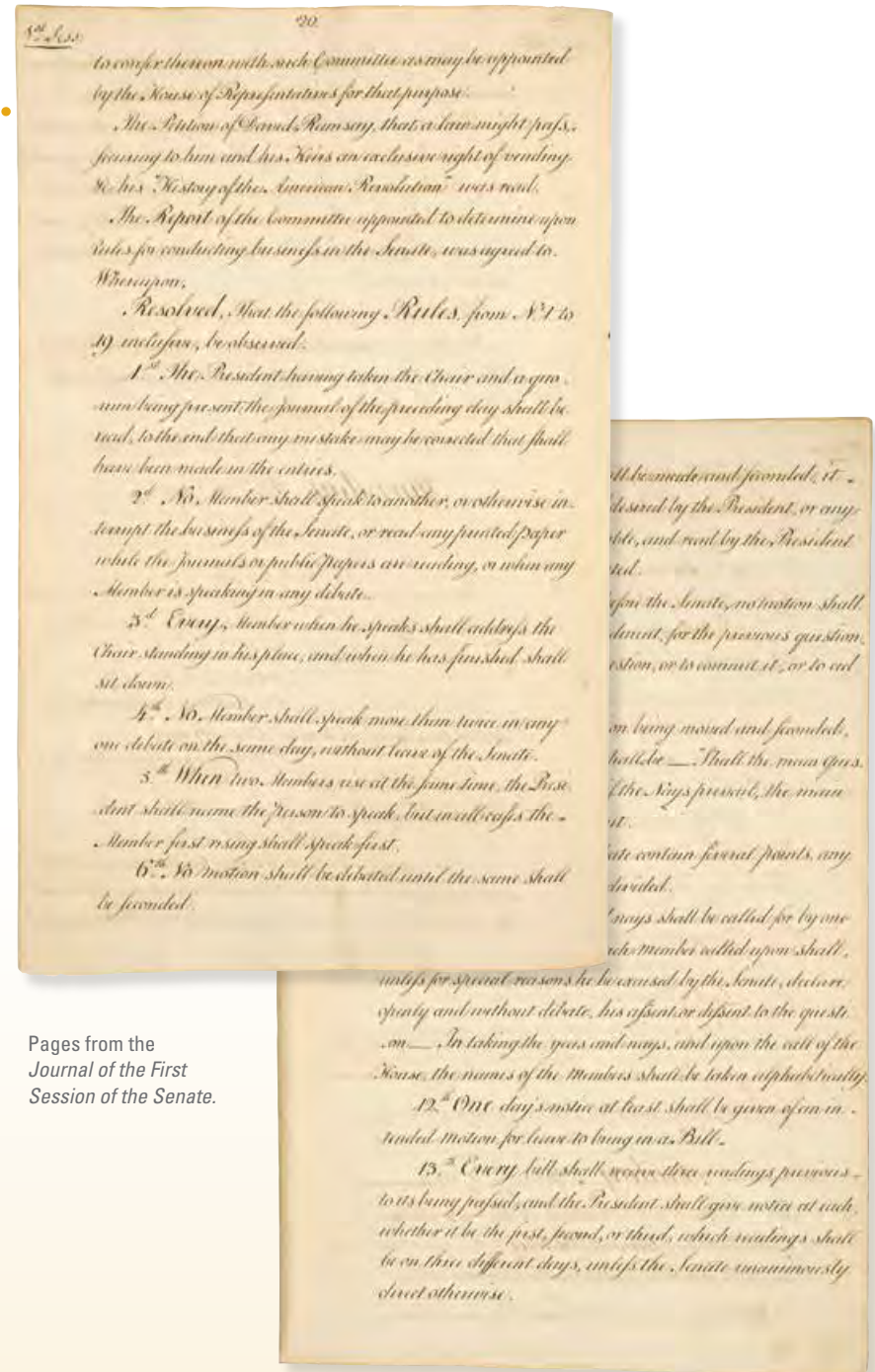
Think about it. Why did the authors of the Constitution want senators to be chosen by state legislatures? How do we select senators today? Why do you think the law was changed?

Check it out online. The Senate still keeps a record of its daily activities. Go to www.senate.gov and click on "Daily Digest" to see the most recent entries.

Find this column capital. What makes it unusual? Stumped? Read the exhibit label to find out.



Cornucopia
column capital



Pages from the
*Journal of the First
Session of the Senate.*

Congress of the United States

Opened and held at the City of New York, on
Wednesday the seventh of March, one thousand seven hundred and eighty nine.

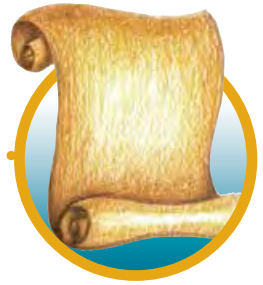
THE

RESOLVED

ARTICLES

STOP 6

The House Sets Up Shop



During its first session in 1789, the House of Representatives established the way it would carry out its business. It looked to Britain's House of Commons for ideas. For example, the Speaker of the House would be responsible for presiding over debates and maintaining order. Basic rules of parliamentary procedure were adopted from the House of Commons as well.

The House also began the process of adding amendments to the new Constitution. Why? Because the Constitution said nothing about protecting the freedom of speech, freedom of religion or other individual rights. From amendments proposed by the House of Representatives, the Senate approved 12 that were sent to the states to be ratified. The states agreed to 10 of the amendments—known today as the Bill of Rights. Name three of the rights.

Left: Bill of Rights

Below: Bronze inkstand, Smithsonian Institution, National Museum of American History, Behring Center



A CLOSER LOOK

Find this inkstand. Henry Clay used this bronze inkstand to hold the writing implements he used while he was Speaker of the House. Clay served as Speaker longer than anyone else in the 1800s.

