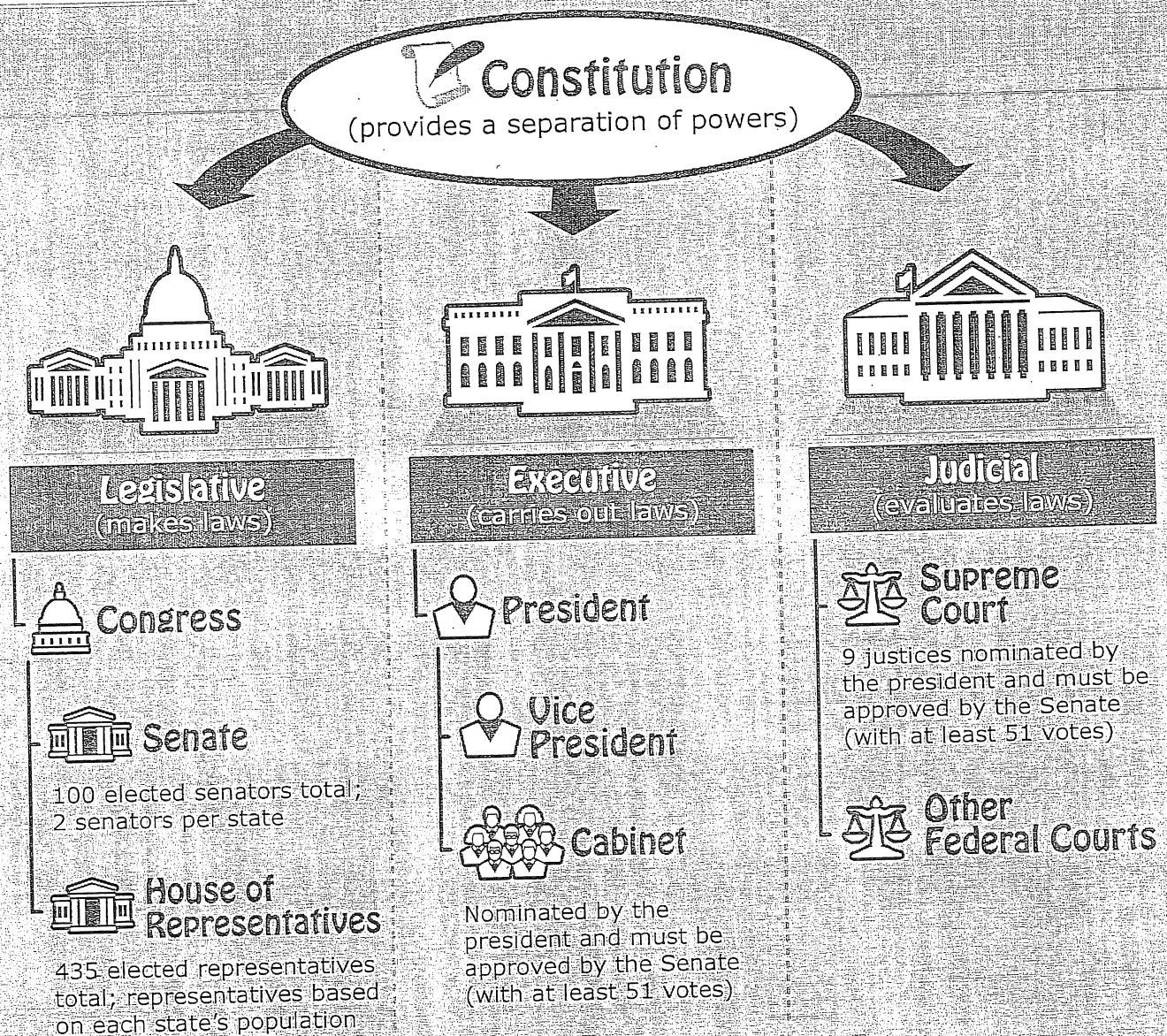


# How a Bill Becomes a Law

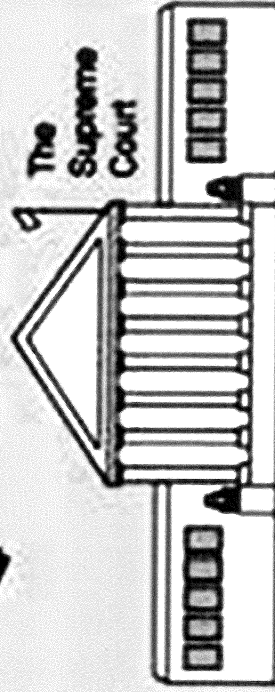
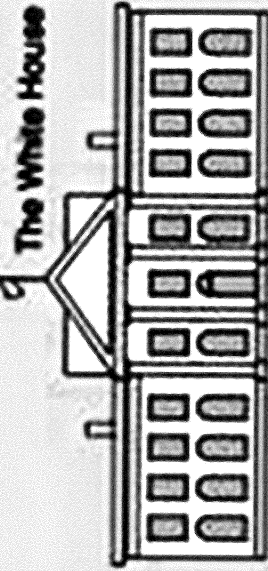
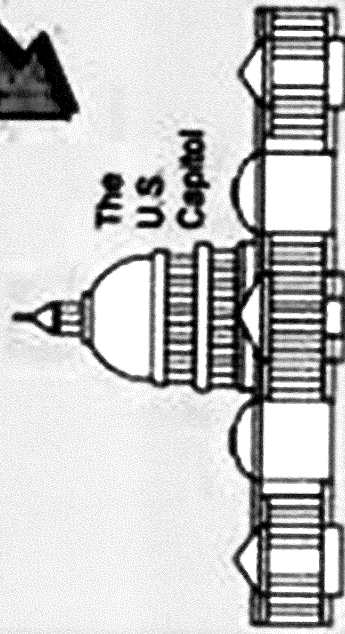
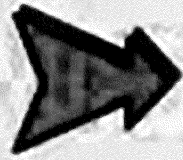
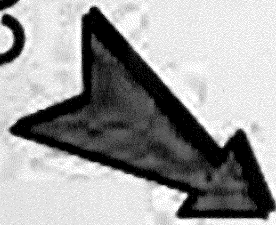
## 3 BRANCHES of GOVERNMENT



Created by **Kids.gov**

[kids.usa.gov/three-branches-of-government](http://kids.usa.gov/three-branches-of-government)

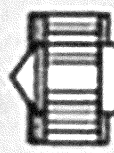
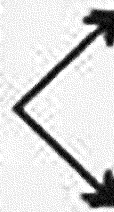
# CONSTITUTION



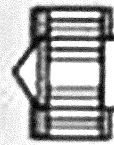
## LEGISLATIVE



CONGRESS

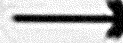


HOUSE OF  
REPRESENTATIVES



SENATE

## EXECUTIVE



PRESIDENT



VICE  
PRESIDENT



PRESIDENT

## JUDICIAL



SUPREME COURT

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Instructor   
WEB

Date \_\_\_\_\_

## How a Bill Becomes a Law

America is run by many rules. These rules are called laws. There are thousands of laws. Some laws are small laws that only affect certain areas. These laws affect specific cities or states. Other laws are bigger. These laws affect the entire country.

Laws are not just picked and made by one person. In truth, the government has developed a large process. This process must be followed to make a law. A law starts out as an idea and has to work its way up to being a law. The process can be a long one but all laws have to go through it.

Laws begin as an idea. Anyone has the ability to create an idea that could later become a law. Once a person has that idea, they go and tell other people. This makes sense because when someone comes up with a good idea it is natural to want to tell other people. The idea will not have a chance to become a law until someone tells the right people. If you have a great idea and want it to become a law then you would need to tell a congressperson.

