International Relations · GS - II

Explain the institutional structure of the U.S. Congress and examine how midterm elections influence the functioning of the American political system.

EXAM YEAR	PAPER	SUBJECT
DAILY PRACTICE 31/10/2026	GS - II	International Relations

MARKS	WORD LIMIT
10	~150 words

Answer Hint

Bicameral legislature; House of Representatives; Senate; separation of powers; checks and balances; presidential accountability; legislative deadlock; federalism

Model Answer

Introduction

The United States follows a presidential system with a bicameral Congress consisting of the House of Representatives and the Senate. Midterm elections are held halfway through the President's four-year term.

Institutional Structure

1. House of Representatives: Comprises 435 voting members elected for two-year terms, with representation based on population.
2. Senate: Has 100 members, with two senators representing each state. Senators serve six-year terms, with approximately one-third of seats contested every two years.

Significance of Midterm Elections

1. Presidential accountability: They provide voters an opportunity to express their assessment of the incumbent administration.

2. Legislative control: A change in party control of either chamber can influence law-making and budgetary decisions.
3. Checks and balances: Opposition control of Congress can increase legislative scrutiny of the executive.
4. Policy implications: Divided government may produce negotiation as well as legislative deadlock.

Conclusion

Midterm elections are an important mechanism of democratic accountability, shaping the relationship between the executive and legislature without directly electing a new President.

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