Chapter 6

1. Which of these congressional leadership roles is outlined in the Constitution?

\*a. Speaker of the House

b. Majority Leader

c. Majority Whip

d. Minority Leader

2. Which of the following might we expect under the theory of conditional party government?

a. Parties tend to raise more money in fundraising campaigns when their legislative programs have passed with little opposition

\*b. The majority party is likely to centralize power in a strong leader when its preferences are homogeneous and it is polarized from the minority party

c. Party leadership is likely to be stronger in the Senate than in the House

d. The Speaker of the House will have little power because committees remain the most powerful bodies in the House in terms of agenda setting.

3. Which of the following might we expect under the pivotal voter theory?

a. A bill is defeated because extreme members of the House united to oppose it

b. A bill is passed that is opposed by a majority of House members, because of strong support in the Senate

\*c. A bill is passed that is supported by moderate members of the House, even though party leadership believed the bill contained too many compromises

d. A bill is passed that is opposed by moderate members of the House, because party leaders pressured those members to vote for it

4. Which of the following is a major duty of the House majority leader?

a. Primary point person to coordinate strategy with the President

b. Selects the Speaker of the House

c. Presides over the House on a day-to-day basis

\*d. Gauges sentiment among rank-and-file members and urges them to support bills

5. What is the main role of party whips?

\*a. Serve as a liaison between the party’s rank-and-file members and the party leadership

b. Serve as a liaison between the House and the Senate

c. Serve as a liaison between Congress and the President

d. Serve as a liaison between different committees in Congress

6. Which of the following procedural hurdles has become more prominent and more frequently utilized in the Senate in recent years?

a. Reed’s Rules

\*b. The filibuster

c. Conditional party government

d. Recognition of the chair

7. How is the Senate majority leader selected?

a. Appointed by the Vice President

\*b. Elected by secret ballot of their party colleagues

c. Elected by majority vote of the entire Senate

d. Elected by majority vote of the House of Representatives

8. Which of the following characteristics best describes the modern Senate?

a. Efficient

b. Strong Party Leadership

\*c. Individualistic

d. Inegalitarian

9. Which of the following is an example of an *institutional* task performed by party leaders?

a. Publicizing party views

b. Encouraging party unity

c. Appointing party committees

\*d. Scheduling floor business

10. Which of the following is an example of an *partisan* task performed by party leaders?

\*a. Raising money for candidates

b. Appointing top administrative officers

c. Consulting with the President

d. Scheduling floor votes

11. Which of the following is an example of a party committee?

a. The Democratic Caucus

\*b. The Democratic Senatorial Campaign Committee

c. The Republican Study Committee

d. The Blue Dog Democrats

12. What is an omnibus bill?

a. A bill that never makes it out of committee because of partisan conflict

b. A piece of legislation authorizing new executive agencies

c. A very specific piece of legislation detailing one topic

\*d. A long piece of legislation encompassing disparate policy topics

13. Which of the following is a benefit of having strong parties in Congress?

a. Discourages the creation of third parties

b. Creates a zero-sum environment

\*c. Helps voters better understand the divergent views and values of the parties

d. Members are willing to make significant accommodations and compromises

14. Congressional leaders sometimes decide to strategically focus on confrontation with the president rather than legislative accomplishments.

\*a. True

b. False

15. In both the House and the Senate, having a strong and cohesive party enables the leadership of the majority party to govern.

a. True

\*b. False

16. The Senate gives more power to individual members than does the House.

\*a. True

b. False

17. Because of procedural rules in the House, the minority leader typically wields significantly more power than the majority leader.

a. True

\*b. False

18. The filibuster is only used very occasionally, to block action on highly controversial bills.

a. True

\*b. False

19. The modern Speaker of the House focuses largely on external activities (such as campaigning or fundraising) opposed to presiding over the House.

\*a. True

b. False

20. The selection of party leaders in Congress is typically uncontested and based largely on seniority.

a. True

\*b. False

21. Once elected, the Speaker of the House is typically reelected to this position as long as his/her party maintains majority control of the chamber.

\*a. True

b. False

22. The Speaker of the House can be elected to a maximum of one term (two years).

a. True

\*b. False

23. Since the 1890s, the House has been run by majority rule with limited rights for the minority party to delay legislation.