If the congressperson you speak to likes your idea then it will have a chance to go even further. If the congressperson likes the idea enough, they will sponsor your idea. This means that they will take your idea and tell other congress people and lawmakers.

Your idea will be represented by the congressperson. This means they will work with the people they have told about your idea. Their goal is to try to help the idea become a law. The best way to see that your idea could become a law is with the help of someone in politics or government.

If the congressperson sponsors your idea then your idea will become a bill. This means that your bill is on the way to having a chance to becoming a law. Your bill is sent to a specific committee. The committee your idea goes to will depend on the type of idea that was created. For example, if you created an idea about the importance of recycling it would go to the Environmental Safety Committee.

Once the committee has all the details of your idea, they will discuss the idea. At that time, they will vote on the idea. If they approve the idea, it will move on to other areas of government. The next stop your bill will take will be to the House of Representatives.

Now that your bill has been approved by the committee that voted on it, the real fun begins! Your bill is heading to the House. When it goes to the House of Representatives 435 people will vote on the bill. More than half (just over 50%) of the members of the House have to vote to approve the bill. This means at least 218 people have to say that they like your bill and want it to be a law.

If at least 218 people vote for your bill then it keeps on moving. The next stop your bill

will take is to the Senate. If your bill does not receive enough votes, either it can be sent back to the committee to be rewritten or it can be abandoned. If it is abandoned it will never become a law. If it is sent back to the committee, they might change a few things in the idea. They will try to make it more positive so it can receive a better vote.

