

I : Constitution

System of checks and balances:

- Each of 3 branches serves to control each other; power equally divided; all branches same amount of power
- government shouldn't become too powerful to undermine people's rights

Three branches of government: judicial branch, executive branch, legislative branch

Compromises:

- Congress consists of two houses: Senate and House of Representatives
- Slave counted as 3/5s of a person

Bill of Rights

Protects rights, e.g. religious freedom, own weapons, ...

1791 to state the rights against governmental power

➔ *Model for free world; holds together people that are known for diversity*

II: Legislative Branch

Bicameral legislature:

Congress ➔ Senate and House of Representatives (balance of powers)

Senate: 100 members H. : 435 members

Senate: 6 years – H. : 2 years

Senate: 30 years - H: 25 years old

House of Representatives and Senate can pass laws

But also unique rights/ powers

House of Representative: selects vice president

Senate: approve candidates; ratify treaties

Process of making a law:

- 1) write a bill (a law) → only a member of Congress can present it to the Congress***
- 2) bill goes to a committee of experts → can be accepted or denied or changed***
- 3) Congress will have to discuss bill***
- 4) Congress votes → bill must get majority of votes***
- 5) President must sign the bill or veto it***
→ if Congress still wants law to pass they can override veto by getting majority of 2/ 3s

President:

Tasks:

Enforce and implement laws

Appoints heads of leaders of federal agencies

Diplomacy with other nations (e.g. signing treaties)

Obama: first coloured President, symbolizes cultural diversity of America → American Dream can come true

Vice President: supports President, becomes new President if old one is unable to serve, elected and serves for 4 years → unlimited number of elections

Cabinet: important; consists of 15 different departments, advises President

Judicial branch:

Consists of judges and courts

Federal → decides cases concerning the US as a whole

State courts → handle civil suits

Supreme Court:

Highest court, President nominates members , reviews cases of lower courts

Landmark cases:

Important Supreme Court cases; lasting impact on law and future cases