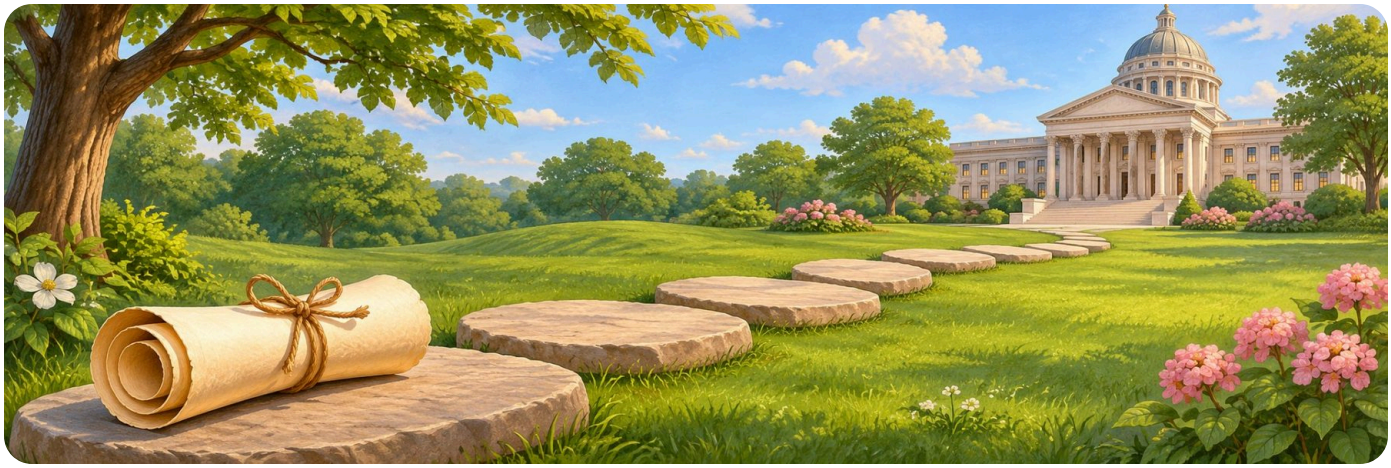
CARDINAL COMPASS - CIVICS NO. 5 - HANDS-ON LEARNING - WITH CARL THE CARDINAL

How a Bill Becomes a Law with Carl

VOL. 5

Civics - Volume 5 - Version 7

From One Idea to a Rule for Everyone. How does an idea become a rule for everyone?



Cover illustration: a bill traveling a path of stepping stones to a columned building.

Read together | **Do together** | **Grown-up with you**



Meet Carl - Lawmaker Carl

Carl the Cardinal is your guide. For this book, Carl carries one rolled-up bill, tied with string, from desk to desk. Two jars of tokens sit on his desk, six in each jar. One token stands for one pretend legislator's vote. Carl is learning every stop an idea makes before it can become a law. His green neckerchief and gold compass medallion stay on. Color your own Carl on the last page.

How to use this book

Read pages 2 to 4 together first. Then try the activities in order: march a bill through its stations, play Sign or Send Back, and pass a family bill into your family RULES book.

You will need: paper, a rolled paper bill tied with string, a travel card with stamp boxes, two jars or cups, 12 tokens or paper counters, pencils, and a family RULES book or notebook.

PART 1 - WHAT AND WHY (PAGES 2-3)

What is a bill, and what is a law?

What you already know: In Book 1, your family wrote a constitution, the big rules. In Book 4, neighbors on a council voted on city decisions. This book follows a bigger path: how an idea becomes a law for the whole country.

Bill: a written idea for a new law, not yet a law.

Law: a rule the government has finished making and can enforce.

Congress: the lawmaking part of the United States government, with two houses.

House of Representatives: one house of Congress.

Senate: the other house of Congress.

Vote: to choose, counted.

Veto: when the President sends a bill back with reasons instead of signing it. Veto means "I forbid" in Latin.

Override: when Congress votes again and passes a bill over the President's veto. It takes two thirds of BOTH houses.

Key fact: A bill must pass BOTH houses in the SAME words before it can become a law. If either house changes the bill, both houses must agree to the final wording before it goes to the President.

Why is the power split up? The framers who wrote the Constitution divided lawmaking power on purpose, so no one person or group could make a law alone. Two houses must agree on the same words, and the President can send a bill back. Each part checks the others, and a bill is read, argued about, and counted more than once before it can bind everyone. (U.S. Constitution, Article I.)