When the bill is taken to the Senate, it starts in the appropriate committee. Every bill starts out going to the correct committee for review. The committee will read the bill and vote on whether they think the bill needs to become a law. If the committee votes that it needs to be a law then it moves to the full senate for a vote.

In the full Senate, all of the Senators will get a chance to learn about the bill. There are 100 Senators and all of them will be able to find out information about the bill. Once the bill is in the Senate, the Senators can discuss and debate their feelings about the need for the bill. Like in the House of Representatives, the Senate needs over half the votes to pass the bill. This means that at least 51 people need to vote yes.

The steps for your idea to become a law are as follows:

- ✕ You create an idea
- ✕ A Congressperson sponsors your idea
- ✕ Your idea becomes a bill
- ✕ A committee votes on your idea
- ✕ The bill goes to the House of Representatives
- ✕ The bill goes to a Senate Committee
- ✕ The bill goes to the full Senate
- ✕ The bill goes to the president
- ✕ The bill becomes a law

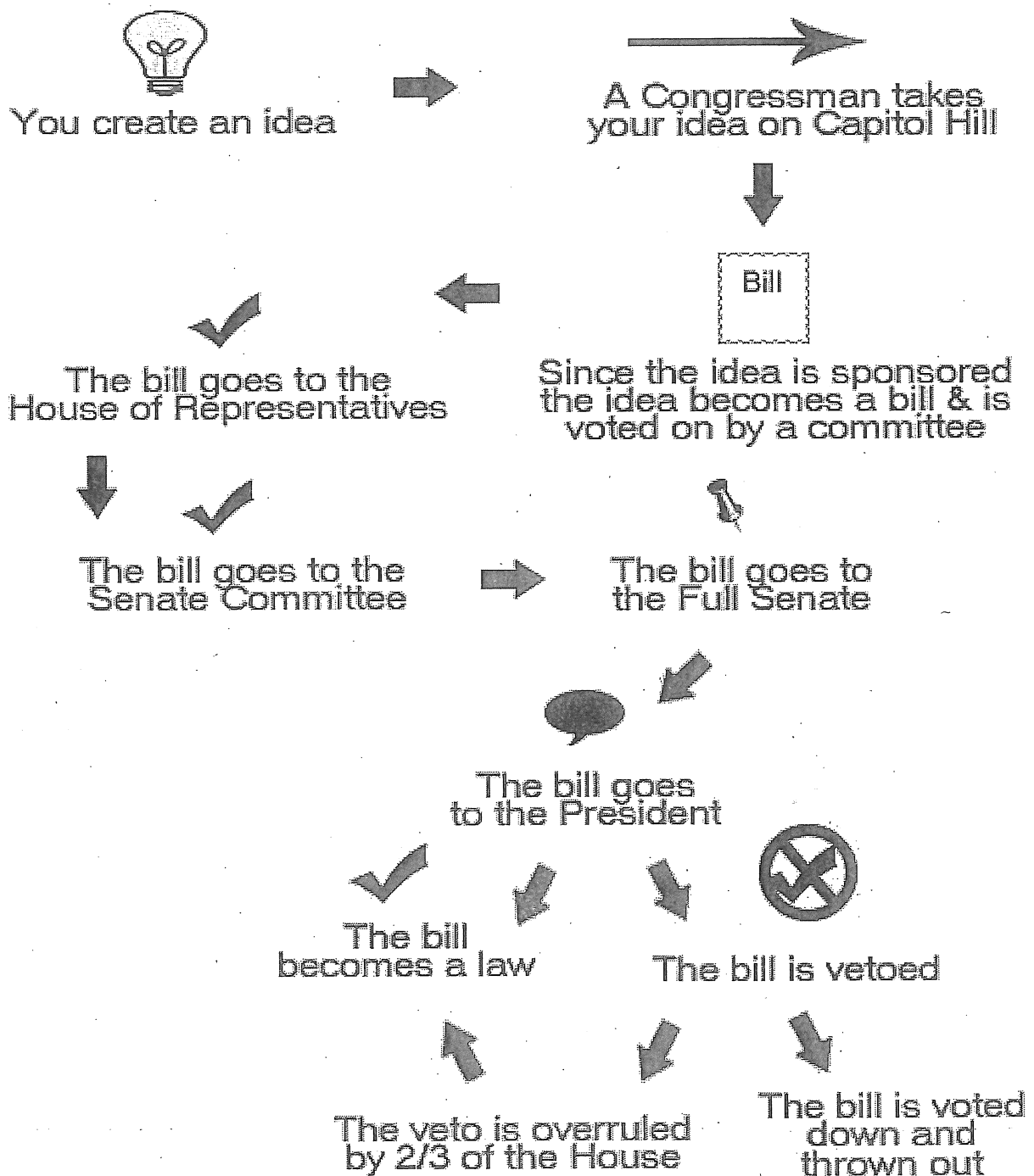
As soon as the Senate passes the bill, it goes to the President to sign. This means it is really close to becoming a law. The president can either choose to sign the bill or not. If the president signs the bill, it will become a law. If the president does not like the bill and decides not sign the bill he can choose to veto the bill. This means he does not approve and will not sign the bill into law.

