# Handout B: Critical Reading Graphic Organizer Answer Key

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reforms</th>
<th>Procedural or Constitutional</th>
<th>Purpose</th>
<th>Effect</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Speaker Reforms</td>
<td>Procedural</td>
<td>To decentralize power and take it out of the hands of the Speaker of the House.</td>
<td>Power was decentralized giving more power to long-serving members of Congress.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Seventeenth Amendment</td>
<td>Constitutional</td>
<td>Changed the method of electing senators indirectly by state legislatures to directly electing by popular vote in the state.</td>
<td>Altered the mode of election for the Senate to the people of the state rather than the legislatures, and shifted the motivation of senators from state interests to the interests of the people.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rule XXII</td>
<td>Procedural</td>
<td>Changed the Senate rules to allow two-thirds majority vote for cloture.</td>
<td>This rule made it easier for the majority to defeat a filibuster and bring a motion to a vote.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Legislative Reorganization Act of 1946</td>
<td>Procedural</td>
<td>Decreased the number of committees in the House from 48 to 19 and in the Senate from 33 to 15 and provided for the hiring of committee staff.</td>
<td>Helped in the decentralization of power in Congress, allowing for closer oversight of executive agencies.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Legislative Reform Act of 1970</td>
<td>Procedural</td>
<td>Decreased the power of committee chairs by ensuring greater transparency in committee hearings.</td>
<td>Allowed all members of a committee to have an influence on legislative initiatives before the committee, strengthening the position of the minority.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Handout C: The Indirectly Elected Senate Answer Key

1. How do these quotes portray the role of the Senate?
   Answers may be similar to the following:

   The quotes portray the Senate as a stabilizing feature of American government that served as a check against the more passionate and popular House. According to these quotes, the Senate was limited to the most respected and distinguished members.

2. Do you think their concerns are justified?
   Answers may be similar to the following:

   Yes, I believe that indirectly electing senators provided for a more stable government that checked the popular passions of the people while preserving federalism. This system also allowed the best in the nation to serve in the advising role to the president, particularly on foreign policy.

   No, I do not believe their concerns were justified. The system of indirectly electing senators prevented the Senate from acting for the common good of the country by limiting the voice of the people. Democratic reform was needed.

3. Using these quotes as a guide, write a sentence that outlines why the Senate should be indirectly elected. You do not have to agree with the sentence.
   Answers may be similar to the following:

   The Senate should be indirectly elected because this system creates a stabilizing effect upon the government by helping uphold reason instead of passion.

Handout D: The Directly Elected Senate Answer Key

1. How do these quotes portray the role of the Senate?
   Answers may be similar to the following:

   These quotes portray the Senate as an instrument of propertied and moneyed interests that denies the people a voice in government. These quotes outline a system that is broken and held hostage by these interests. The only way the system can be set right is to democratize it.
2. Do you think their concerns are justified?

   Answers may be similar to the following:

   Yes, the indirect election of senators prevents the will of the people from being recognized. It is clear that denying direct election opens the door for political interests to take hold and prevents the people from controlling their government.

   No, these quotes seem to ignore the arguments laid out by those in favor of direct election. They make no comment about the stabilizing influence of the Senate, nor do they counter the idea that states would lose representatives that protect their interests, or that this system would help uphold reason instead of passion.

3. Using these quotes as a guide, write a sentence that outlines why the Senate should be directly elected. You do not have to agree with the sentence.

   Answers may be similar to the following:

   The Senate should be directly elected to ensure the will of the majority is carried out.

**Handout F: The Filibuster Answer Key**

**Critical Reading Questions:**

1. Why is the filibuster seen as an obstructive tool?

   The filibuster is often seen by the majority party as an obstructive tool because it prevents the majority, who believe they embody popular will, from accomplishing their agenda.

2. Does the position of the filibuster change depending on who holds power?

   Yes, whoever is in the majority tends to look down upon the filibuster as an inconvenient and obstructive tool.