Look for two versions of the Bill of Rights. Which version was sent to the states to be ratified? What two amendments were not ratified?

Think about it. Why do you think the First Congress was concerned about individual rights?

STOP 7

Senate Chamber Desks

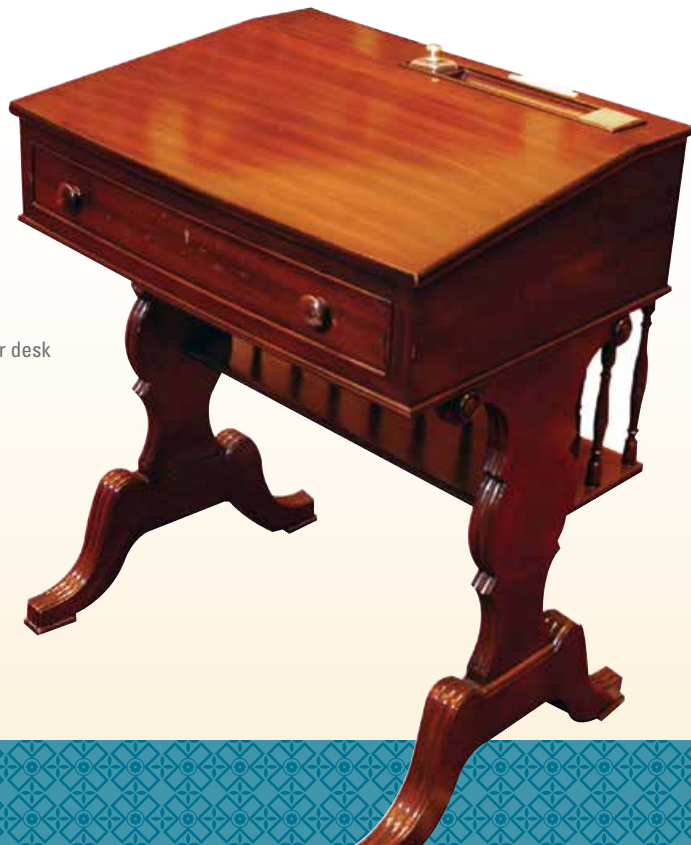
In 1819, the Senate ordered 48 desks to replace those destroyed when the British burned the Capitol during the War of 1812. Made by Thomas Constantine, each desk cost \$34.

Today, all of the desks remain in use. As the Senate has grown in size, desks similar to Constantine's design have been added to the Senate Chamber. It's a tradition among senators today to sign their names inside the drawer of their chamber desks.

A CLOSER LOOK

Pop quiz. How many senators serve in Congress today? How many senators represent each state? What is the length of a senator's term? Are all senators elected at the same time?

Think about it. Why don't residents of the District of Columbia and U.S. territories have representation in the Senate?



Senate chamber desk

STOP 8

House Chamber Desks and Chairs

After the British burned the Capitol in 1814, the House Chamber was rebuilt and needed furniture. The House ordered 188 desks and chairs from Thomas Constantine, a cabinetmaker from New York. These desks and chairs, however, were removed in 1857.

As the nation expanded westward and the population grew, the number of House members increased. Seating in the House Chamber was redesigned. Continuous rows of seats replaced individual desks and chairs.

A CLOSER LOOK

Pop quiz. What determines the number of representatives from each state? What is the length of a representative's term? How does that compare with a senator's term?

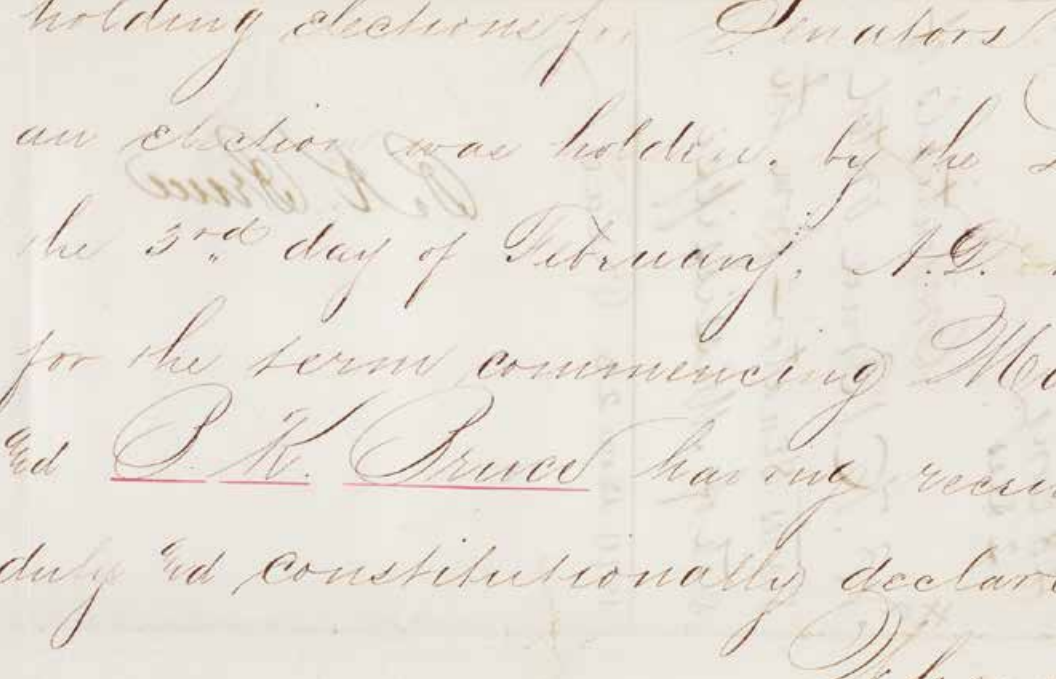
Do the math. By law, no more than 535 members may serve in Congress. If there are 100 senators, how many representatives currently serve in Congress? Name your congressional district's representative. (Don't know? Go to the interactive computer area—"Your Congress/Your Capitol"—to find out.)



