THE PRESIDENTIAL HATS:

Chief Legislator

The Chief Legislator wears a policeman’s hat. These eight-point hats are worn by the New York City Police Department; the eight points stand for the eight members of their original watch.
Talking to Lawmakers

Although the President does not have the power to pass laws, he can suggest laws to Congress. He can also work with individual Congressmen and Congresswomen to get their help and support to pass the bills that he has suggested.

Picture:
President Lyndon B. Johnson talking on the phone in the Oval Office, November 29, 1963.

To hear President Johnson speaking to New Jersey Congressman Frank “Topper” Thompson, click the icon below. The President congratulates Thompson on the passage of recent tax and civil rights bills and is asking for Thompson’s help on his medical care proposals.
Talking to Lawmakers

On June 1, 1981, President Ronald Reagan and Vice President George H.W. Bush met with House Speaker Tip O’Neill to discuss the Tax Bill. President Reagan and Vice President Bush were both Republicans while Speaker O’Neill was a liberal Democrat. When members from both parties work together, it is called bipartisanship.
Signing Legislation

The President is given the power to approve or veto laws that are passed by Congress.

Picture:
President William J. Clinton signing House Resolution (H.R.) 2254, the Omnibus Budget Reconciliation Act of 1993 on the South Lawn of the White House while Vice President Al Gore looks on.
President George W. Bush signed the U.S.A. Patriot Act in the East Room of the White House on October 26, 2001. Standing behind the President from are U.S. Attorney General John Ashcroft and a bipartisan group of members of Congress. The act was signed as a response to the September 11, 2001 attacks.
Vetoing Legislation

When a President does not agree with Legislation, he can refuse to sign it. This is called a veto. When a bill is vetoed, the President returns it to Congress with a message letting them know why he vetoed it.

Even if a President vetoes a bill, it can still be passed if a two-thirds majority of both houses in Congress pass it.

Document:
Draft of President Harry S. Truman’s speech to Congress about his decision to veto the Taft-Hartley Bill.

In his speech, President Bush said making “American taxpayers support the deliberate destruction of human embryos would be a grave mistake. I will not allow our Nation to cross this moral line. For that reason, I must veto this bill.”

President Bush used this pen, pictured above, to sign the veto.
Signing Pens

Did you know that when a President signs a bill into a law, sometimes he will use more than one pen? He does this so that pens can be given as souvenirs to people who helped write or pass the bill.

Picture:
President Lyndon B. Johnson signing the Immigration Act on October 3, 1965. Notice there are a few pens above his hand on the table.
Calling a Special Session of Congress

Presidents have the power to call a special session of Congress to address issues that they think are important.

Document:
April 16, 1929 message from Herbert Hoover to the special session of Congress he called to address the issues of farm relief and the tariff.
Article I

• Article I of the Constitution deals with the powers of Congress.
  – Section 7 is about the process of passing laws and the Presidential Veto.

• In Article I, Section 7, the President is given the power to review all laws passed by Congress:
  – Once a bill passes the House of Representatives and the Senate, “before it [can] become a Law, [it must] be presented to the President of the United States”
  – If the President approves the law, “he shall sign it”
  – If he does not approve the law, he must “return it, with his objections” to the house where it originated (this is the veto)
Article II

• Article II, Section 3 of the United States Constitution establishes the duties of the President.

• In Article II, Section 3, the President is given the following duties:
  – “He shall take care that the laws be faithfully executed.”