

# Branching Out

## The Three Branches of Government

**Benchmark:** SS.7.C.3.3 Illustrate the structure and function (three branches of government established in Articles I, II, and III with corresponding powers) of government in the United States as established in the Constitution.

### Clarifications/Objectives:

- Students will recognize the structure of the legislative, executive, and judicial branches.
- Students will compare the roles and responsibilities of the three branches of the federal government.
- Students will identify the general powers described in Articles I, II, and III of the U.S. Constitution.

**Time:** 1-2 Class Periods

### Materials:

- Branching Out PowerPoint
- Computer
- Projector
- Speakers
- Chart Paper (12 pieces)
- Markers
- Handout A: Branching Out
- Handout B: Flocabulary's Three Branches of Government Rap Lyrics
- Handout C: Branching Out: Types of Powers

### Lesson Preparation

- Review all handouts and PowerPoints
- Print and review the PowerPoint in "notes view". The PowerPoint includes notes to guide the lesson.
- Review Get to the Point Lessons 1.1 and 1.7 prior to this lesson.
- Prepare and post chart paper for the warm up activity. 6 sheets of chart paper – 2 labeled Legislative, 2 labeled Executive, 2 labeled Judicial. Each side of the room should have 3 sheets – Legislative, Executive, and Judicial.
- Print/cut Teacher Handout A

### Lesson Overview

#### Warm Up – Assessing Prior Knowledge

- Divide the class into 6 groups and then divide the class in half - 3 groups on one side, 3 on the other.
- Have 3 pieces of chart paper on each side of the room (6 pieces total) labeled "Legislative" "Executive" and "Judicial". Each group should go to one of the pieces of chart paper.
- Have the groups write what they know about this branch of government. Allow each group 1 minute per poster to write as much as they can.

- After 1 minute, groups should rotate and add/edit the next piece of chart paper on their side of the room. Allow groups to rotate through the three stations.

Debrief with the students to see what students know. Use the outcome of the warm up to assess prior knowledge and focus the content of the lesson.

**Review** Ask students “What is a constitution?” Using the Branching Out PowerPoint, discuss the function of a constitution as a rule book for government that establishes a plan of government, serves as a contract between government and the people, provides government structure and function, and lists some of the rights of the people. Review the concept of separation of power from Get the Point Lessons 1.1 and 1.7.

**Distribute Handout A.** Students should complete the handout as the PowerPoint progresses. This presentation is formatted in layers so students can build on the previous slides:

- Basis in U.S. Constitution;
- Separation of Powers;
- Three separate branches of government as found in the Constitution;
- The structure of the three branches;
- And the powers of the three branches.

The PowerPoint will include a video by Belinda Stutzman through TedEd about how power is divided in the U.S. Government (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HuFR5XBYLfU>) before continuing to outline the structure, function, and powers of the branches of government.

**Distribute Handout B** when you reach [Flocabulary’s Three Branches of Government Rap](#). *Note: Flocabulary has made this video a restricted resource. To access the full video, you will either need to register for a free trial or subscribe to Flocabulary.* Have students follow along with the lyrics while listening/watching the video. Discuss some of the terms in bold using the following slide and identify additional powers of the different branches of government.

**Play the Three Branches of Government Game.** To help students remember some of the powers of the different branches of government, either play the game individually or as a class by sorting the powers into the correct branches of government. Students should be completing Handout A as the PowerPoint progresses and following the game. Time permitting, have students illustrate each branch on their handout. They will use these illustrations to create a final product for the lesson.

**Distribute Handout C.** Students should complete Handout C as the different types of powers are discussed. These notes are important to help students remember the different powers as there are so many synonyms provided for each power.

**Group Activity** When prompted in the PowerPoint, divide the class into 8 groups. Distribute one of the powers on Teacher Handout A to each group. The group will then need to go prepare to work as a small group to act out the power they are assigned. Groups should be prepared to use gestures and not speak. Have each group act out their power. Other small groups will need to guess the power and find it in the U.S. Constitution. Have them read the delegated/enumerated/expressed directly from the Constitution, emphasizing that it is plainly/expressly found in the Constitution.

**Continue with the PowerPoint.** Discuss implied and concurrent powers. Students should work to create visuals on Handout C to help them remember the different powers in the Constitution.

## **Culminating Activity Options**

### **Option 1 – Poster Project**

Students will use their Branching Out Handout A to create a visual representation of all three of the three branches of government. Students should illustrate the structure and function of each branch using a medium of their choice (paper, online platform, etc.). Emphasize that their illustration will need to address all three branches of government based on all of the components outlined in Handout A.

### **Option 2 – Progressive Pictures**

With clean chart paper, reset the activity from the warm up - 3 posters on each side of the room, labeled "Legislative" "Executive" and "Judicial".

This time, each group should start illustrating/drawing the branch of government on their piece of chart paper using Handout A. After 2 minutes, have the groups rotate. At the new poster, the groups will need to assess the drawing and add to the drawing based on what the previous group was unable to complete.

This will allow students to interpret concepts drawn by other groups, evaluate the pictures for missing information, and add information to the existing picture.

**Check for Understanding** The final slide will include a question from the End of Course Exam Item Specifications book. Have the students independently write down their answer and ask student to explain how they made their decision.