If a bill is vetoed then it is sent back to Congress. The House of Representatives and the Senate have a few options when this happens. The first thing they can do is change the bill to convince the president that it is an important future law. If this is not an option, they can get rid of the bill. If the House and the Senate think the bill is perfect the way it is, they have a final option. They can overrule the president and make it a law anyway.

If Congress decides to overrule the president then they need to have even more positive votes than they did the first time. To overrule a presidential veto Congress needs two-thirds of the member votes. This means they will need 290 Representative votes and 67 Senate votes.

If the Representatives and Senate do not have enough votes then the veto made by the president continues. The bill will not become a law. However, if Congress works together and all vote to accept the bill then it is passed and the bill will finally become a law!

### How a Bill Becomes a Law





Name \_\_\_\_\_

Instructor  WEB

Date \_\_\_\_\_

## How a Bill Becomes a Law Worksheet

### Multiple Choice

1. There are many steps an idea takes on the way to becoming a law. Which of these is not a step?

- A. The bill goes to the President to be signed into law or vetoed
- B. The bill goes to the Full Senate
- C. The bill goes to the Supreme Court
- D. The bill goes to the House Representatives

2. There are many ideas that have become laws. The first thing you should do once you have an idea that you would like to make a law is \_\_\_\_\_.

- A. Tell people about your idea
- B. Send it to the President
- C. Demand the House vote on it
- D. Make the idea a law on your own

3. Once your Congressman has decided to sponsor your idea, it becomes a bill. Once your idea is a bill, where is the first place it goes?

- A. The Senate
- B. The Senate Committee
- C. The House of Representatives
- D. A special committee who votes on the bill

4. The first time the bill goes to the House of Representatives or Senate the bill must receive \_\_\_\_\_ majority vote or more.

- A. 100%
- B. 75% (2/3)
- C. 25% (1/4)
- D. Just over 50% (over 1/2)

### True or False

5. If the President vetoes a bill, it is thrown out forever. No one can appeal the decision not even Congress.

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6. There are thousands of laws across the each city, state, and the entire nation that we must follow.
7. The path a law travels once it becomes a bill is Special Committee, House of Representatives, Senate Committee, Full Senate, President, and then back to Congress if the bill has been vetoed.
8. The President has no say in the law making process.

### **Explore the Process**

9. A bill takes a long path on its way to becoming a law. Draw a diagram similar to the one at the end of this lesson. Outline the path the bill takes from your first idea to making it a full law. Make sure to list what your idea is about and why you think it should become a law.
10. Do you think the process for making an idea a law is fair? Why do you think that the process is so lengthy to make an idea a law? Can you guess why so many branches of government (Legislative and Executive) have the chance to examine and vote on the law?
11. Research (on the Internet) the Judiciary Branch (the Courts) of the government. The Legislative (Congress) and the Executive (President) branches have say in the lawmaking process. The Judiciary has its own part in relation to laws. What do you think the Judiciary does in relation to laws? Why do you think this is important?

### **-Optional Project-**

12. If you could make any idea you have a law in your classroom, what would it be? With a group of your classmates (3-4) develop you idea and then act out the process of making your idea a law. With your full class as the House and Senate and your teacher as the President, you can determine if your law is an effective law in your classroom. If any laws pass make sure to write them on a poster board and hang them in your classroom for everyone to follow.

Name \_\_\_\_\_



Date \_\_\_\_\_

### Answer Key

1. C
2. A
3. D
4. D
5. F
6. T
7. T
8. F
9. Responses will vary
10. Responses will vary
11. Responses will vary though the correct answer should mention the fact that the courts deal with upholding the laws that are made by the Legislative and Executive Branches.
12. Responses will vary though this project is optional at the discretion of the teacher.





