

# Pol- Science

Question: -

- (a) Write a note on "Political System of USA:-" and (b) how USA senate is the most powerful senate in the world and (c) mention the criticism on American senate?

Answer.

Political system of USA:-

Outline :-

1. Background.
2. Features of constitution.
3. The US - president.
4. The vice president
5. The congress
6. Senate / Senate is the most powerful upper house in the world.
7. Legislative procedures.
8. Committee system.
9. The supreme court.
10. The political parties

11. Us - Federation
12. Check & Balance.
13. Criticism on USA

14. Conclusion.

Answer.

Background:

Before looking upon the political system of USA, it is necessary to look upon the background of United States of America:- Initially there were 13 British colonies because it was colonization era and American colonies were occupied by British - And these were under British control.

But in 1775-1783, they started revolution of independence and finally on 4 July 1776 America became independent.

# Features of US-constitution.

In 1787, Philadelphia convention was occurred and heads of 13 colonies have made a constitution in 1787 and it was enforced in 1789 under the leadership of George Washington.

## 1. Written constitution:

American constitution is short constitution as compared to Pakistan. Because it has only 7 articles, while if we talk about Pakistan constitution then there are 280 articles in it.

## 2. Rigid constitution:-

It is a rigid constitution because for any amendment there is a need of  $\frac{2}{3}$ <sup>rd</sup> majority in senate while  $\frac{3}{4}$  majority of all states of America. It

is very difficult to get  $\frac{2}{3}$  majority in senate while 40% majority of 50 states. So, there has been 27 amendments in USA constitution due to this factor.

### 3- Bicameral - congress:-

There is bicameral legislation in USA constitution which is called congress. It has two houses

- 1- House of representative (lower house - 435 members)
- 2- Senate (upper house - 100 members, 2 members from each state.)

### 4- Federal system:-

All the 50 states of USA are independent but these are linked due to their constitution

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and federation system. Like  
wise in Pakistan all  
provinces are individually  
independent but collectively  
they are under central  
government.

### 5- Separation of Power :-

Separation of Power means  
power is distributed between  
three pillars of state.

→ Executive

→ Legislature

→ Judiciary.

Legislature <sup>branch</sup> makes the  
through legislation in  
Parliament. Executive branch  
enforces law and Judiciary  
branch interprets it. Hence  
in this way, power is  
distributed between three  
main branches of USA.

### 6- Check & Balance :-

Although, there is separation of power between 3 main branches of USA as well as in other countries - But, still there is a system of check and balance there in which legislature branch has check and balance over executive and judiciary and vice versa. <sup>As</sup> Check and balance system was firstly given by ~~Enlighte~~ English man John Locke but he only suggested separation b/w executive and legislative but then Montesquieu added judicial branch as well. Along with separation of power Montesquieu coined the term check & balance for check & balance of three main branches over one another -

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→ Check and balance of the legislative branch over executive and judiciary: -

It has following checks over executive.

→ It may override presidential vetoes with 2/3rd vote.

→ May remove the president through impeachment.

→ Senate can approve treaties and it can approve presidential appointments.

It has following check and balances over Judicial branch.

→ Creates lower courts.

→ May remove judges through impeachment.

→ It's upper house senate can approve appointment of judges.

→ Check & balance of the Executive branch over legislative and Judiciary.

Executive has following checks over the legislative branch.

→ Veto power.

→ Ability to call special sessions of Congress.

→ Can recommend legislation.

→ President can give pardon over prisoner appeal.

It has following check over Judicial branch.

→ President appoints S. C and other federal judges.

→ **Check and balance of the Judiciary over legislative and Executive.**

It has following checks over Executive.

→ Judges, once appointed for life time and are free from executive branch.

→ Courts can judge executive action to be unconstitutional through the power of



judicial review.

→ It has following check over the legislative branch. Courts can judge legislative acts to be unconstitutional.

