

KidCitizen Teacher's Guide

Welcome to Congress

Who represents us in Congress and where do they work? Congress is made up of people who represent their community. We will investigate multiple primary sources to explore how Congresswoman Patsy Mink began in her home community of Hawaii and traveled to join a new community in Washington, DC to serve as a member of Congress.



Patsy T. Mink campaigning with family and supporters
<https://www.loc.gov/rr/mss/mink/mink-about.html>

Essential Question

Who represents us in Congress and where do they work?

TPS Connections

In this episode, children are introduced to Congress. To connect with primary grade students' existing knowledge, they discover how a member of Congress is part of two communities- their home community that they serve, and the community of Congress. Students analyze primary sources to explore how Congresswoman Patsy Mink began in her home community and traveled to a join a new community in Washington, DC where she worked in Congress. Children observe the details of a photograph of Congresswoman Mink in Hawaii (See). Working with in-game character Ella, students generate and test hypotheses based on evidence, figuring out how Congresswoman Mink traveled from Hawaii to the Capitol (Think). Children explore the structure of the Capitol building and conclude the episode by reflecting on how other members of Congress represent different communities around the country (Wonder).

Curricular Connections

NCSS Standards

- II. Time, Continuity, and Change
- VI. Power, Authority, and Governance
- X. Civic Ideals and Practice

C3 Framework

- D2.Civ.2.K-2. Explain how all people, not just official leaders, play important roles in a community
- D2.Civ.6.K-2. Describe how communities work to accomplish common tasks, establish responsibilities, and fulfill roles of authority
- D2.Civ.14.K-2. Describe how people have tried to improve their communities over time
- D2.His.2.K-2. Compare life in the past to life today.
- D2.His.3.K-2. Generate questions about individuals and groups who have shaped a significant historical change.

Historical Background

Congress: The Legislative Branch of the U.S. Government

The foundation of American democracy, the U.S. Congress, was established from the ashes of the Articles of Confederations, which strengthened states rights at the expense of a strong central government. This “Great Experiment” grew from the 1787 convention that proposed a strong central government with a legislative branch composed of a House and Senate. The Congress of the United States, also known as the legislative branch, was established under the Constitution of 1789 and separated structurally from the executive and judicial branches of government. It consists of two houses: the Senate, in which each state, regardless of its size, is represented by two senators, and the House of Representatives, to which members are elected on the basis of population. In total, there are 100 Senators and 435 members of the House of Representatives. Among the express powers of Congress as defined in the Constitution are the power to collect taxes, borrow money on the credit of the United States, regulate commerce, coin money, declare war, raise and support armies, and make all laws necessary for the execution of its powers

Patsy Mink: United States Representative to Hawaii

From humble beginnings of the cane fields of Paia, Maui to the halls of the U.S. Congress, Patsy Takemoto Mink brought her unique perspective to public service by representing her community and the nation. Due to her Japanese ancestry, Representative Mink, encountered frequent racial prejudice. These confrontations molded her ideology as she entered into public service after graduating from the University of Hawaii and receiving her J.D. from the University of Chicago Law School.

Always a trailblazer, Representative Mink, in 1951 became the first Asian-American woman to practice law in Hawaii. In 1958, she parlayed her local political success into her election to the Territory of Hawaii Senate. This success was short lived after the bicameral territory legislature was dissolved when Hawaii became a state. Ironically, Representative Mink lost in the special election to another icon and fellow Japanese American, Senator Daniel Inouye. During the 1960 Democratic National Convention, Representative Mink drew national attention by her speech on civil rights its message of equality for not only the African American community, but the Asian American community as well. Using this speech as a launching pad to revitalize her political career in 1962 she ran a successful campaign for the Hawaii State Senate. Her outlook as an outspoken defender of her beliefs propelled her political career into a dynasty of five consecutive terms in the U.S. House of Representatives where she was the first Asian-American Congresswoman from 1965-1977. Among her many accomplishments she authored the Title IX of the Higher Education Act Amendments, known as the Equal Opportunity in Education Act. This legislation prohibits gender discrimination in federally funded educational institutions and contributed to considerable growth of women's athletic programs in American schools and colleges. Representative Mink was one of the pioneers of women presidential candidacy when in 1972 she declared herself a candidate for the U.S. presidency. She returned to her private life after her unsuccessful Senate bid in 1976, but was never far from the fray. In 1990 she again retained her old House seat, until her death in 2002.

Bibliography

- Committee on House Administration of the U.S. House of Representatives. (2006). Patsy T. Mink 1927-2002. In *Women in Congress 1917-2006* (pp. 425-429). Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office.
- U.S. Capitol Visitor Center. (2017). *About Congress*. Retrieved from <https://www.visitthecapitol.gov/about-congress>

Primary Sources with Citation



(1966). Patsy T. Mink campaigning with family and supporters. [Photograph] Retrieved from the Library of Congress, https://www.loc.gov/rr/mss/images/mink_campaign_smst.jpg



Highsmith, C. M., photographer. (1980-2006). Young driver, old car at a family reunion in North Carolina. Madison, NC. [Photograph] Retrieved from the Library of Congress, <https://www.loc.gov/item/2011634852/>.



Highsmith, C. M., photographer. (2015). Old train engines and cars, part of the collection of the Colorado Railroad Museum. Alamosa, CO. [Photograph] Retrieved from the Library of Congress, <https://www.loc.gov/item/2015632591/>.



Delano, J., photographer. (1942). Boy Scout camp. At a swimming class. Florence, AL. [Photograph] Retrieved from the Library of Congress, <https://www.loc.gov/item/owi2001000146/PP/>.