3. Should the position of political parties regarding the filibuster change depending on whether they are in power or not?

   No, all parties should respect the filibuster as an essential tool protecting minority rights.

   Yes, political parties should judge how crucial the legislation they are trying to pass is. If the minority is endangering the nation by their obstruction, the filibuster should be reevaluated.

4. How does having a tool like the filibuster help to protect the voice of the minority in the Senate?

   The filibuster gives the minority recourse when their voice would otherwise be drowned out by the majority. It makes their presence meaningful, even if they do not have the votes to stop legislation.
5. Do you think senators that are obstructive, but represent the views of their constituency, are acting against the common good?

No, those senators are acting as their constituents would want and so are fulfilling their obligation as an elected representative.

Yes, senators should independently evaluate whether or not something is in the interest of the nation. They should not act against the national interests of the country for their individual constituency.

6. Do you think senators that are obstructive, but do not represent the views of their constituency, are acting against the common good?

No, all elected officials should act for what they believe is the best course for the nation. They should not be limited simply by what their constituents believe. If they believe going against a piece of legislation is necessary, they should do so.

Yes, representatives should always act as their constituents would wish. If senators obstruct the Senate for their own purposes, they are going against the common good.

7. Do you think senators that ignore the voice of the minority in order to pass their legislation or obtain their nominations are acting against the common good?

No, the majority was elected because they represent the will of the majority of people in the United States. They are not going against the common good by acting as they have been elected to act.

Yes, the United States is a diverse country with many different interests represented. No one party or coalition should act with complete disregard for the minority. To do so is to act against the common good of the whole nation.

8. How do you think the filibuster helps balance this dilemma? Or does the filibuster in fact ruin the balance that would otherwise exist?

The filibuster helps to ensure that all views have the opportunity to be expressed and to influence the course of the nation. In that way it helps balance minority and majority rights.

The filibuster disrupts the nation by not allowing the majority to rule. This tends to halt progress and prevent the nation from moving in the direction the people of the country wish it to go.

Where Do You Stand?

Student responses should reflect a reasoned approach using evidence from the documents provided or from student research of other sources. The rubric below can act as a guide for assessing student responses.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Score (Grade)</th>
<th>Thesis</th>
<th>Analysis (tends to be the most difficult component)</th>
<th>Entire Prompt</th>
<th>Organization and Writing Skill</th>
<th>Errors</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>4</strong></td>
<td>Contains a well-developed thesis which clearly addresses all aspects of the prompt and shows an organizational roadmap.</td>
<td>Effective analysis which shows and proves relationships; fully answers the “so what?” questions; more analytical than narrative.</td>
<td>Adresses all aspects of the prompt, though coverage may be slightly uneven.</td>
<td>Clearly organized &amp; well-written evident on first reading, but will read it again just for pleasure.</td>
<td>May contain minor errors.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>3</strong></td>
<td>Contains a thesis which addresses the prompt.</td>
<td>Limited analysis; mostly descriptive; knowledge and comprehension level in use of facts.</td>
<td>Slights or neglects some parts of the prompt.</td>
<td>Acceptable organization; language errors do not interfere with comprehension and do not indicate misunderstanding of the topic.</td>
<td>May contain errors that do not seriously detract from quality of the essay.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>2</strong></td>
<td>Presents a limited, confused, and/or poorly developed thesis.</td>
<td>Simplistic explanations that do not indicate mastery of the content; may list facts without analysis.</td>
<td>Deals with one aspect of the prompt in a general way or with additional parts in a superficial way.</td>
<td>Demonstrates weak organizational and/or writing skills which interfere with comprehension.</td>
<td>May contain major errors.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>1</strong></td>
<td>Contains no thesis or a thesis which does not address the prompt.</td>
<td>Shows inadequate or inaccurate understanding of the prompt.</td>
<td>Ignores part of the question.</td>
<td>Is so poorly organized or written that it is difficult to understand.</td>
<td>Contains numerous errors both major and minor</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>