## 7. Presidential system: -

In USA, there is Presidential system because all the authority is of President. President can appoint judges, call emergency sessions and President is involved in almost all main acts of the country. There is no vote of no-confidence against President but it is directly elected from public. Although if President is involved in corruption or illegal activities then there is impeachment of President but it is another case.

Vice president is present usually under President

## 8. Fundamental rights:-

Fundamental rights are reserved in USA constitution. Although there are White / Black race conflicts in America. But in its constitution fundamental rights are reserved for all.

## 9. Dual-citizenship:-

There is dual citizenship in USA. A person can keep two types of nationality. One from its state out of 50 states and one from the United States of America itself.

## The US President:- Requirements:-

Minimum

35 years age is necessary  
for USA President and  
he should have been lived in  
USA since for previous 14  
years. There is a 4 years  
tenure of President and  
a person can be elected as  
make USA  
president in two times in  
his life - Removal of  
President can be done  
through impeachment of  
 $\frac{2}{3}$  majority.

## Duties and Powers of US - President:-

### 1- Executive power:

He is the head of the  
whole state and the  
whole control of USA  
is under President - He  
has following executive  
powers.

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- He executes law in country
  - He headed council of ministers
  - He done supervision of his staffs (6700 members)
  - He give <sup>executive</sup> orders to all institution.
  - He directs agencies like CIA, FBI
  - He done appointments of Ambassadors and Military officers

## 2. Legislative power:-

USA President has legislative power of Veto. He approves bill by giving his ascent but he can reject bill by his power of Veto within 10 days.

## 3. Judicial power:-

He has judicial power. He can veto any law which is against human rights

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#### 4- Financial power:-

He contains financial power because budget making is the responsibility of Government and he is the head of the Government. So, he contains financial power.

#### 5. Foreign policy:-

He has power to make foreign policy from the cooperation of other agencies.

#### 6- Appointment power.

He appoints military Head and also he has power to appoint judges -

### The US - vice president.

US - vice president is like a right hand to USA president. The age factor and term of office (4-year)

of V-president is same as of President.

### Duties:-

- 1- Political visits.
- 2- Succession (If President has died then V.P is his successor)
- 3- V.P is the President of senate
- 4- He attend meetings and lead committee according to President advice

## The Congress of USA.

It has two houses - HOR (435) <sup>→ directly elect for 2 years,</sup> and senate (100) <sup>indirectly elected for 6 years and 2/3rd retired after every 2 years.</sup>

### Power & Functions:-

- 1- Legislation
- 2- Investigative power

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- 3- Financial power
  - 4- Powers upon executive (Like on President for unconstitutional decisions.
  - 5- Impeachment
  - 6- Amendment.
  - 7- To control staff.

## USA Senate: Most powerful senate in the world:-

USA senate is the most powerful senate in the world due to the following authorities of USA senate as compared to others.

## Factors which contribute to the Power of U.S.A. Senate:-

### 1- Small membership:

The membership of US senate is small of hundred number. And that small

membership has made it more compact & efficient body. The small no of senators gives men of talent a better chance to show their strength and become known to the country at large.

### **Longer Tenure :-**

A senator is elected for a term of six years which is a longer tenure although one third senators retire after every two years but, they are generally re-elected. Because of long tenure outstanding politicians are attracted toward senate.

### **Greater influence :-**

The senators are seasoned politicians and have greater skills than their friends in the lower house. As a result they enjoy greater influence among the public.



## Freedom of speech:-

The senators of USA has freedom of speech beyond the limit of time. So, it is a prominent factor in the abundance of USA senate.

## Direct Election:-

In other democratic countries, members of upper house are elected indirectly while

## Solidarity of Senate:-

The USA senate is the only senate in the world which has unity and solidarity irrespective of the political affiliations of the members.

All the senators arise their voice as one man voice against any irregularity.

## Absence of Parliamentary Government,

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USA has Presidential form of government which make it's senate superior in the whole world. In Parliamentary form of government, lower house is more powerful while in Presidential form upper house enjoys executive powers.