Horydczak, T., photographer. (ca. 1920-ca. 1950). View of National Airport with plane in foreground. Arlington, VA. [Photograph] Retrieved from the Library of Congress, <https://www.loc.gov/item/thc1995013459/PP/>.



Highsmith, C. M., photographer. (1980-2006). U.S. Capitol building, Washington D.C. [Photograph] Retrieved from the Library of Congress, <http://www.loc.gov/pictures/item/2011630843/>



Keating, M., photographer. (1991). U.S. Representatives including Nita Lowey, Pat Schroeder, Patsy Mink, Jolene Unsoeld, Eleanor Holmes Norton and Ileana Ros-Lehtinen walking by the U.S. Capitol on their way to the Senate. Washington, D.C. [Photograph] Retrieved from the Library of Congress, <https://www.loc.gov/item/2015645194/>.

Suggestions for Teachers

Ask children to look at the two pictures of Patsy Mink at home in Hawaii and in Washington, DC. What is the same about the two pictures? What is different? Use these pictures and their similarities to create a definition of the term community.

Look up the Congressional Representatives for your state at <https://www.house.gov/representatives/find/>. How many Representatives does your state have in all? Compare this to other states. Ask children to compare the number of Senators in each state (see <https://www.senate.gov>) to the number of Representatives. How does this number change when you compare your state to others? Engage students in discussion about how each state is represented by 2 senators but representation in the House is allocated according to population data.

Have your students write a letter to one of their Representatives. Ask children to help create questions to ask the Representatives about their work in their home community and in Congress.

Look closely at the re-election poster Patsy Mink is hanging in the photo Patsy T. Mink campaigning with family and supporters. Discuss the qualities students think a representative for their community should have. Ask students to think about how they would design a re-election poster to convey the traits that would make them good leaders- what would they need to include, what words might be

important, what images would support their ideas. Provide students with materials and time to create their own re-election posters.

Display the image of Patsy T. Mink with other female U.S. representatives. Ask children to count how many women they see in the picture. Discuss Patsy Mink's history as the first woman of color in Congress. Visit the website <https://wholeads.us> to explore more about the demographics of the individuals who lead our country.

Compare primary source images of the proposed plans for the Capitol building. Compare with the image of the finished building. What was added? What did the builders leave off?

Lesson Plans and Curriculum Guides

Our Changing Community Lesson Plans

These lessons teach students to examine and describe a series of primary sources (mostly photographs) to observe and analyze changes over time. The focus is on the local community. The local community might be a city, township, county or surrounding area.

Our Changing Community

https://www.uvm.edu/landscape/learn/Downloads/DTS_Lessons/conduct_research.pdf

How Do Communities Change?

<http://www.dryden.k12.mi.us/common/pages/displayfile.aspx?itemid=3678464>

House Mouse, Senate Mouse Curriculum Guide

https://www.regnery.com/wp-content/uploads/House_Mouse_Draft_2-27-13.pdf

Additional Resources

Trade Books

Barnes, P. W., & Barnes, C. S. (2010). *Cappy's Tail's Capitol tale*. Alexandria, VA: VSP Books.

Barnes, P. W., & Barnes, C. S. (2012). *House mouse, Senate mouse*. Washington, DC: Little Patriot Press.

Kennedy, E. M. (2006). *My Senator and me: A dog's eye view of Washington, D.C.* New York, NY: Scholastic Press.

Piehl, J. (2009). *The Capitol building*. Minneapolis, MN: Lerner Publishing Group.

Library of Congress

Biographical overview of William Thornton, winner of the original design for the Capitol. Available at <http://www.loc.gov/rr/print/adecenter/essays/B-Thornton.html>

Temple of Liberty; Building the Capitol for a New Nation (February 24 –July 4, 1994). Featured information details the history of the Capitol building including text and images related to the original design, additions and extensions. Available at <http://www.loc.gov/exhibits/us.capitol/s0.html>

Local Legacies: Celebrating Community Roots was a project initiated by members of Congress to celebrate the rich diversity of America. This collection includes photographs, reports, video recordings, newspaper clippings, posters, and other primary sources that document the “the creative arts, crafts, and customs representing traditional community life; signature events such as festivals and parades; how communities observe local and national historical events; and the occupations that define a community's life.” Available at the creative arts, crafts, and customs representing traditional community life; signature events such as festivals and parades; how communities observe local and national historical events; and the occupations that define a community's life. Available at <https://www.loc.gov/folklife/roots/>

Virtual Tours of the Capitol

Take an interactive tour of the U.S. Capitol and other buildings and grounds of Capitol Hill with these resources:

Architect's Virtual Capitol <https://www.capitol.gov/>

Virtual Tours of Capitol Complex from Virtually Anywhere
<http://www.virtually-anywhere.com/portfolio/uscapitol/>

Congress for Kids

Ben's Guide to the U.S. Government <https://bensguide.gpo.gov/>

Kids in the House <https://kids-clerk.house.gov/>

Welcome to the U.S. Capitol Teachers: Resources & Activities

<https://www.visitthecapitol.gov/education/teachers/resources-and-activities>

Author Credits

Ledford, E., Maguregui, J., Gajjevi, S., Ferguson, M., Berson, M.J., & Berson I.R.. (2017). Welcome to Congress—Teacher's guide. Amesbury, MA: Muzzy Lane Software. Retrieved from KidCitizen, a Congress, Civic Participation, and Primary Sources Project from the Library of Congress, <https://www.kidcitizen.net/>