

QUESTION:

Ted of Colorado, asks, "Does the Speaker of the House need to be a Member of the House? If not, has there ever been a Speaker who was not a Representative?"

RESPONSE:

The Speaker of the House of Representatives does not have to be a Member of the House. Article I, Section 2 of the Constitution states, "The House of Representatives shall choose their Speaker and other Officers..." No qualifications are given in the Constitution. Thus, it is left to the House to decide whether the Speaker is a House member or not. Other House officers- the Clerk and the Chief Administrative Officer, for example-- are not Members of Congress. That being said, however, all Speakers of the House thus far in American history have been elected Members of Congress.