Gift of Mr. and Mrs. Frank E. Miller in memory of Nellie Holmead Fowler.



House chamber chair and desk
Collection of the U.S. House of Representatives.



Certificate of Election for Blanche Bruce; 1875



Portrait of Blanche Bruce



FIRST AFRICAN AMERICANS IN CONGRESS

After the Civil War, three amendments were added to the Constitution that addressed slavery and civil rights. The Thirteenth Amendment abolished slavery in 1865. The Fourteenth Amendment, ratified in 1868, provided citizenship rights to the newly-freed slaves. And in 1870, the Fifteenth Amendment granted voting rights to black men.

In addition, African Americans could be elected to Congress. From 1863-1877 (the period called Reconstruction), 14 African American men held House seats and two served in the Senate.

STOP 9

First Full-Term African American Senator: Blanche Bruce, Mississippi

Blanche Bruce was the first African American elected to serve a full term in the Senate. He was also the first African American to preside over the Senate in its practice of rotating Presiding Officers. Born as a slave in Virginia, Bruce fled north to freedom during the Civil War. Following emancipation, he pursued a career in education and politics in Missouri and Mississippi.

A CLOSER LOOK

Look for Senator Bruce's certificate of election issued by the state of Mississippi.



STOP 10

First African American Representative: Joseph Rainey, South Carolina

A slave in his youth, **Joseph Rainey** was the first African American to serve in the House of Representatives. In 1874, he became the first black American to preside over the House. During Reconstruction, 14 African Americans held House seats.



A CLOSER LOOK

Look for the marble. Representative Rainey would have picked a numbered marble like this one to find his seat assignment. We don't know which number he pulled, but he sat with members of his party. Seating on the floor of Congress was not segregated by race. However, visitors in the galleries were segregated by race and gender.

Find out more. Research how seating is decided in the House of Representatives today.

Look at the model of the Capitol (1877). The cast-iron dome is in place, and new wings flank the original building. Compare this model to the one in Stop 4.

STOP 11

Challenges of a Growing Nation

After the Civil War, farms and small towns gave way to factories and cities. Many factory workers were new immigrants and children. Long hours, dangerous job conditions and low pay challenged Congress to find ways to improve workers' lives, especially those of children.

The photographer, **Lewis Hine**, played a major role in convincing members of Congress that they needed to act to protect children from poor working conditions and abuse. Hine traveled the country documenting child labor.



A CLOSER LOOK

Look for photos of child laborers. What jobs are the children doing?

Talk about it. How would your life be affected if you had to work a 12-hour day in a factory or on a farm?

Research it. When you return to school, look up the Fair Labor Standards Act of 1938. How does this law and others like it protect your life?



Look at the model of the Capitol (1913). What changes do you see that tell you that congressional membership had increased? What changes do you see to the Capitol Grounds?

FIRST WOMEN IN CONGRESS

Before 1917, no women served in Congress. As of the 112th Congress, 274 have served as women's service continues. A significant number have held leadership positions, including Speaker of the House.



Hattie Caraway

STOP 12

First Woman Elected to the Senate: Hattie Caraway, Arkansas

Hattie Caraway was the first woman elected to the Senate. She had been appointed to her husband's seat after he died in 1931. To everyone's surprise, however, she won a special election and then a general election in 1932. She was also the first woman to chair a Senate committee and to preside over the Senate.

STOP 13

First Woman Elected to the House: Jeannette Rankin, Montana

Jeannette Rankin was the first woman to be elected to Congress—four years before the Constitution gave women the right to vote. Rankin served in the House of Representatives from 1917-19 and 1941-43. She was one of the few suffragists (campaigners for women's right to vote) to serve in Congress. Also, she was the sole member of Congress to vote against U.S. participation in both World War I and World War II. She said, "I may be the first woman member of Congress, but I won't be the last."



Jeannette Rankin

A CLOSER LOOK

Find the gavel used during the House vote that declared war against Germany and Italy in 1941.

Figure it out. The Nineteenth Amendment to the Constitution, which guarantees women the right to vote, was ratified in 1920. How was it possible for Jeannette Rankin to be elected to Congress in 1916? (Hint: In 1914, women residing in Montana were granted the right to vote in national elections.)

STOP 14

First Woman Elected to the House and the Senate: Margaret Chase Smith, Maine

Margaret Chase Smith was the first woman elected to both the House (1940-1949) and the Senate (1949-1973). Smith broke down many barriers to women in politics. For example, she served on the Senate Armed Services Committee and was a presidential candidate in 1964.



Smith's
campaign
button



Above: Smith's campaign buttons
Right: Margaret Chase Smith



MINORITY WOMEN IN CONGRESS

STOP 15

First Asian American Woman Elected to Congress: Patsy Mink, Hawaii

Patsy Mink was the first Asian American woman to be elected to Congress, winning a seat in the House of Representatives in 1964. In Congress, she strongly advocated for women's issues and rights. Among her achievements, she gained critical support for Title IX of the 1972 Education Amendments. This legislation barred discrimination against women in schools receiving federal funds. It also opened up opportunities for women in school athletics.

STOP 16

First African American Woman from the South in Congress: Barbara Jordan, Texas

Elected in 1972, **Barbara Jordan** was the first African American to represent Texas in Congress and the first African American woman from a Southern state to serve in the House. While in Congress, Jordan's assignments included membership on the influential Judiciary Committee, which held President Nixon's impeachment hearings in 1974.

A CLOSER LOOK

Talk about it. How have women serving in the House and the Senate affected American society?

