

The Federal Government

New York State Social Studies Framework 4.4a

NYS Social Studies Framework:
4.4 GOVERNMENT: There are different levels of government within the United States and New York State. The purpose of government is to protect the rights of citizens and to promote the common good. The government of New York State establishes rights, freedoms, and responsibilities for its citizens.

- 4.4a After the Revolution, the United States of America established a federal government; colonies established state governments.
- Students will examine the basic structure of the federal government, including the president, Congress, and the courts.

Materials:

- "Government: Why do we have government?"
- "The Government of the United States: Three Branches" student text.
- "The Government of the United States: Three Branches" & key.
- Ticket to Leave: Three Branches

Anticipatory Set: Start a discussion about what rules students have at home and at school. Talk about who creates these rules (parents/guardians, the teacher, the principal). Move the discussion to talking about the government.

Body: Read the "Government: Why do we have government?" student text and discuss what the two documents shown have to say about our government. Have students write their thoughts at the bottom of the page. Next, read through the information about the three branches at the federal level. Work together to create a "Government of the United States: Three Branches" note catcher using the information.

Websites used in lessons:

- U.S. Senate - find your Senators. <https://www.senate.gov/states/statesmap.htm>
- U.S. House of Representatives - find your Congressman. <https://www.house.gov/representatives/find-your-representative>
- U.S. Census 2020: Apportionment of the U.S. House of Representatives map. <https://www.census.gov/library/visualizations/2021/dec/2020-apportionment-map.html>

Anticipatory set: Review what the legislative branch and the word "representative". If you have already reviewed the executive branch, review the word "president".

Lesson #1: Why do we have government? & The Three Branches of the Federal Government

Materials:

- "Government: Why do we have government?" student text
- "The Government of the United States: Three Branches" student text.
- "The Government of the United States of America: Three Branches" & key.
- Ticket to Leave: Three Branches

Anticipatory Set: Start a discussion about what rules students have at home and at school. Talk about who creates these rules (parents/guardians, the teacher, the principal). Move the discussion to talking about the government.

Body: Read the "Government: Why do we have government?" student text and discuss what the two documents shown have to say about our government. Have students write their thoughts at the bottom of the page. Next, read through the information about the three branches at the federal level. Work together to create a "Government of the United States: Three Branches" note catcher using the information.

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Anticipatory set: Review what the legislative branch and the word "representative". If you have already reviewed the executive branch, review the word "president".

Lesson #2: The Office of the President of the United States of America

Materials:

- "The Office of the President of the United States" student reading page.
- "The Office of the President of the United States Sorting Tags" page.
- "The Office of the President of the United States Sorting Cards" page & key.
- Ticket to Leave: "Which of the president's responsibilities do you think is the most important? Why?"

Anticipatory Set: Ask the class who they think his job entails. Be careful! Try to stick to the office, not the person.

Body: Read through the "The Office of the President of the United States" student reading page. Have students write their thoughts at the bottom of the page. Next, read through the information about the three branches at the federal level. Work together to create a "Government of the United States: Three Branches" note catcher using the information.

Websites used in lessons:

- U.S. Senate - find your Senators. <https://www.senate.gov/states/statesmap.htm>
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Anticipatory set: Review what the legislative branch and the word "representative". If you have already reviewed the executive branch, review the word "president".

Lesson #3: The Congress

Materials:

- "The Government of the United States of America: The Congress"
- Ticket to Leave: "What is an issue you'd like to bring to your Senator or Congressman's attention?"

Websites:

- U.S. Senate - find your Senators. <https://www.senate.gov/states/statesmap.htm>
- U.S. House of Representatives - find your Congressman. <https://www.house.gov/representatives/find-your-representative>
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Anticipatory set: Review what the legislative branch and the word "representative". If you have already reviewed the executive branch, review the word "president".

Standards aligned detailed lesson plans.



• NYS SOCIAL STUDIES FRAMEWORK •

4.4 GOVERNMENT

GOVERNMENT

THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT

THREE BRANCHES, THE PRESIDENT, CONGRESS & THE COURTS

ELA INTEGRATED

4.4a

CIVIC ENGAGEMENT FOCUSED

ASSESSMENTS

BUILD THINKING SKILLS

ELA INTEGRATION

ENGAGING ACTIVITIES

The Office of the President of the United States of America

The President of the United States has many different responsibilities.

Chief Executive

The President is the head of the executive branch of the government. He or she is responsible for carrying out the laws of the United States. The President also has the power to appoint and remove federal judges and other officials.

Commander in Chief

The President is the head of the armed forces. He or she has the power to declare war and to send troops to other countries.

Head of State

The President represents the United States at official events. He or she is the symbol of the nation's unity and is responsible for promoting the common good.

Political Party Leader

The President is the leader of his or her political party. He or she is responsible for promoting the party's platform and for winning the support of the voters.

Supreme Court - The Highest Court in the Nation

If a person isn't happy with the court's decision, they can ask the Supreme Court to review it. The Supreme Court only hears about 60-80 cases each year.

United States Courts of Appeal - 13 Total

If a person is not happy with the United States Circuit Court's decision, they can ask the Supreme Court to review it. The Supreme Court only hears about 60-80 cases each year.

