

# **Comparative Governance, Elections, and Representation between The United States Congress and The Japanese National Diet**

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**Objectives:** Students will understand the electoral systems and representative structure of another country to refine their current understanding of the U.S. governmental structure and electoral process.

**Subject/Grade Level:** American Government, grades 11-12

## **NM Standards for Education:**

9-12.Civ.22. Research multiple sources to think critically about how the United States conducts itself in international relations and how international standards affect U.S. domestic policy.

9-12.Civ.24. Evaluate procedures for making governmental decisions at the local, state, national, and international levels in terms of the civic purposes achieved.

9-12.Civ.38. Use historical data and evidence related to various actors' interests and motivations to determine their influence on contemporary issues.

9-12.Civ.40. Develop strategies for evaluating multiple perspectives about current events and policy issues.

9-12.Civ.42. Apply an effective questioning strategy to evaluate sources intended to inform the public and consider the effects of choices made by media organizations (including internet social platforms) on elections and social movements.

**Timeframe:** Two 50 minute class periods.

**Materials:** Paper and writing tools will be necessary for the essay assessment. Most of the material is online and will require a device equipped with internet access. If the technology is not available, then printed copies of the relevant websites will suffice.

## **Essential Questions:**

- What differences exist between the election systems of the legislative branches in Japan and the United States?
- How does geography affect the electoral process and the government structure?
- How does federalism affect the government processes of Japan and the United States?
- How does political representation affect election processes and governance structures?

**Procedure:**

## Day 1:

- Brief lecture (10 min): The teacher will go over the structure of the U.S. legislative branch followed by the election process for seats in Congress. To supplement this, the teacher will introduce the Japanese government system as structurally similar with a correlated legislative branch.
- Election results review (30min): Students will access the websites seen in the resources section of this lesson plan. If access to websites is not available, the teacher should prepare physical copies. The majority of this time will be spent in discussion about the rules, procedures, and results for both the U.S. Congress and the Japanese Diet. The links provided on this lesson plan review the 2022 elections for the upper assemblies of both Congress and Diet. These links will need to be updated with the most recent election whenever possible, however, for the purposes of this lesson occurring in 2024-2025, the most recent national elections for both legislations occurred in 2022. The teacher will guide discussions towards the fundamental differences between the two legislations while highlighting how the legislative purpose and process is maintained in their respective structures.
- Election results analysis (10+ min): Students will receive a handout of questions that will change depending on the most recent election. Students should be able to answer all questions within the remaining time in class. However, if more time is needed, students will complete this handout as homework. This handout will also include relevant information from the most recent election to help with the in-class essay they will complete in the following class.

## Day 2:

- Brief lecture/discussion (10 min): The teacher will go over the findings from the previous lesson. This lecture should be open to discussion in order to answer any questions from the previous lesson. The teacher will then host a discussion in which the primary question will be about the federalist structures of both countries, if applicable, and how political participation affects the presence of parties in each legislation.
- In class essay draft (40+ min): Students will work to answer the following question in a standard five paragraph comparison essay. "Are the election systems and legislative branches between Japan and The United States more similar or different to each other? What factors about each country contribute to their election systems and legislative structures?"

**Assessment:** Day 1 requires completion of the comparative worksheet with full answers to guiding questions. Day 2 will require students to complete a comparative essay covering the two election systems with a focus on how representation affects both. The rubric to assess this essay will be as follows on the next page.

# Comparison and Contrast Rubric

CATEGORY	4	3	2	1
<b>Purpose &amp; Supporting Details</b>	The paper compares and contrasts items clearly. The paper points to specific examples to illustrate the comparison. The paper includes only the information relevant to the comparison.	The paper compares and contrasts items clearly, but the supporting information is general. The paper includes only the information relevant to the comparison.	The paper compares and contrasts items clearly, but the supporting information is incomplete. The paper may include information that is not relevant to the comparison.	The paper compares or contrasts, but does not include both. There is no supporting information or support is incomplete.
<b>Organization &amp; Structure</b>	The paper breaks the information into whole-to-whole, similarities - to-differences, or point-by-point structure. It follows a consistent order when discussing the comparison.	The paper breaks the information into whole-to-whole, similarities - to-differences, or point-by-point structure but does not follow a consistent order when discussing the comparison.	The paper breaks the information into whole-to-whole, similarities - to-differences, or point-by-point structure, but some information is in the wrong section. Some details are not in a logical or expected order, and this distracts the reader.	Many details are not in a logical or expected order. There is little sense that the writing is organized.
<b>Transitions</b>	The paper moves smoothly from one idea to the next. The paper uses comparison and contrast transition words to show relationships between ideas. The paper uses a variety of sentence structures and transitions.	The paper moves from one idea to the next, but there is little variety. The paper uses comparison and contrast transition words to show relationships between ideas.	Some transitions work well; but connections between other ideas are fuzzy.	The transitions between ideas are unclear or nonexistent.
<b>Grammar &amp; Spelling (Conventions)</b>	Writer makes no errors in grammar or spelling that distract the reader from the content.	Writer makes 1-2 errors in grammar or spelling that distract the reader from the content.	Writer makes 3-4 errors in grammar or spelling that distract the reader from the content.	Writer makes more than 4 errors in grammar or spelling that distract the reader from the content.

## Resources:

<https://www.bbc.com/news/election/2022/us/results>

<https://www.usa.gov/midterm-elections>

[https://japan.kantei.go.jp/constitution\\_and\\_government\\_of\\_japan/fundamental\\_e.html](https://japan.kantei.go.jp/constitution_and_government_of_japan/fundamental_e.html)

[https://afe.easia.columbia.edu/special/japan\\_1900\\_elections.htm](https://afe.easia.columbia.edu/special/japan_1900_elections.htm)

[https://www.soumu.go.jp/senkyo/senkyo\\_s/naruhodo/naruhodo03.html#chapter1](https://www.soumu.go.jp/senkyo/senkyo_s/naruhodo/naruhodo03.html#chapter1)

<https://www.sangiin.go.jp/japanese/joho1/kousei/giin/214/giinsu.htm>