Do you know? Does your state have any women members in Congress? If so, name them.



Above: Patsy Mink; Barbara Jordan Below: President Lyndon B. Johnson signing the Voting Rights Act, 1965



STOP 17

Civil Rights for All Americans

In the 1960s, Congress passed two important pieces of legislation—the **Civil Rights Act of 1964** and the **Voting Rights Act of 1965**. The first bill ensured that all Americans have the right to go to any hotel, restaurant, theater, store or other place open to the public. The second bill prevented any state from discriminating against voters because of their race or color. These two landmark bills were proposed to Congress by President John F. Kennedy, but neither one passed before his assassination in 1963. In 1964, Senator Everett Dirksen of Illinois, an influential debater, declared that racial integration was “an idea whose time has come.” A Republican, Dirksen joined Democrats to end the filibuster against the Civil Rights Act.

A CLOSER LOOK

Look for a pen and a desk. What do they have to do with the Voting Rights Act of 1965?

Talk about it. Why was passing the Civil Rights Act of 1964 so important? What role did citizen action play in passing the act?



Close-up of the Constitution's Preamble



STOP 18 The Constitution and Congress

The Constitution is the supreme law of the United States and is the oldest written constitution of any of the world's nations. Framed by a convention of delegates from 12 of the 13 original states, the Constitution establishes three branches of government: Legislative, Executive and Judicial. The legislative branch, or Congress, is the foundation of the democratic framework put forth by the Constitution. In Congress, the American people speak through their representatives and senators.

A CLOSER LOOK

Look in the case and find the Constitution. The one displayed here is a reproduction of the original as it was written in 1787 (the original is in the National Archives).

Now take a step back to get a better look. How many pages does the Constitution contain? Are you surprised? How many articles does it include? Which one is the longest? Which of the three branches of government does that article establish?

Look more closely at the label titled "The House and Senate." Read it and assign the following responsibilities to the House (H), the Senate (S) or both (B).

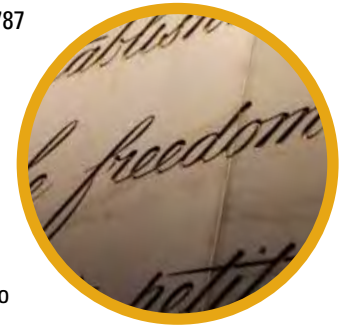
- Initiates all laws concerning the raising of money by the federal government.
- Approves all treaties.
- Declares all wars.
- Approves all presidential nominations.
- Initiates the removal of federal officials suspected of "high crimes and misdemeanors."
- Makes all laws.

Think about it. Bills that impose federal taxes must originate in the House. Why do you think the authors of the Constitution chose the House instead of the Senate? (Hint: How were senators and representatives chosen when the Constitution was written?)

Investigate it later. Identify a bill that is currently being debated in Congress. Find out if Congress would need to raise additional money (revenues) if the bill is passed into law.

True or False? Any U.S. citizen can introduce a bill into Congress.

For more "Capitol Challenges" go to www.visitthecapitol.gov/Exhibitions/online/explore-and-discover.html.



Wall engraving in Exhibition Hall

STOP 19

Working at the Capitol

Have you wondered what it takes to keep the Capitol and Congress working smoothly? Look at the photographs—from past and present—of the many people and professions working behind the scenes.

A CLOSER LOOK

Talk about it. How many jobs can you identify?

Below: Grounds crew planting flowers; Capitol guide in 1949; Electromotive mechanic working on the Senate subway; Officers of the Senate and House expedite the legislative process; Conservator restoring a Brumidi Corridor mural



WHAT ELSE CAN I DO?

Check out the Senate and the House of Representatives Theaters. The television monitors to the right and left of the movie screens show what is happening on the floor of the House and the Senate whenever that Chamber is in session.

Test your knowledge about Congress and the Capitol. Go to one of the interactive computer stations in the “Your Congress/Your Capitol” section of the Exhibition Hall. While you are there, also take a virtual tour of some of the rooms in the Capitol closed to visitors.



PART II EXPLORE THE U.S. CAPITOL GROUNDS

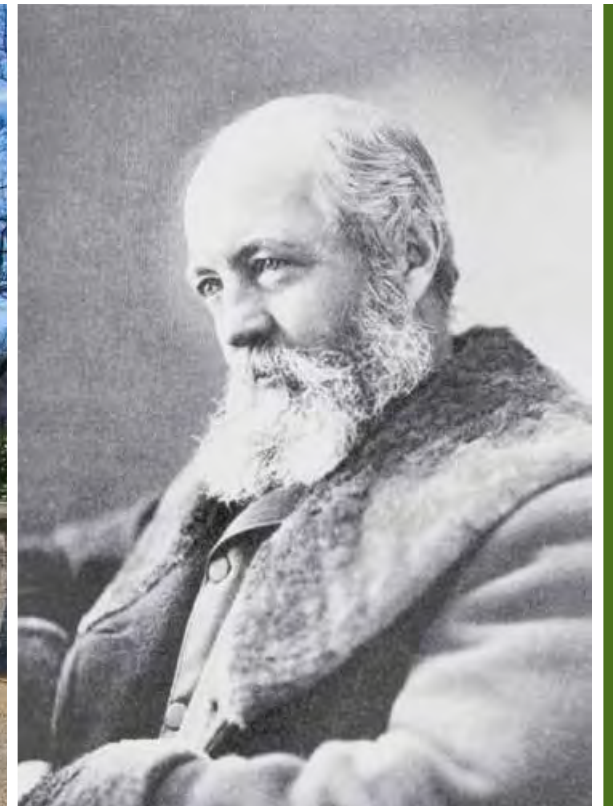
Like a painting in a frame, a grand building deserves a grand setting. The U.S. Capitol Grounds do just that. The Capitol's landscape plan was designed by **Frederick Law Olmsted**. Often called the father of American landscape architecture, Olmsted also designed New York City's Central Park and the National Zoo in Washington, D.C.