\*a. True

b. False

24. Compared to legislative leaders in most other democracies in the world, Congressional party leaders have more tools to induce party loyalty.

a. True

\*b. False

25. In today’s individualistic Senate, party leaders are expected to serve members’ personal needs and help advance their individual agendas.

\*a. True

b. False

26. Party leaders are prohibited from publicizing partisan views in the media because of their official positions in government.

a. True

\*b. False

27. What are the different kinds of presiding officers in the Senate, and what is the difference between them?

\*a. Answers Vary

@The constitutional president of the Senate is the vice president of the United States, but he rarely presides over the Senate, except in the case of ceremonial occasions or breaking a tie vote. The president pro tempore is the majority party senator with the longest continuous service and presides over the Senate in the absence of the VP. Finally, junior members of the majority party may preside in one-hour stints each day to help them become more familiar with Senate rules and procedures. Students should also mention the Senate Majority Leader since this person holds the most leadership authority.

28. What is the difference between institutional maintenance and party maintenance?

\*a. Answers Vary

@These are both considerations that party leaders must balance. Institutional maintenance refers to ensuring that Congress as an institution is functioning—members are performing their duties, and Congress’s reputation and integrity is preserved. Party maintenance is more specific to the member’s party and involves crafting winning coalitions among copartisan, providing assistance to members, and ensuring a positive reputation for one’s party.

29. Why does the United States have a two-party system where it is difficult for third parties to gain prominence?

\*a. Answers Vary

@Students should emphasize that there are a variety of factors contributing to this system, not just one. They should list some of the following factors: winner-take-all districts, early conflicts between Federalists and Antifederalists, and state laws that make it difficult to create new parties.

30. What are omnibus bills and why do party leaders prefer them?

\*a. Answers Vary

@These are very long pieces of legislation that include many disparate policy topics. They have a variety of advantages for party leaders. They can help leaders garner support by adding provisions to woo supporters or by bundling unpopular cuts with popular programs. They can also strengthen Congress’s bargaining position with the President. Less important measures that the President might veto on a stand-alone basis can be included if the bill includes more important measures that the President wishes to sign into law. Finally, party leaders have quite a bit of power to influence the packaging process, giving them more leverage than they might have for smaller bills.

31. Why has increasing partisanship and polarization made governing more difficult in the Senate?

\*a. Answers Vary

@Essentially, the Senate is a less majoritarian institution than the House. The majority leader cannot set the agenda without consulting/negotiating with the minority party. And, individual members can filibuster legislation and use other delaying tactics because of the consensus nature of the institution.

32. What are the major similarities and differences between party caucuses/conferences and informal party groups?

\*a. Answers Vary

@Both of these describe ways that parties organize themselves within Congress. Caucuses/conferences are both the most inclusive and most formal. For each party, they include all members of that party. Caucuses/conferences elect leaders, approve committee assignments, provide services, and provide a forum for assessing member sentiment and forging party unity. In contrast, informal party groups are less inclusive and will include only members that agree with their specific mission. They are less formally organized and will tend to have more specific purposes. Some might focus on a specific issue, while others might include members with a particular ideological approach (such as fiscal conservatism).

33. What are some of the tools party leaders have for encouraging party unity and discipline?  
\*a. Answers Vary

@Students could give a variety of answers, but a selection includes the following: social gatherings, committee assignments, leadership appointments, providing services (such as information, scheduling bills, advice on electoral issues, visits with constituents), fundraising assistance, providing access to executive agencies or the White House.

34. Why is mobilizing a winning coalition to pass legislation considered to be a collective action dilemma?

\*a. Answers Vary

@Individual members would prefer to focus only on their own electoral needs. For the individual, it would be advantageous to free ride on the efforts of colleagues rather than making potentially difficult trade-offs. Yet, if everyone did this, legislation could not pass. Leaders must figure out how to mobilize members for the public good rather than only their personal goals.

35. What are the Speaker’s procedural and political duties?

\*a. Answers Vary

@Procedural duties involve presiding over the House (ruling on points of order, maintaining order, announcing the results of votes, and referring legislation to committee). Political duties include setting the agenda, controlling the Rules Committee, influencing committee assignments, and coordinating with the Senate. Students might also note the Speaker’s role in fundraising, campaigning, and developing party messages.

