Senator in Training

Compromise
Learn about the importance of compromise in the Senate. Complete the worksheet to make a compromise for a contemporary Senate issue and then work on creating one for something in your life.

Words to Know

**Compromise**: An agreement in which the people involved reduce their demands or change their goals in order to agree

**Constitution**: The founding document for the U.S. government

**The Great Compromise**: The compromise that established the two parts of Congress

**Bill**: The primary way by which legislators in the Senate and House of Representatives introduce their ideas and proposals

**Watershed**: An area of high ground from which water flows downhill to a river

Compromise for All
Have you ever disagreed with someone but worked together to find a solution that worked for both of you? A compromise is achieved when people who disagree about a situation find a solution that they can all accept, even though no one gets everything they want.

Compromise was essential to the founding of the United States government and Congress. In 1887 the framers of the Constitution were having trouble agreeing on the issue of representation. Delegates from large states wanted more representation, while delegates from smaller states wanted equal representation. They eventually agreed with what is known as The Great Compromise. They set up Congress so the Senate would provide the necessary equal representation, as the smaller states wanted, while the House of Representatives would be divided based on the proportion of population in each.

Today, Senators continue to compromise all the time when writing bills to find solutions that will work for people in different states, political parties, and ideas. Compromise is sometimes challenging, but it is very important to find common ground.
Senator in Training

Compromise

Senator __________________________

Step 1: Two Senators are sharing ideas that they want to include in the contemporary piece of legislation. Carefully read the two statements below. Once you’ve read through them circle any ideas that are very similar and underline ideas that are different.

Senator 1.
To best protect the watersheds in our National Forests, we should pay close attention to flood risk conditions, the fish and wildlife that live in the area, and the risk of wildfires. We need to prioritize seven watersheds in each park and check on these conditions three times each year.

Senator 2.
Watersheds are very important to the life of the National Forests. I think we should focus on water quality, plant, fish, and wildlife in the area, and the risk of floods. We should monitor four watersheds in each park five times a year.

Step 2: Create a compromise that might work for both Senators. Consider the following points:

- What are the ideas that are similar? Those ideas should easily go into the compromise.
- What ideas are different? How can you present a mixture of goals from each senator?
- What ideas come with a number? Can you find a balance or average?

Step 3: After you've reflected on each Senator's wishes, write out your compromise in full sentence form.

_________________________________________________________________________________
_________________________________________________________________________________
_________________________________________________________________________________

Step 4: Now try to find compromise in your own life! Are there any topics in your own home that sometimes people disagree on? Maybe you disagree about whose turn it is to clean up after dinner or what show to watch when your work is done. Pick a subject and discuss each person's wishes or goals. What does each person want and why?

Step 5: Then look to find any common interests in those goals and what factors might affect the compromise (like time, how often, etc.). What interests do you share that are extra important? Where can you be flexible and where can they be flexible?