Olmsted believed that city dwellers needed public parks in which to relax and enjoy nature. The Capitol



Grounds' open spaces and curving walkways contrast with the straight, formal lines of the building. Groupings of trees and shrubs frame different views of the Capitol, which create opportunities for great photos.

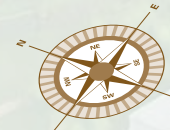
Photos left to right: The U.S. Capitol; Frederick Law Olmsted





Map of the Capitol Grounds

Begin your tour anywhere on this map. As you follow the walkways, take advantage of the many scenic views of the Capitol.



- 1 United States Capitol Visitor Center
- 2 Trolley Stop Shelters
- 3 Summerhouse
- 4 Commemorative Trees*
- 5 West Front Lawn
- 6 Peace Monument
- 7 United States Botanic Garden

** Commemorative trees are located throughout the grounds*

STOP 1

The United States Capitol

The U.S. Capitol is recognized worldwide as a **monument** to the American people and their government. The Capitol with its magnificent dome has become a landmark of neoclassical architecture—a style inspired by the buildings of ancient Greece and Rome.

The U.S. Capitol has been the **home of Congress** since 1800. The Senate meets in the wing to the north, and the House meets in the wing to the south. When the flag is flying above a wing, it means the legislative body that meets there is in session. Since the Capitol's construction began in 1793, the building has changed many times. Its newest addition, the Capitol Visitor Center, opened in 2008.



THINK ABOUT IT. What features of the Capitol's architecture resemble buildings from ancient Greece and Rome? Why do you think those buildings appealed to the Founding Fathers?



STOP 2

Trolley Stop Shelters

Stand under the **trolley stop shelter** and imagine yourself waiting for a trolley while enjoying magnificent views of the Capitol. This wrought iron shelter is one of two built for visitors who waited for trolleys that once stopped at the Capitol. Trolley tracks used to run through the Capitol Grounds from Independence Avenue. The trolleys carried visitors to the Capitol as well as to other places in the city like the Treasury Department, the State Department, and Union Station.

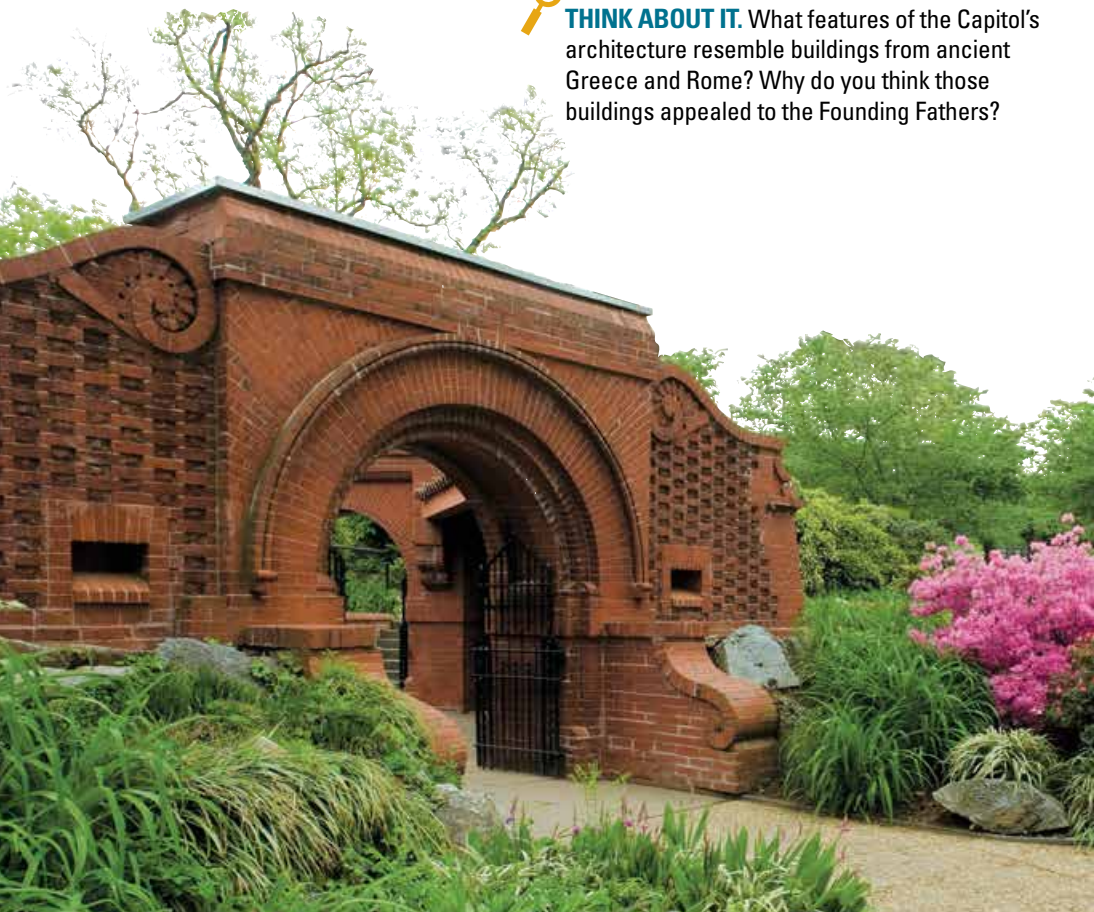
STOP 3

Summerhouse

Olmsted designed the **Summerhouse** as a place to escape Washington's hot summer sun and to enjoy views of the Capitol. Sit on one of the shaded benches, relax and examine the architectural details that surround you. Above one of the benches a window looks into a small **grotto**, or cave. Listen to the water as it splashes over the rocks. The fountain in the center of the grotto once provided drinking water pumped from a spring. Now the fountain is only for display.



