**The Legislative Branch Revision Tasks**

**Task 1**

What is the legislative branch in the UK?

**Task 2**

What is the legislative branch in the US?

**Task 3**

Explain the process of passing laws in the UK legislative system

**Task 4**

Explain the process of passing laws in the US legislative system

**Task 5**

One strategy the UK legislative branch uses to scrutinise the executive is by asking questions of Prime Minister during the weekly televised Prime Minister’s Question Time. Outline the effectiveness and ineffectiveness of this form of scrutiny. Give relevant examples of this form of scrutiny in action.

**Task 6**

Another way that the UK legislative branch is able to scrutinise the executive is by through the existence of a shadow cabinet. Outline the effectiveness and ineffectiveness of this form of scrutiny. Give relevant examples of this form of scrutiny in action.

**Task 7**

Another way that the UK legislative branch is able to scrutinise the executive is by through Select Committees. Outline the effectiveness and ineffectiveness of this form of scrutiny. Give relevant examples of this form of scrutiny in action.

**Task 8**

The US legislative branch is able to scrutinise the executive is by through what is known as ‘oversight’. Oversight is a word that describes the review and investigations that Congress may undertake to check or scrutinise the actions of the US government.

The main goals of congressional oversight are preventing waste, fraud, and abuse and protecting rights and civil liberties.

Outline three recent examples of congressional oversight.

**Task 9**

Explain how effective and ineffective congressional oversight was in relation to holding to account President Trump.

**Task 10**

A congressional committee is a legislative sub-organisation of the United States Congress. There are approximately 250 congressional committees and subcommittees, each responsible for a different function. They are constituted by members of Congress.

Note the three main committees in Congress and give a recent example of each.

**Task 11**

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| **UK Scrutiny** | *Similar**Different**Compare**Contrast* | **US Scrutiny** | Analysis |
| **Parliamentary Committees** | Similarly the US Congressional Committee system | **Congressional****Committees** | Therefore, in both the UK and the US, committees could be claimed to be the most effective method of executive scrutiny by the legislative. However, Congressional committees could be claimed to be more effective than UK committees, due to the dominance of the governing party on committees in the UK, US committees could be seen to be more independent with more powers. |
| 2nd Chamber **House of Lords**The House of Lords possesses different scrutiny procedures such as debates and select committees.The Lords has a special contribution through select committees. The Lords have played an active role in challenging government legislation and have been a considerable obstacle.For example, the Lords have delayed legislation on hunting, terrorism and the introduction of ID cards in recent years.However, bills dealing with taxation and spending can bypass the Lords. Acts of Parliament can also be used to bypass the Lords. The lords power to delay, means laws could simply be reintroduced in the next parliament. | Similarly, the Upper chamber in Congress can scrutinise the executive | **Senate****Approval** | Therefore, in both the UK and the US the upper chambers can play and important role in scrutinising the executive. The House of Lords can provide effective scrutiny, however this is limited due to a number of conventions and the ability to bypass this chamber. The Senate has a significant function in having to approve all important appointments, which can act as a check on the executive. However, appointments are now by majority rather than unanimous, which may impact the effectiveness of this function. |
| **The Opposition** | However, due to the separation of powers in the US party allegiances are not as strong and therefore scrutiny can come in the form of…. | **No Collective responsibility** | Therefore, in the UK the main role of the opposition is to act as an effective method of scrutiny and offer alternatives, whereas in the US the party allegiance is not necessarily as strong, and scrutiny can come from within, whereas in the UK, collective responsibility often prevents this from happening effectively. |
| **Question Time** | However, in the US there is no equivalent of question time, however scrutiny can come in the form of….. | **Publicity/Media** | Therefore, in the UK question time does produce the opportunity for the legislative to scrutinise the government in a very public way, however, the US Congress can use publicity of high profile hearings as means of public scrutinising the government, due to a lack of equivalent of UK question time |
| **Debates** | In the US, public officials are freer to voice their opinions on public issues and debates | **Public Officials** | Therefore, in the UK debates are an important way in which the Legislative can scrutinise the actions of the government. However, in the US public officials are ‘freer’ to voice their own concerns on issues of debate. |

Look at the table below. Identify which legislative branch (UK or US) is the most effective in terms of scrutiny by highlighting the relevant boxes:

**Task 12**

“The UK legislative branch is more effective than the US legislative branch in its ability to scrutinise the actions of the executive”

How far do you agree with this statement? Give relevant examples.

*Although Legislatures have an important ‘law making’ role one of their most important functions is to scrutinise the government. Both the UK Parliament and the US Congress hold the government to account to varying levels of effectiveness in a number of different ways…*