Federal District Courts - 94 Total

When a government has to take someone to court, it must be taken to a federal court. There are 94 federal courts.

The Government of the United States: Three Branches

The federal government is made up of three branches: the legislative branch, the executive branch, and the judicial branch. Each branch has its own responsibilities and powers.

The Legislative Branch

The legislative branch is made up of the U.S. House of Representatives and the U.S. Senate. They are responsible for making laws. They also have the power to declare war and to approve or reject the President's appointments.

The Executive Branch

The executive branch is headed by the President. He or she is responsible for carrying out the laws. The President also has the power to appoint and remove federal judges and other officials.

The Judicial Branch

The judicial branch is headed by the Supreme Court. It is responsible for interpreting the laws and for deciding if they are fair. The Supreme Court also has the power to review the decisions of the lower courts.

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★ NO PREP • PRINT & GO • ANSWER KEY INCLUDED ★

The Government of the United States of America Sum-it-Up

Name that Branch!

The President of the United States belongs to the _____ branch.

The Congress of the United States belongs to the _____ branch.

The Supreme Court of the United States belongs to the _____ branch.

List three responsibilities of the President of the United States.

What are the two houses of the Congress?

Name: _____

List three branches of government, one in each box, below. Add some information about that branch.

TICKET TO LEAVE

TICKET TO LEAVE

Which of the president's responsibilities do you think is the most important?

Formative & Summative Assessments

The Three Branches – Text & Graphic Organizer

Government: Why do we have government?

The Declaration of Independence

We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life,

The Preamble to the Constitution

We the People of the United States, in Order to form a more perfect Union, establish Justice, insure domestic Tranquility, provide for the common defence, promote the general Welfare, and secure the Blessings of Liberty to ourselves and our Posterity, do ordain and establish this Constitution for the United States of America.

The texts above are from two of the most important documents in our history. The Declaration of Independence tells what the four basic rights of the people were born with the rights of life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness. The job is to protect those rights.

In the U.S. Constitution, our nation's basic law, the government they were working to create to insure domestic tranquility, and all the other things that the government is supposed to do.

The government makes laws that are meant to "promote the general Welfare" and "secure the Blessings of Liberty" to ourselves and our Posterity. The government also makes sure that the Constitution is followed.

The government is made up of three branches: the Executive, the Legislative, and the Judicial. Each branch has different jobs to do. Their jobs are all spelled out in our Constitution.

Why we have
government
based on
the Constitution
document

In your own words, explain why we have government.

**The Government of the United States:
Three Branches**

The Legislative Branch

The federal legislature makes the laws that are for people in all 50 states. The Legislative Branch is called the Congress. The Congress has two houses, or parts - the Senate and the House of Representatives.

In the Senate there are two representatives from each state. They are elected to serve for six years. They are called senators. To be a senator one must be at least 30 years old, a U.S. Citizen for at least 9 years and must live in the state the senator represents.

In the House of Representatives the number of representatives from each state is determined by the state's population. Representatives to the House are called congressmen. Congressmen serve for a two-year term. To be a congressman one must be at least 25 years old, a citizen of the United States for at least 7 years and live in the state the congressman represents.

The Executive Branch

The executive branch carries out the laws created by the legislative branch. The head of the executive branch for the United States is the President. In order to be president, one must be at least 35 years old, a natural-born citizen of the U.S. and have lived in the U.S. for at least 14 years.

The Judicial Branch

The judicial branch interprets the laws of the United States to see if they are fair. The head of the judicial branch is the Supreme Court. Justices of the Supreme Court are appointed by the President and confirmed by the Senate. They serve for life.

The Role of the Courts

The courts are responsible for interpreting the laws of the United States. They decide if laws are constitutional. If a law is found to be unconstitutional, it is struck down. This means it is no longer valid. The courts also hear cases involving disputes between individuals or organizations. They decide who is right and what consequences should follow.

The Importance of the Courts

The courts play a vital role in our government. They protect our rights and ensure that everyone follows the same rules. Without the courts, our society would be chaotic and unfair. It is important that we respect the decisions of the courts and work together to uphold the law.

The Office of the President

Text & Sorting Activity

The Congress

The Government of the United States of America

The Congress

The Senate



Your Senators:

The House of Representatives



Your Congressman:

What is an issue you'd like to bring to your Senator or Congressman's attention? Write about it in the speech bubble.

How can you find out how to contact your representative?

Federal Court System

The Supreme Court

Supreme Court – The Highest Court in the Nation



If a person still isn't happy with the court's decision, she can ask the Supreme Court to review it. The Supreme Court only hears about 60-80 cases each year.

United States Courts of Appeal – 13 Total



What is an issue you'd like to bring to your Senator or Congressman's attention? Write about it in the speech bubble.

How can you find out how to contact your representative?

Supreme Court



Justices are appointed for life so that they do not have to be reelected. This is to help make sure they are not influenced by politics. The Justices are held to a very high standard. They have a Code of Conduct, rules they strive to live and work by.

Look up this code of conduct at https://www.supremecourt.gov/about/Code-of-Conduct-for-Justices_November_13_2023.pdf

What are some of the rules the Justices agree to follow? List 3 below.