

Branches of Federal Government

Aligned with CA state standards - 12th grade social studies standard 12.4

Lesson Objective: Students should be able to name and identify the three branches of American government, the people involved in each of them, and the functions of each branch.

Lesson Plan:

Topic 1: Introduction to the federal government

- The three branches of the federal government

Topic 2: The executive branch

- Role and responsibilities of the president
- Enforcing laws made by congress
- Electoral college and presidential elections

Topic 3: The legislative branch

- Composition and function of congress
- The senate and the house of representatives

Topic 4: The judicial branch

- The supreme court and its role in interpreting laws
- Justices and their appointment process
- Lower federal courts and their jurisdiction

Topic 5: Interactions between branches

- Checks and balances system
- Examples of interactions between branches
- Importance of cooperation and separation of powers

Facts to know at the end of the unit: Understanding the Branches of the Federal government (8th grade)

1. The federal government of the United States consists of three branches: the executive, legislative, and judicial branches.
2. The executive branch is headed by the president, who enforces laws made by congress.
3. The president is elected by united states citizens through the electoral college system.
4. The legislative branch, known as congress, is composed of the senate and the house of representatives.
5. The senate has 100 senators with each state represented by two Senators
6. The House of Representatives has 435 members, with the number of representatives per state determined by population.
7. Congress is responsible for making laws.
8. The Judicial Branch includes the Supreme Court, which consists of nine justices.
9. The Supreme Court interprets laws according to the Constitution and handles cases related to constitutional issues.

10. There are lower federal courts located in each state to handle cases involving federal issues.
11. Washington D.C. is the main headquarters of all three branches of the federal government.
12. The branches of the federal government have separate roles but also interact and check each other's powers through a system of checks and balances.

Resources:

1. <https://kids.nationalgeographic.com/history/article/three-branches-of-government>
2. <https://www.history.com/topics/us-government-and-politics/three-branches-of-government>
3. <https://www.usa.gov/branches-of-government#:~:text=The%20Constitution%20of%20the%20United,will%20have%20too%20much%20power.>
4. <https://www.trumanlibrary.gov/education/three-branches/three-branches-of-government>
5. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0bf3CwYCxXw> - crash course (8:30)

Standards - Aligned:

CA.12.4. Principles of American Democracy: Students analyze the unique roles and responsibilities of the three branches of government as established by the U.S. Constitution.

- 12.4.1. Discuss Article I of the Constitution as it relates to the legislative branch, including eligibility for office and lengths of terms of representatives and senators; election to office; the roles of the House and Senate in impeachment proceedings; the role of the vice president; the enumerated legislative powers; and the process by which a bill becomes a law.
- 12.4.4. Discuss Article II of the Constitution as it relates to the executive branch, including eligibility for office and length of term, election to and removal from office, the oath of office, and the enumerated executive powers.
- 12.4.5. Discuss Article III of the Constitution as it relates to judicial power, including the length of terms of judges and the jurisdiction of the Supreme Court.
- 12.4.6. Explain the processes of selection and confirmation of Supreme Court justices.