Chapter 5

1. Which of the following is an example of descriptive representation?

\*a. An African American member of the House representing a majority-minority district

b. A white Democrat sponsoring a bill to provide more funding to inner-city schools

c. A former lawyer representing a small rural district and supporting price supports for farmers

d. A moderate Democrat represents a district where a majority of registered voters are Republican

2. Which of the following groups is *overrepresented* in Congress?

a. African Americans

\*b. People from rural states

c. Women

d. Latinos

3. Which of the following groups are *underrepresented* in the Senate because of the “equal representation” rule?

a. Farmers

b. Ranchers

\*c. African Americans

d. Mining interests

4. Which of the following activities fits into a member’s role as a legislator?

a. Helping a constituent lodge a complaint with the Social Security Administration

b. Raising money for the Democratic National Committee

c. Writing a letter of recommendation for a constituent applying to the Naval Academy

\*d. Introducing a bill about immigration reform into Congress

5. What are the two stages of constituency careers?

a. Democratic and Republican

\*b. Expansionism and Protectionism

c. Person-to-person and Issue Oriented

d. Fundraising and Legislating

6. Which of the following activities is an example of constituency service?

\*a. Introducing a bill that would fund the construction of a new bridge in the member’s district

b. Requesting membership on the Armed Services committee because the member is a veteran

c. Cosponsoring a bill that would make changes to education policy

d. Making a floor speech in favor of a partial-birth abortion ban

7. Which of the following does *not* tend to be associated with procuring pork-barrel projects for one’s district?

a. Lower chance of facing a strong challenger

\*b. Higher chance of negative attack ads

c. Improved name recognition

d. Enhanced chance of reelection for vulnerable members

8. Which of the following might happen during a party caucus meeting?

a. Final vote on a bill to pass health care reform

b. Selection of a party’s candidate for President

\*c. Coordinating floor speeches to shape media coverage

d. The State of the Union address

9. Which of the following is the *widest* type of constituency?

a. Primary Constituency

b. Reelection Constituency

c. Personal Constituency

\*d. Geographic Constituency

10. Which of these individuals would be considered a member of a Senator’s *personal* constituency?

\*a. Her spouse

b. A voter who always votes for the Democratic party candidate

c. A voter who shares the Senator’s ethnic background

d. A donor from a neighboring state

11. Which of the following activities would be typical of a “person-to-person” home style?

a. Town hall meetings to address local issues

\*b. Knowing constituents by name

c. Highlighting the member’s status as a decorated war veteran

d. Emphasizing key issues in television ads

12. Which of the following tasks would *not* be part of the job of a legislative assistant (LA)?

a. Preparing position papers

b. Drafting bills

\*c. Making fundraising phone calls

d. Writing speeches

13. About half of the members of the House of Representatives are millionaires.

\*a. True

b. False

14. Most news coverage about incumbents is uncritical and positive.

\*a. True

b. False

15. Pork-barrel spending is widely viewed as a negative among constituents, even when it is secured for their own district

a. True

\*b. False

16. People with working-class backgrounds are underrepresented in Congress

\*a. True

b. False

17. Veteran members of Congress are more likely to be successful in getting their bills passed than are freshman member

\*a. True

b. False

18. Despite their strong support, members do spend time and attention on making sure their primary constituency (or loyalists) is happy.

\*a. True

b. False

19. Members who are elected as independents must still organize with one of the two major parties in order to receive committee assignments.

\*a. True

b. False

20. Compared to other minority racial and ethnic groups, African Americans are the most underrepresented in Congress

a. True

\*b. False

21. Because more populous states are more racially diverse, the Senate’s equal representation rule acts to boost the voting power and representation of whites.

\*a. True

b. False

22. Senate norms and procedures tend to be more formal than in the House of Representatives.

a. True

\*b. False

23. Most Americans tend to want members of Congress to follow majority opinion rather than their own personal preferences.

\*a. True

b. False

24. Because of the incumbency advantage and the creation of many safe seats, most members of Congress do not worry much about the threat of losing their reelection campaigns.

a. True

\*b. False

25. Most House and Senate staff members are long-time employees who have spent decades on the job.

a. True

\*b. False

26. The franking privilege allows members to send out campaign materials and fundraising appeals free of charge.

a. True

\*b. False

27. What is the difference between substantive and descriptive representation? Provide an example of each type.

\*a. Answers Vary

@Descriptive representation refers to whether a legislature’s membership reflects the diversity of backgrounds/interests in society. In contrast, substantive representation occurs when legislators consciously act for agents of their constituents even if their personal background is not the same. Examples will vary.

28. What are some factors that could lead a member to change their home style?

\*a. Answers Vary

@Home style is how a member presents himself/herself to his/her constituents. Although members typically stay with the same home style, some factors could cause them to make a change. One development is if the constituency itself changes, either because of population changes (such as migration in or out of the district) or redistricting. Members could also be responding strategically to a new challenger or changing issues in the policy space. Finally, a member’s personal goals/ambitions could change—for example, a Senator might hope to run for President and therefore change his/her home style.

