HANDOUT A
House Bill Writing Directions

Directions

As a member of Congress, you are tasked with drafting a bill for the United States House of Representatives. Use the template at the bottom of this handout as a guide to draft your legislation.

Writing a Bill

Topic:

Determine a topic that you believe is important. It may be a local, state, or national law, but be specific as to which level of government to which your law applies. State this in your one sentence summary starting at line 9 on Sample Bill Setup and again in the main provisions.

Process:

Begin developing your ideas today. Your final, typed bill is due on ________________.

Structure:

I. Heading: see sample below.

*Follow the structure of the sample bills you were provided on Handouts B and C.*

1. Section 1: Short Title: “This act may be cited as the [title of your bill] act.” Be creative but serious.

2. Section 2: Purpose: Explain the goals of your law and what you want to accomplish.

3. Section 3: Definitions: Define unusual terms or phrases or those you want to highlight.

4. Section 4: Main Provisions: Explain the details of your law and how you will accomplish your goals.

5. Section 5: Appropriations:

   i. How much will it cost?

      - Start-up costs

      - Continuing annual costs
ii. Source of money

- Taxes (Raise taxes – by how much)
  - Income tax
  - Property tax
  - Sales tax
  - Excise tax (alcohol, tobacco, gasoline, etc.)

If your bill relies on cutting spending to another program, you must explain how you propose to do so.

- User Fee (Such as entry fee to a national park, camping fee for a national park, or highway toll)
- Eliminate a program.
- Borrowing (Sell bonds – annual interest expense and source of funds to pay the interest must be estimated.)
- No Private Sources (They are rare and neither continuing nor reliable.)

iii. If your bill saves money, estimate the initial and annual savings in dollars. Clearly explain how it saves money with detail.

iv. This is all a best effort guess. Use logic and common sense to estimate costs. You may research for more accuracy.

6. Section 6: Penalty Clause (Penalties)

- Encourage compliance
- Punish violators
  - Fine – how much?
  - Jail time – how long?
  - Others

7. Section 7: Effective Date

All lines on each bill must be numbered with the first line each page always 1. (See below for first page numbering.)
Sample Bill Set-Up

Student Congress 2016

House Bill No. ____

Creating a law... (one sentence summary)

________________________ introduced the following bill,

(Your typed name)

which was introduced to the Committee on ________________

(Date)

An Act

1. Be it enacted by the Student Congress,...

2. Section 1: Short Title

3.

4. Section 2: Purpose

5.

6.

7.

8.

9.

10.

11.

12.

13.

14.