LOOK MORE CLOSELY. What patterns do you see on the walls of the Summerhouse?



STOP 4

Commemorative Trees

Many of the trees on the Capitol Grounds were planted to **commemorate** or honor members of Congress, other notable citizens, national organizations and historic events. In addition, more than 30 states have presented gifts of their **state tree** to the Capitol Grounds. Many of the trees bear plaques that identify the species of the tree and its historic significance.

STOP 5

West Front Lawn

This area creates a formal setting for the Capitol's West Front, the side of the building that faces the National Mall. Beginning with the inauguration of Ronald Reagan in 1981, **presidential inaugurations** have been held on the marble terrace named for Frederick Law Olmsted. Surrounding the lower part of the West Front lawn are stone walls, lamp posts and fountains with carvings inspired by nature.



STOP 6

The Peace Monument

The Peace Monument **honors sailors** who died at sea during the **Civil War**. The marble monument is topped with two female figures wearing classical robes. They symbolize Grief and History. Below them, two other female figures represent Victory and Peace. The two infants at the foot of Victory depict Mars, the Roman god of war with his sword, and Neptune, the Roman god of the sea with his trident.



TALK ABOUT IT. How can you tell which figure symbolizes Grief, History, Victory and Peace?

STOP 7

United States Botanic Garden

The U.S. Botanic Garden is the **oldest such garden in the nation**. The idea dates to our earliest presidents—Washington, Madison and Jefferson. They wanted a **National Garden** to collect, grow and distribute plants useful to the American people. The Botanic Garden has been open to the public since 1850 and moved into its current building in 1933. Some of the first plants in the collection came from the United States Exploring Expedition of 1842, which brought plants from around the world to Washington, D.C.

The Botanic Garden—constructed from glass, aluminum and stone—includes a series of greenhouses such as the Jungle House, Garden Court and Orchid House. A four-year renovation of the building was completed in 2001.

THINK ABOUT IT.

Stand back and look at the Capitol and the West Front lawn. If you were a landscape architect, what would you change or add to the landscape design. Why?



KEY TERMS

Architecture: The practice or art of designing and building structures. The common elements of design form an architectural style.

Bill of Rights: A summary of a people's fundamental rights and privileges that cannot be violated by a government. The first ten amendments to the U.S. Constitution are known as the Bill of Rights.

Congress: The legislative branch of the United States made up of the Senate and the House of Representatives.

Constitution: The basic principles and laws that determine the powers and duties of a nation, state or organization. A constitution can also grant certain rights and privileges to its citizens or members. The U.S. Constitution was written in 1787 and ratified (approved) by the states in 1788. It went into effect on March 4, 1789.

Democracy: A system of government in which the supreme power is vested in the people, who can exercise their power directly or indirectly through elected representatives.

District of Columbia: The city created by the U.S. Constitution to serve as the nation's capital. The original site, chosen by President George Washington, was on land provided by Maryland and Virginia. The District of Columbia is not a state but a unique federal district under the jurisdiction of Congress.

The House of Representatives: One of the two bodies of the legislative branch in which a state's population determines its number of representatives.

Legislative Branch: The branch of the U.S. government that has the power of legislating, or making laws.

The Senate: One of the two bodies of the legislative branch in which each state has two senators, ensuring equal representation among the states.

RESOURCES

For more information about what you have seen in Exhibition Hall and about Congress and the Capitol, check out the following websites:

The U.S. Capitol Visitor Center: www.visitthecapitol.gov

The Architect of the Capitol: www.aoc.gov

The House of Representatives: <http://artandhistory.house.gov>

The Senate: www.senate.gov

Recommended Readings:

Aikman, Lonelle. *We, the People: Story of the United States Capitol*. Washington, D.C.: United States Capitol Historical Society, 1993.

Allen, William. *History of the United States Capitol: A Chronicle of Design, Construction, and Politics*. Washington, D.C.: Prepared under the direction of the Architect of the Capitol, U.S. Government Printing Office, 2001.

Baker, Richard Allan. *The Senate of the United States: A Bicentennial History*. Malabar, Florida: Krieger Publishing Company, 1988.

Currie, James T. *The United States House of Representatives*. Malabar, Florida: Krieger Publishing Company, 1988.

Greenburg, Ellen. *The House and the Senate Explained: The People's Guide to Congress*. New York: W.W. Norton and Company, 1996.

Remini, Robert. *The House: The History of the House of Representatives*. New York: HarperCollins Publishers, 2007.

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Page 15: President Johnson signing the Voting Rights Act, 1965, © AP/WIDE WORLD

Page 19: Frederick Law Olmsted, National Park Service

ANSWER KEY

My Capitol Part 1: U.S. Capitol Visitor Center Exhibition Hall

PAGE 3:

In how many places in Exhibition Hall can you find the Great Seal of the United States?

Answer: The Great Seal of the United States is used to authenticate certain documents produced by the federal government. Features of this seal served as models for the designs of the U.S. Senate Seal and the Presidential Seal, which are used for the same purpose — to authenticate important documents. The U.S. Senate Seal appears three times in Exhibition Hall — on the wall near the model of the Capitol Dome, near the reproduction of the U.S. Constitution at the south end of Exhibition Hall, and in the Senate theater.

PAGE 5/STOP 1: Plaster Model for the Statue of Freedom

Where are the initials “U.S.” on the model for the Statue of Freedom?

Answer: The initials are found on the brooch that secures the statue’s dress.

Where is the reference to the original states on the model?

Answer: There are 13 stars and 13 stripes on the shield representing the original 13 states.