## Massachusetts Voter Registration Guide

### How to Obtain and Submit Registration Forms

#### Types of Voter Registration Forms

- You can use either a Massachusetts state registration form ([download here](#)) or the [federal mail-in registration form](#) at your registration drive.
- State forms can also be obtained from your [Town Clerk's office](#), local DMV, most public assistance agencies, the office of the Elections Division of the Secretary of the Commonwealth in Boston.

#### Handling and Submitting Registration Forms

- You can photocopy blank federal registration forms for your voter registration drive. You can't photocopy Massachusetts state registration forms.
- Don't fill in missing information on a voter registration form without the express consent of the person registering to vote.
- You should hand deliver completed applications to your [local election official's office](#) as soon as possible/immediately after receiving them. Massachusetts's voter registration deadline is 20 days before an election.

### Who Can Register to Vote?

As per Massachusetts' Secretary of the Commonwealth, you must meet the following requirements to register to vote:

- Be a US citizen;
- Be at least 18 years old on or before the next election (16 year olds can pre-register);
- Live at a Massachusetts address;
- Not be under guardianship or incarcerated in a correctional facility due to a felony conviction;
- Not be temporarily or permanently disqualified from voting because of corrupt practices in respect to elections.

### Things to Remember

#### If Someone Needs to Update Their Name, Address or Party Affiliation

If the voter wants to change their name, address or party affiliation, they must submit a new

**Government and Voter Information Websites:**

**Congressional Districts: MA:**

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Massachusetts congressional districts large.pdf](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Massachusetts_congressional_districts_large.pdf)

**Three branches of Government website:**

<http://carbajalscrazyclasroom.blogspot.com/2016/09/states-government-use-sentence-frames.html>

**Rock the Vote: Interactive website:**

<https://www.rockthevote.org/voting-information/> (interactive map of voting regulations)

**Mail-in voter registration form:**

<https://www.sec.state.ma.us/ele/elepdf/Voter-reg-mail-in.pdf>

**Ballot Questions:**

[https://www.sec.state.ma.us/ele/ele18/ballot\\_questions\\_18/ballot\\_questions18.htm](https://www.sec.state.ma.us/ele/ele18/ballot_questions_18/ballot_questions18.htm)

**Ma Election and Voting Information (Get out the Vote)**

[https://www.sec.state.ma.us/ele/ele18/ballot\\_questions\\_18/ballot\\_questions18.htm](https://www.sec.state.ma.us/ele/ele18/ballot_questions_18/ballot_questions18.htm)

**Find My Voting Information:**

<http://www.sec.state.ma.us/wheredoivotema//bal/myelectioninfo.aspx>

**Ma Ballot Questions (2018):**

<https://www.boston.com/news/politics/2018/07/09/massachusetts-ballot-questions-2018>

**All purpose, all in one, one stop shopping MA election info, including research and statistics:**

<https://www.sec.state.ma.us/ele/>

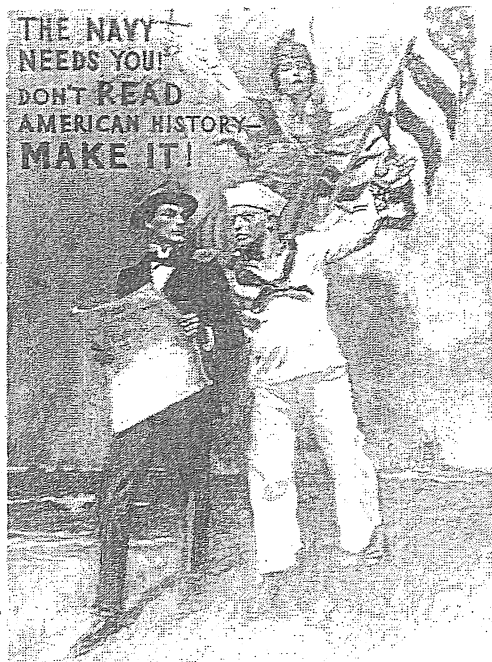
**School House Rocks Video:**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FFroMQlKiag>

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Questions 17 and 18 refer to the following information.

The poster below is from World War I.



"The Navy needs you!" Courtesy of Library of Congress # LC-USZC4-8890.

17

In the poster, the man with the newspaper most likely represents

- A. newspaper reporters.
- B. former veterans.
- C. potential recruits.
- D. members of Congress.

18

This poster was most likely designed to appeal to all of the following EXCEPT a person's

- A. desire for adventure.
  - B. feelings of patriotism.
  - C. sense of responsibility.
  - D. need for financial security.
-