

THE NONLEGISLATIVE POWERS

TEXT SUMMARY

The Constitution gives Congress a number of nonlegislative powers. For instance, Congress may propose constitutional amendments by a two-thirds vote in each of its houses.

Congress also has certain rarely used electoral duties. The House may elect a President if no candidate wins a majority of electoral votes. The Senate may choose a Vice President in similar circumstances. If the office of Vice President becomes vacant, the President nominates a **successor**, or replacement, who is subject to a vote in Congress.

The Constitution says that any civil officer, such as the President, can be removed from office. The House has the power to **impeach**, or bring charges against, the officer. Charges

may be brought against someone for actions such as **perjury**, or lying under oath, and the failure to respond to a **subpoena**, which is a court order to appear in court or to produce requested materials.

The Senate serves as judge for the trial. The Senate can vote to **acquit**, or find the officer not guilty. In such a case, members of Congress can try to **censure** the official, that is to issue a formal condemnation of his or her actions.

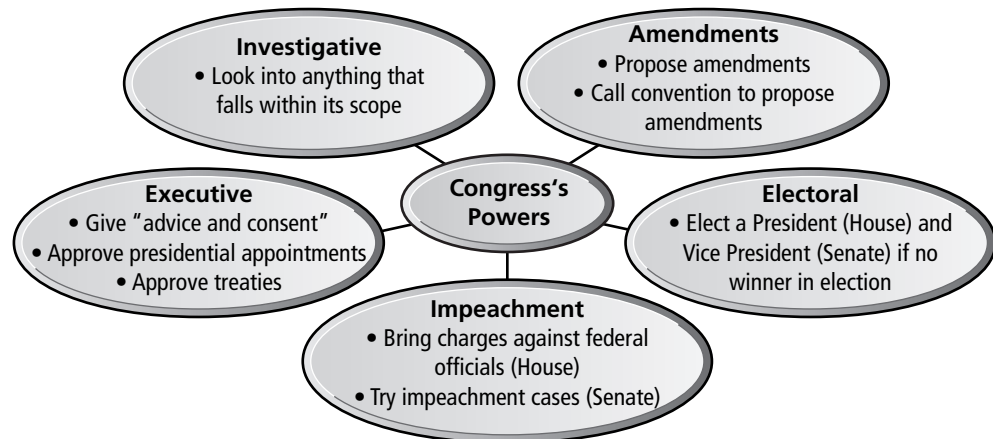
The Senate also has certain executive powers. It can advise the executive branch. It has the power to approve appointments and treaties made by the President.

Lastly, Congress has the power to investigate any matter that falls within the scope of its powers. Congress uses its standing committees to do this.

THE BIG IDEA

Congress has a number of non-legislative powers, including electoral, executive, and investigative powers.

GRAPHIC SUMMARY: Nonlegislative Powers of Congress



Congress's nonlegislative powers sometimes result in dramatic investigations and hearings.

REVIEW QUESTIONS

1. What occurs in an impeachment?
2. **Diagram Skills** What are the electoral powers of Congress?