### Equal powers in the field of Legislation:-

American senate has equal powers in the field of legislation. Money and non-money bills are approved from senate also along with lower house. Senate is empowered to amend or reject bills.

### Executive Powers:-

The American senate is the only upper house in the world which has some direct executive powers because President can make no

appointment without the consent  
of senate

### Court of Trial:-

The senate can make  
court of trials for  
the impeachment of president,  
vice president, other  
high officials and even  
judges.

### Power to appoint committees:-

The senate is empowered to  
appoint investigating committees  
for various administrative  
matter and to expose the  
errors of administration.

## USA senate comparison with British Upper HOUSE (HOL).

It was once a very powerful  
chamber but now it has  
become so weak - It has no  
share in financial legislation  
HOL has no control over executive

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It has no share in appointments while USA senate enjoys the all above mentioned authorities

## Comparison of US senate with Indian Rajya Sabha:-

Indian Rajya Sabha is weaker than Lok Sabha, it is indirectly elected. Although in case of impeachment and ordinary bill both Indian

houses enjoys the same right while in case of disputed bills Lok Sabha is superior.

Money bills are introduced only in Lok Sabha.

After approved they passed to Rajya Sabha which

just delay bill for 14 days.

So, Indian senate has no

absolute power over approval

of bills and no control over minister of Lok Sabha while USA senate enjoys all these rights.

## Legislative procedure:-

- Introduction of bills.
- Committee stage
- Debate
- Voting
- 2nd house
- Conference committee
- Presidential assent
- Veto or approved
- Become law

## Committee system in USA political system.

### → Standing committee:

Discussion on any bill before sending it into HOR and senate, occurs in standing committee

### → Specialized standing committee.

Sometimes standing committee make some specialized standing committees for further discussion on any bill.

### → Specialized committee

Specialized committee is  
formed for any special  
type of budget.

### Joint committee :-

Joint committee work  
for both houses of  
USA congress.

### Investigative committee :-

Investigative committee are  
formed for investigation  
of judges and other  
high ministers.

### Conference committee :-

Conference committee work  
for the resolution of  
dispute between American  
congress both houses.

## The Supreme Court :-

9 judges not fixed  
Retirement age - 79 years.  
Not removed but impeachment.

