

TEXT SUMMARY

In the Senate, a bill follows the same steps that it does in the House. However, most Senate procedures are less formal than those of the House.

Unlike the House, the Senate allows debate on bills to go on until all senators agree to end it. If one senator does not agree, debate continues and may result in a **filibuster**, a process in which a senator delays Senate action by talking at great length. The Senate can stop a filibuster only if three-fifths of the senators vote for **cloture**, or limiting debate.

For Congress to send a bill to the President, both houses must have passed identical versions of it. If necessary, a conference committee works out a compromise version that both houses will approve.

The President has ten days to act on a bill. He may sign the bill, making it a law. He may **veto**, or refuse to sign, the bill and send it back to Congress. The bill then dies unless both houses approve it again by a two-thirds vote. The President may also allow the bill to become law without a signature by not acting on it within the ten-day period. As a variation on this option, if Congress adjourns before the end of the ten-day period and the President has not signed the bill, the bill dies, a possibility called the **pocket veto**.

THE BIG IDEA

Although the law-making process in the Senate is much like that in the House, debate in the Senate is largely unrestricted.

A bill is introduced into either house and, once approved by both, passes on to the President.

GRAPHIC SUMMARY: How a Bill Becomes a Law



REVIEW QUESTIONS

1. Why might a senator want to start a filibuster?
2. **Diagram Skills** Where do any differences the two houses introduce into a bill get resolved?