What do you see on Freedom’s head?

Answer: There is a helmet on Freedom’s head that is encircled by stars and features a crest composed of an eagle’s head, feathers, and talons, a reference to the costume of Native Americans.

Why do you think the artist chose this symbol?

Answer: The artist integrated symbols of the United States of America and freedom throughout the design of the statue. For the helmet, he chose the eagle, which represents national pride, unity, and the strength of the nation.

In choosing these items, what was the sculptor saying about freedom?

Answer: Citizens must always be prepared to defend this country’s freedom and democracy.

PAGE 6/STOP 2: The Dome: An Architectural Masterpiece

How tall is the U.S. Capitol Dome?

Answer: The dome is 288 feet tall. That is almost the length of a football field.

Name five other Washington, D.C. buildings or monuments that have domes.

Answer: Five other buildings or monuments in Washington, D.C. with domes are: the Library of Congress, the National Gallery of Art West Building, the Smithsonian Institution’s Natural History Museum, the Thomas Jefferson Memorial, and the Basilica of the National Shrine of the Immaculate Conception.

PAGE 7/STOP 3: Inside the Dome: An Artistic Masterpiece

In *The Apotheosis of Washington*, what do you think the 13 women that surround George Washington symbolize? Why is the number 13 important to American history?

Answer: The 13 women represent the 13 original American colonies. That is why the number 13 is important to American history.

Why do you think the artist included a rainbow?

Answer: The rainbow is a symbol of hope and promise.

Benjamin Franklin is standing to the right of Minerva, the Roman goddess of science. What did Franklin invent?

Answer: Benjamin Franklin invented the lightning rod, a metal-lined stove that was named after him (the “Franklin” stove), bifocal eyeglasses, and a simple odometer for measuring distance.

The central figure in the “War” group represents Freedom. Name the elements that resemble those you saw in the model of the Statue of Freedom in Stop 1.

Answer: Those elements are the sword, shield, and a helmet encircled by stars with an eagle on top.

What does *The Apotheosis of Washington* tell you about the way America wanted to present itself to the world in the 1850s?

Answer: The goal was to impress foreign visitors who came to the U.S. Capitol, to illustrate the importance of democracy, and to show the creativity and ingenuity of the American people.

PAGE 8/STOP 4: A Home for Congress

Name the 13 original states from north to south. Where was Washington, D.C. located in relationship to the states? Why do you think that location was chosen?

Answer: The 13 original states were New Hampshire, Massachusetts, Rhode Island, Connecticut, New York, Pennsylvania, New Jersey, Delaware, Maryland, Virginia, North Carolina, South Carolina, and Georgia. The location for Washington, D.C. was chosen because it was situated at the approximate mid-point between the northern and southern states. This location made traveling to the Capitol manageable for most members of Congress.

How does Dr. Thornton’s design for the Capitol reflect the two legislative bodies: the House of Representatives and the Senate?

Answer: Dr. Thornton’s design of the Capitol included two wings housing the House chamber and the Senate chamber that were joined by a dome and rotunda.

PAGE 9/STOP 5: The Senate Sets Up Shop

Why did the authors of the Constitution want senators to be chosen by state legislatures?

Answer: The authors of the Constitution believed that if each state selected its own senators, state legislatures would strengthen their ties with the federal government and thus strengthen the chances for ratifying the Constitution.

How do we select senators today?

Answer: Since 1913, senators have been elected by popular vote.

Why do you think the law was changed?

Answer: For Congress’ first 125 years, state legislatures elected senators. Often they chose senators who agreed with them on issues likely to come before Congress. Political party conflicts in some states resulted in no one being selected; having vacant Senate seats disrupted work. In addition, some state legislators used intimidation and bribery in choosing senators. To resolve these concerns, the 17th Amendment was passed stating that senators would be elected by popular vote.

What makes the corn cob column capital unusual?

Answer: The column depicts a native American plant. When this column and others like it were installed, they were greatly admired by members of Congress and visitors to the Capitol.

PAGE 10/STOP 6: The House Sets Up Shop

There were two versions of the Bill of Rights. Which version was sent to the states to be ratified?

Answer: The second version with 12 amendments was sent to the states to be ratified. The first version included 17 amendments.

What two amendments were not ratified?

Answer: The two amendments not ratified concerned the number of constituents for each representative and compensation for members of Congress.

Why do you think the First Congress was concerned about individual rights?

Answer: Individual rights were not considered when the Constitution was written, and the founders soon realized that they needed to set limits on government action in regard to personal rights. There needed to be guarantees of essential rights and liberties. Several state legislatures insisted on a promise of amendments before they would ratify the Constitution. The drafting of the Bill of Rights soon followed the ratification of the Constitution.

PAGE 11/STOP 7: Senate Chamber Desks

How many senators serve in Congress today?

Answer: One hundred senators serve in Congress today.

How many senators represent each state?

Answer: Two senators represent each state.

What is the length of a senator’s term?

Answer: A senator’s term is six years.

Are all senators elected at the same time?

Answer: Senators’ terms are staggered so that one-third of the Senate is elected every two years.

Why don’t residents of the District of Columbia and U.S. territories have representation in the Senate?

Answer: The District of Columbia (Washington, D.C.) and U.S. territories are not states. The Constitution only provides representation in the Senate for states.

PAGE 11/STOP 8: House Chamber Desks and Chairs

What determines the number of representatives from each state?

Answer: The number of representatives from each state is based on population. Every ten years, a census is conducted to determine the number of people in each state. Today, 435 representatives represent over 300 million American citizens. This means that on average, a representative serves a constituency of more than 700,000 people.

What is the length of a representative's term?

Answer: A representative's term is two years.

How does that compare with a senator's term?

Answer: A representative's term is four years shorter than a senator's.

How many representatives currently serve in Congress?