29. How does national and local news coverage of Congress and its members differ?  
\*a. Answers Vary

@Local news tends to be about individual members/incumbents and is typically uncritical and positive. It can tend to lean heavily on members’ press aids and other official sources. In contrast, national news tends to focus on Congress as an institution. It also tends to be much more critical, negative, and investigative. These differences underscore the idea that there are “two” Congresses. Students could also mention the *dual congress* that is stressed in Chapter One.

30. What are the most important differences between a person-to-person and an issue-oriented home style?

\*a. Answers Vary

@Home style describes the way a member presents himself/herself to constituents. A person-to-person home style works best in a smaller district and relies on calling constituents by name, meeting with them face-to-face, and cultivating personal relationships. Issue-oriented styles will emphasize the member as an activist working on issues important to constituents and may feature town hall evens and a focus on specific issue positions.

31. How does the equal representation rule in the Senate impact representation and political outcomes?

\*a. Answers Vary

@In the Senate, voters from more populous states are underrepresented and voters from less populous states are overrepresented. Because of the racial and ethnic makeup of these states, the effect of this is to provide less representation for minority voters. Another important impact is that less populous states receive more federal benefits than they pay in taxes, while those in more populous states receive less benefits than they pay in taxes.

32. Why do veteran members of Congress tend to be more effective than freshman members at getting their bills passed?

\*a. Answers Vary

@There are a variety of factors at play, including veteran members tend to be more specialized and are experts in their field, they have more experience with the legislative process, they know key-office holders and are more skilled at deal-making/bargaining, and they tend to be more patient and willing to work within institutional rules and norms.

33. What is collective representation? Give a specific example of how this might work in the modern Congress?

\*a. Answers Vary

@Collective representation is the idea that representation involves more than the interactions between individual members and their specific constituents. Instead, members may represent interest that go far beyond the geographic boundaries of their district or state. Voters may feel represented when there are members that speak and act on issues and interests that matter to them, even if they are from a different district or state. Examples will vary.

34. Why would members work hard for their party even when they may disagree with some policy stances?

\*a. Answers Vary

@The party in power matters for legislative outcomes; a member knows that if her party holds the majority, she will have a better chance of achieving her personal legislative goals. Her party will control agenda-setting and committee leadership. Members also know that popular views of parties will affect their own legislative success; if the Republican party is viewed as very popular and successful, this will increase Republican members’ reelection chances (and vice versa).

35. What are the four major types of constituencies and who generally belongs to each?

\*a. Answers Vary

@The geographic constituency is the widest type of constituency and includes every voter in one’s district. The reelection constituency comes next and includes supporters who will reliably vote to reelect the member. Then comes the primary constituency, loyalists who would support the member against a primary challenger from his/her own party. And finally, the personal constituency includes intimates who will give the highest level of support to the member—people such as his/her spouse or campaign manager.

36. What are the three roles undertaken by most members of Congress? Briefly explain what each of these roles entails and give an example of each.

\*a. Answers Vary

@The three roles are legislator, constituency servant, and partisan. Legislating involves legislative work, investigation, and committee specialization, all under the specific institutional rules and norms of Congress. Constituency service involves casework and giving voice to local concerns. And partisan activity involves working to further the common good of one’s political party. Examples will vary.

37. How have Senate norms or folkways changed since the 1950s?

\*a. Answers Vary

@A style of restrained activism and apprenticeship among freshman members has given way to more unrestrained activism. New Senators now are more active in taking part in all aspects of the chamber’s work. They also tend to express views on many issues and maintain a public persona.

38. Which activities that members of Congress engage in seem to have the most influence on constituents’ attitudes toward the member?

\*a. Answers Vary

@Constituency service seems to have the most influence. A reputation for working hard on behalf of constituents—whether by helping them solve specific problems or by bringing pork home to the district—seems to have more of an effect on reputation than policy stands. Moreover, constituency service can help “make up” for unpopular policy positions.

39. How well does Congress reflect the American public demographically? Is this a problem for representation? Be sure to consider multiple demographic characteristics in your response.

\*a. Answers Vary

@Students should first consider the descriptive portion of the question; members of Congress tend to come from the social and economic elite. They are richer, more well-educated, and have more prestigious backgrounds in terms of occupation compared to the “average” American. Congress is also whiter and more male than the U.S. population. Atheists are underrepresented in Congress. And, of course, states are unequally represented in the Senate. Good answers should address at least three of these demographic characteristics. Students should then take a position on whether these disparities between members and the general population are problematic for good representation. Good answers could make a variety of arguments but should state a clear position and use concepts from the text (i.e., descriptive vs. substantive representation) in defending this position.

40. In making decisions about bills to sponsor or votes to take, should members follow the majority opinion in their constituency or follow their personal conscience?

\*a. Answers Vary

@Good answers could take a variety of positions but should make a clear argument, develop a theory for how they are evaluating members (Reelection? Good policy decisions? Something else?), and reference concepts and evidence from the text.

41. Explore the concept of home style by identifying a member of the House or Senate of particular interest to you. Using newspaper articles, campaign materials, and the member’s website, try to identify which home style the member seems to use to present themselves. Does their home style seem to be driven by district/constituency qualities, personal preferences, or something else?

\*a. Answers Vary

@Essays will differ but should utilize diverse sources, make a clear argument, and correctly reference/rely on concepts from the text.