Reapportionment, Redistricting, and Gerrymandering

• Reapportionment is the process by which the government reallocates the number of representative each state/area is entitled to.

• This needs to be done because:
  o the numbers of representatives stays the same, but the population grows and moves
  o each district should have populations that are roughly equal
  o representatives’ districts do not cross state boundaries

• To determine the number of each state is entitled to, the process is:
  o US House of Representatives has 435 members (fixed number)
  o Each state gets at least 1 member regardless of population
  o The other 385 representatives are apportioned according to population
  o The population of the US is counted and divided by 435 (310 million/435 = 713,000)
    ▪ This is the number of people each member of the House should represent
  o Each state’s population is counted and divided by 713,000
    ▪ This determines the number of representatives each state gets.

• Some states will gain representatives, some states will lose representatives and some states will have the same number of representatives as before.

• Once representatives are reapportioned, the districts must be redrawn. This process is called Redistricting.

• States must draw new lines every 10 years due to:
  o The change in the number of people each house member represents
  o Shifts in population

• Inside each state:
  o The state government must draw districts that are roughly equal in population
  o In Colorado there must be 7 districts with approximately 720,000 people each.

• The new lines are often drawn to try to maximize political advantage (Gerrymandering)
  o Political parties try to draw lines to gain power
  o Ethnic/Racial groups want better representation