Answer: The number of voting representatives in the House of Representatives is fixed by law at no more than 435. Currently, there are also five delegates representing the District of Columbia, the Virgin Islands, Guam, American Samoa, and the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands. A resident commissioner represents Puerto Rico.

PAGE 13/STOP 10: First African American Representative: Joseph Rainey, South Carolina

How is seating in the House of Representatives decided today?

Answer: Individual desks on the House chamber floor have been eliminated due to the number of representatives and limited space. Long benches have replaced the desks. Members of the House have no assigned seats but are by tradition divided by party. Members of the Democratic Party sit to the Speaker's right, and members of the Republican Party sit to the Speaker's left.

PAGE 13/STOP 11: Challenges of a Growing Nation

What jobs are the children doing?

Answer: The children are working in the field picking cotton and resetting spools of thread in a textile factory.

Looking at the model of the Capitol (1913), what changes do you see that tell you that congressional membership had increased? What changes do you see to the Capitol Grounds?

Answer: By 1913, office buildings for members of Congress and staff had been built and Union Station had been constructed, making train travel convenient for members of Congress and visitors to the Capitol. The Library of Congress had been completed and landscaping had begun on the Capitol Grounds.

PAGE 14/STOP 13: First Woman Elected to the House: Jeannette Rankin, Montana

The Nineteenth Amendment to the Constitution, which guarantees women the right to vote, was ratified in 1920. How was it possible for Jeannette Rankin to be elected to Congress in 1916? (Hint: In 1914, women residing in Montana were granted the right to vote.)

Answer: By 1916, some western states, including Rankin's home state of Montana, had already granted women the right to vote. Rankin was elected to the House of Representatives with the support of women voters in her home state. One of several issues that she wanted to focus on in Congress was full voting rights for all women nationally.

PAGE 15/STOP 17: Civil Rights for All Americans

What do the pen and desk have to do with the Voting Rights Act of 1965?

Answer: President Johnson used the pen and desk (a replica) to sign this legislation into law, making illegal any tactics used by states to prevent minorities and other disadvantaged citizens from voting.

Why was passing the Civil Rights Act of 1964 so important?

Answer: The Civil Rights Act of 1964 made it illegal to discriminate against anyone based on gender, race, religion, national origin, disabilities, or age and required those states that were not honoring past civil rights laws to do so.

What role did citizen action play in passing the act?

Answer: Citizen actions such as protests, petitions, marches, and sit-ins brought to the attention of Congress the injustices that people faced which prevented them from exercising their civil liberties that were protected by previously-passed legislation.

PAGE 16/STOP 18: The Constitution and Congress

How many pages does the Constitution contain? How many articles does it include? Which one is the longest? Which of the three branches of government does that article establish?

Answer: The Constitution has four handwritten pages. It contains seven articles. Article 1 is the longest article in the Constitution. Article 1 establishes the legislative branch of the federal government.

Assign the following responsibilities to the House (H), the Senate (S), or both (B).

Answer: Initiates all laws concerning the raising of money by the federal government. (H)

Approves all treaties. (S)

Declares all wars. (B)

Approves all presidential nominations. (S)

Initiates the removal of federal officials suspected of “high crimes and misdemeanors.” (H)

Makes all laws. (B)

Why do you think the authors of the Constitution chose the House instead of the Senate to create bills that impose federal taxes?

Answer: The House is most connected to the people in hearing their concerns and opinions about government spending.

True or False? Any U.S. citizen can introduce a bill into Congress.

Answer: False. Citizens may petition their representatives and ask them to enact a bill. But only an elected representative can introduce a bill for consideration. Laws begin as ideas. These ideas may come from a representative or senator or from a citizen. Citizens who have ideas for laws may contact their representative or senators to discuss their ideas. If the representative or senator agrees, the idea is researched and potentially introduced as legislation.

PAGE 17/STOP 19: Working at the Capitol

How many jobs can you identify?

Answer: To learn about the numerous jobs at the U.S. Capitol, visit the Website for the Architect of the Capitol, www.aoc.gov, and discover occupations like horticulturist, electrician, curator, historian, architect, or mason. The Architect of the Capitol is responsible for the maintenance of the buildings and grounds of the U.S. Capitol.

My Capitol Part 2: Explore the U.S. Capitol Grounds

PAGE 21/STOP 1: United States Capitol

What features of the Capitol’s architecture resemble buildings from ancient Greece and Rome?

Answer: The architectural features of the U.S. Capitol that resemble structures in ancient Greece and Rome are the dome, rotunda, columns, pediments, windows, arches, tholos, and building materials like marble.

Why do you think those buildings appealed to the Founding Fathers?

Answer: The Founding Fathers were inspired and attracted to the grandeur and size of important structures. They also wanted to compete with European architectural structures.

In addition, they admired the architecture for its associations with the self-governing civilizations of ancient Greece and Rome.

PAGE 21/STOP 3: Summerhouse

What patterns do you see on the walls of the Summerhouse?

Answer: The patterns that you see on the walls of the Summerhouse are geometric and artistic patterns forming shapes to create a “basket-weave” texture.

PAGE 22/STOP 6: The Peace Monument

How can you tell which figure symbolizes Grief, History, Victory or Peace?

Answer: The figure that symbolizes Grief holds her covered face and weeps in mourning. The History figure holds a stylus (writing tool) and a tablet with the inscription, “They died that their country might live.” The Victory figure holds a laurel wreath and carries an oak branch, signifying strength. The figure symbolizing Peace faces the U.S. Capitol, holding an olive sprig.

The U.S. Capitol is open from 8:30 a.m.
to 4:30 p.m. Monday – Saturday.
It is closed on Thanksgiving Day,
Christmas Day, New Year's Day,
and Inauguration Day.

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