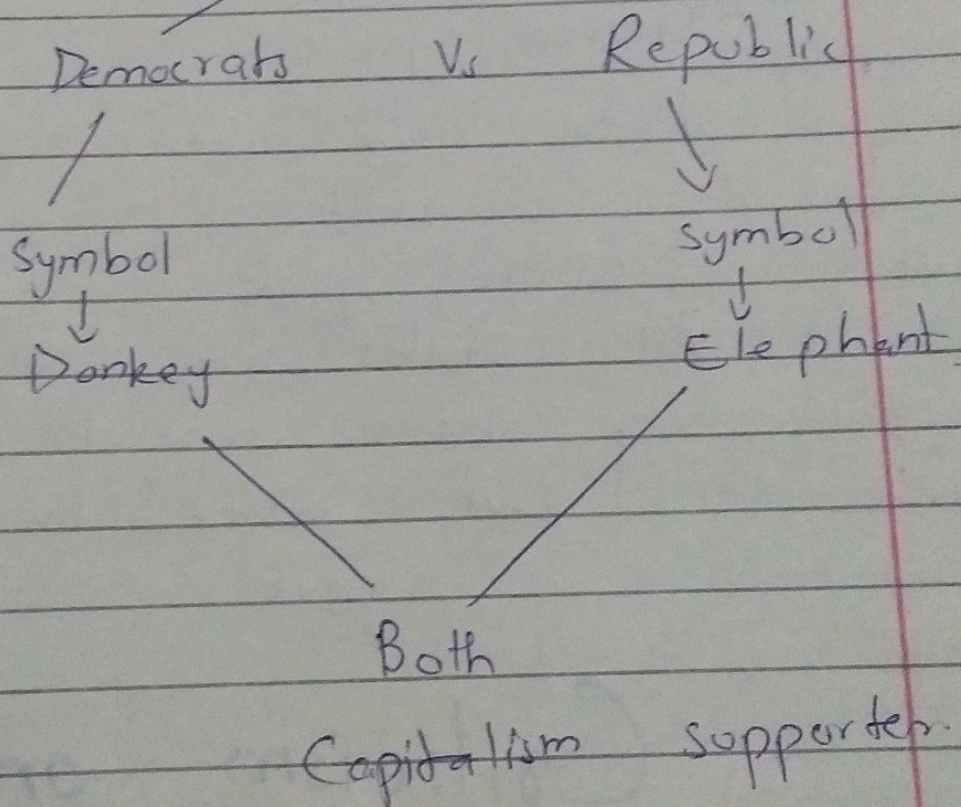
### Powers :-

- 1 - Original cases.
- 2 - Appellate jurisdiction.
- 3 - Appeals of circuit courts.

- Interpretation of Constitution
- Guardian of constitution
- Development of constitution
- Judicial review

## Political parties in US -

### Two party system



## The US Federation,

13 colonies expanded to 50 states.

## Distribution of power.

- 1- Central powers  
↓  
Just powers of centre.
- 2- Concurrent powers  
Powers distributed b/w  
states & centre.
- 3- Reserved powers.  
Powers just reserved to  
states.
- 4- Separate govts  
All states are independent  
& have separate govts  
but under the central  
govt.

## Criticism on USA political system & on senate.

ee/ Terry Moe and William  
Howell " criticize on USA



Political system in their book  
"One of them is President,  
Populism and Crisis of  
Democracy". This book argues  
that US is facing historic  
crisis that threaten it's  
democratic system of govt.  
Some of the problems that  
this book mentioned are.

- 1- Unequal treatment of people  
on basis of colour
- 2- The improper influence of  
money in politics.
- 3- Partisan polarization &  
extremism.

Some of the reforms  
that this book mentioned  
are

- 1- Expanding the govt work for  
people plan.
- 2- Reinventing govt by streamlining  
the govt organization chart,  
reducing bureaucracy, empowering  
frontline workers.
- 3- Strengthening democracy by protecting.

voting rights,  
gerrymandering  
enhancing

reducing  
and by  
civic education

## Perspectives on the Senate:-

Viewpoint of KRISTIN  
EBERHARD (Director  
of Democracy & Climate  
Research, Sightline Institute).

→ "Convert the senate into a  
Citizen's Assembly"  
Because of the following  
reasons.

- 1- Undemocratic Senate - Half of the nation's population represented by 18 senators, while 52 senators represent only 18% of American.
- 2- Racial disparities:- White American have nearly twice as much representation as Black & Hispanic Americans

Proposed solution - A citizen assembly proposed better solution if chosen

by lottery to better  
represent all Americans.

Viewpoint of ROBERT WILKES  
SENIOR CORRESPONDENT,  
Divided we Fall.

→ " Don't Break the Senate  
Because

- 1 - Imp of state representation =  
Each state get two senators  
regardless of population.
- 2 - Role of senate = It acts as a  
deliberative counterweight to  
the House of Representation.
- 3 - USA is not like  
Europe in which mostly  
countries like France, all  
power is centralized in Paris  
which seems like unica-  
meral and it's threat  
to democracy.

According to PETER CERTO,  
(SENIOR EDITORIAL MANAGER,  
Institute for policy studies)

eg Senate is threat to USA  
democracy, Here's how to fix  
it.

Peter Corrao says:

- 1- Imbalance & erosion of democracy  
Senate | Republicans represent  
15 bn fewer American than  
Democrats contributing to  
an anti democratic system.
- 2- Filibuster obstruction?

Republican have used the  
filibuster to block popular  
legislation & maintain their  
minority power

Proposed solution:

- 1- Eliminate or restrict  
the filibuster and  
add new states to  
rebalance the senate  
and the Electoral  
College.