36. What must the House minority leader consider/balance when deciding whether to cooperate with the majority party?

\*a. Answers Vary

@Ultimately, the minority leader’s primary job is to win back control of the chamber. Thus, he/she must balance two competing concerns when deciding whether to cooperate with the majority on a bill. By cooperating, the minority party might be able to gain concessions and ultimately influence legislation to fit more with their party’s policy preferences. But, confrontation might be seen as a more favorable policy from an electoral standpoint, but make the majority party look weak and presenting a clear alternative vision for the future.

37. How has the Speaker’s power changed over time?

\*a. Answers Vary

@In the early years of American history, minorities in the House had significant power to delay or even stop legislative action. This meant that the Speaker had less control over legislative outcomes. In the 1890s, the Speaker gained more power with the introduction of Reed Rules to facilitate majority rule in the House. By 1910, the Speaker dominated the House in terms of political and procedural power. Since then, committees and the Speaker have alternated in terms of how much power each has at a given time. At present, the Speaker is again a fairly powerful position.

38. What is conditional party government? How does it differ from the pivotal voter theory?

\*a. Answers Vary

@This theory states that if partisans share common policy views (homogeneity) and confront an opposition party with sharply different preferences (polarization), leadership in Congress will be strong and centralized. In contrast, the pivotal voter theory emphasizes the importance of rank-and-file members, especially those whose votes are needed to form a majority. According to this theory, policy outcomes rarely diverge from what is acceptable to the pivotal voter, regardless of party leadership.

39. How does the theory of conditional party government help explain how the role of the Speaker has changed over time?

\*a. Answers Vary

@This theory states that if partisans share common policy views (homogeneity) and confront an opposition party with sharply different preferences (polarization), leadership in Congress will be strong and centralized. It tells us that the Speaker is likely to be given more power and authority in times when the majority party is homogeneous and polarized from the minority party. Otherwise, power in Congress is likely to be decentralized and not lodged in just one party leader (i.e., committee government).

40. What is the difference between a floor leader and a floor manager?

\*a. Answers Vary

@The floor leader, also called the majority leader, is typically an experienced legislator who serves as principal strategist and spokesperson for the party. They monitor the House floor and plan short- and long-term agendas. They are elected to serve two-year terms. In contrast, floor managers are appointed to steer particular bills to a final vote, so their power is narrower.

41. How powerful are parties in the House in accomplishing their legislative goals?

\*a. Answers Vary

@Students should outline both CPG and pivotal politics theories and explain how each theory would address this question. They should then make an argument for which they think best explains legislative outcomes with reference to evidence from the text. The best answers will consider historical evidence in addition to the contemporary Congress.

42. How has party leadership evolved over time in the Senate?

\*a. Answers Vary

@Students should outline the history and explain the sources of change. A general outline is as follows: Although the Senate has always had leaders, they were informal for the first 100 years or so of the Senate’s history. Leadership flowed from the personal talents of individual legislators rather than formal institutional rules and roles. By the early 1900s, party structures and leaders played a more important role in organizing Senate proceedings. The leadership structure was formalized and more based around parties, as it is today. However, the position of Senate majority leader did not become one of significant power and prestige until 1955. Three key developments influenced the modern Senate leadership: the influx of activist senators who wanted to be major policy participants, internal changes that promoted egalitarianism, and external developments to the political environment.

43. The House and the Senate vary considerably in terms of how much power is afforded to parties and to individual members. Which do you believe is the better way to organize a legislative institution in today’s polarized environment?

\*a. Answers Vary

@Students should discuss the power of parties versus individuals in the House versus Senate both generally and in a polarized political environment. They should then make a clear argument about how they define “better” and which organizational structure fits these criteria best. Students should provide evidence from the text.

44. Would the American people be better off with strong parties in Congress or with weak parties?

\*a. Answers Vary

@Students should first provide a clear definition of what they mean by *better off*—this could be in terms of representation, policy outputs, productivity, or some other measure. Then, they should contrast the strengths and weaknesses of our current strong party system opposed to a system with weaker parties. They should make a clear argument as to which system fits their definition of *better off*, with reference to concepts and evidence from the text.