



Speaker of the House: Lesson Plan

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| Topic | |
| The Speaker of the House is the presiding officer of the House of Representatives. The Speaker represents the majority party, establishes the legislative agenda, appoints members of committees, manages the floor, and has several other responsibilities. The Speaker is second in line for the presidency. | |
| Possible subjects/classes | Time needed |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• U.S. History• U.S. Government• Civics | 45 - 60 min |
| Video link: | |
| https://academy4sc.org/topic/speaker-of-the-house-legislation-station-manager/ | |
| Objective: <i>What will students know/be able to do at the end of class?</i> | |
| Students will be able to... <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Define the position of Speaker of the House.• Identify the responsibilities of the Speaker. | |
| Key Concepts & Vocabulary | |
| House, majority party, committees, Constitution, bills | |
| Materials Needed | |
| Worksheet, Student Internet Access | |
| Before you watch | |
| Think-pair-share: Review what the House of Representatives does. Ask students to discuss some of the responsibilities of the House in pairs and then in small groups. Have groups share with the class. | |
| While you watch | |



Answer the *While You Watch* questions on the Worksheet.

After you watch/discussion questions

1. What do you think is the most important responsibility of the Speaker?
2. Do you think the Speaker should be a partisan figure? Does the Speaker seem too powerful?
3. Why is it important that the Speaker has a large say in which members serve on different committees?

Activity Ideas

- **A Closer Look:** Have each student pick a Speaker to research more in-depth. They should answer the Worksheet questions about the Speaker.
- **History of the Position:** The position of Speaker was not always as powerful as it is today. The job has been shaped by the people who held it, and has become more powerful and partisan over the years. Have students research the history of the position and the Speakers who have influenced the role the most. Students should write a short response, either giving a timeline of how the power of the Speaker has changed or describing an event / Speaker that had a significant impact on the position (for example, Joe Cannon in 1920 or Newt Gingrich in 1994).

Sources/places to learn more

1. Caufield, Rachel. "What Does the Speaker of the House Do?" *The Conversation*, 10 Oct. 2019, theconversation.com/what-does-the-speaker-of-the-house-do-94884.
2. The Editors of Encyclopaedia Britannica. "Speaker of the U.S. House of Representatives." *Encyclopædia Britannica*, Encyclopædia Britannica, Inc., 26 Dec. 2019, www.britannica.com/topic/Speaker-of-the-US-House-of-Representatives.
3. "Speakers of the House (1789 to Present)." *Speakers of the House | US House of Representatives: History, Art & Archives*, history.house.gov/People/Office/Speakers/.
4. "United States Speaker of the House." *Ballotpedia*, ballotpedia.org/United_States_Speaker_of_the_House.