# Branching Out

Use the spaces below to take notes during the “Branching Out” PowerPoint.

<b>Branches of Government</b>			
Branch Name(s)	Legislative	Executive	Judicial
Where is it outlined in the Constitution?			
Who is in this branch of government? <i>Number of members</i>			
What is the basic role of this branch of government?	_____ the law.	_____ the law.	_____ & _____ the law.
What are some of the powers of this branch of government?			
How would you draw this branch of government?			

# Three Branches of Government Lyrics

By Flocabulary

LEGISLATIVE: Yeah. It's the legislative branch. I'm the one that pass the laws.  
So if you want to make something happen, you've got to go through me.

EXECUTIVE: It's the executive branch. Who's calling the shots in the oval office?

JUDICIAL: Yeah, yeah, it's the courts. Judicial.

*It goes check, check to stay balanced,  
Not just one, we bring three talents.  
The powers? Got to keep 'em separated,  
That's the motto, we made it.*

*3 branches of government, that's all:  
Legislative writes the laws,  
Executive executes laws — so official,  
The court system is Judicial.*

LEGISLATIVE: I'm the legislative branch, **I write laws**,  
Without me, it'd be anarchy of course.  
Say my name: I'm called Congress,  
Sitting on Capitol Hill, kid that's honest.  
Made up of the Senate and the House of Reps,  
We write a bill and send it to the President's desk.  
We legislate, and we roll deep,  
535 members in my clique, see?  
Senate? Each state sends two,  
100 senators in all, that's how we do.  
The House of Representatives is by population,  
Cali reps the hardest, no debating.  
If my bills get a **Presidential veto**,  
**I can override that with enough people.**  
I wrote the budget and I'm passing the laws,  
Now I'm a grab the mic and pass it off..

EXECUTIVE: Oh, hey Congress — sometimes I need to mess with your plans,  
**I carry out laws**, I'm the Executive branch,  
I'm the president, roll with the VP and cabinet,  
**And I'll veto your laws if I'm not having it.**  
So hail to the **commander in chief**,  
All the armed forces need to follow me.

My powers been blossoming since George Washington  
Stepped to the office and did awesome things.  
I've got a bowling alley in my home,  
Where I call in air strikes from invisible drones.  
Who **appoints the Cabinet and judges too?**  
The boss in the Oval Office that's who.

JUDICIAL: Check check, I'mma keep it short,  
The Judicial system, **I'm the courts.**  
My highest court, that's Supreme,  
All 9 justices know what I mean:  
Nominated by the pres, confirmed by the Senate,  
**No term limits, they serve a life sentence.**  
Plead your case, it's not unusual,  
For me to **rule a law unconstitutional.**

LEGISLATIVE: So I write a law.

EXECUTIVE: Well, I might veto it.

LEGISLATIVE: And I can override that, you know it.

EXECUTIVE: Man, I'm executive, the one that carries it out.

JUDICIAL: It can get challenged in the courts, that's what I'm all about.  
I might declare it unconstitutional.

LEGISLATIVE: I can impeach judges who act unusual,

EXECUTIVE: I nominate justices in the first place.

LEGISLATIVE: I can impeach you too if you step out of place.

*3 branches of government, that's all:  
Legislative writes the laws,  
Executive executes laws — so official,  
The court system is Judicial. (x2)*

*It goes check, check to stay balanced,  
Not just one, we bring three talents.  
The powers? Got to keep 'em separated,  
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# Branching Out: Types of Powers

Use the spaces below to take notes during the “Branching Out” PowerPoint.

<b>Types of Powers</b>			
<b>Type of Power</b>	<b>Also Known As...</b>	<b>Definition</b>	<b>Illustration/examples</b>
<b>Delegated</b>			
<b>Implied</b>			
<b>Concurrent</b>			

<b>Approval of presidential appointments</b>	<b>Naturalization and immigration laws</b>
<b>Sole power to try all impeachments</b>	<b>Armed forces (Army &amp; Navy)</b>
<b>Coin and print money</b>	<b>Declare War</b>
<b>Foreign relations</b>	<b>Regulation of trade</b>

## Notes for Teacher Handout A:

Approval of Presidential appointments	Article II, Section 2 – Legislative branch approving Presidential appointments
Sole power to try all impeachments	Article I, Section 3 – “The Senate shall have the sole power to try all Impeachments.”
Coin and print money	Article I, Section 8 – “To coin money”
Foreign relations	For the purposes of this exercise will be aligned with “To regulate trade with foreign Nations” (Article I, Section 8). It is also important to highlight that the president has the power to make treaties with foreign nations, but that treaty must be approved by the Senate (Article II, Section 2).
Naturalization and immigration laws	Article I, Section 8 – “Immigration” is not listed in the Constitution but is a term in the content focus. It falls under Congress’ power to “establish an uniform Rule of Naturalization”.
Armed forces	Article I, Section 8 – “To raise and support Armies...To provide and maintain a Navy...” Also note that the President serves as the commander and chief of the armed forces.
Declare war	Article I, Section 8 – “To declare War”
Regulation of trade	Article I, Section 8 – “To regulate commerce with foreign Nation, and among the several States, and with the Indian Tribes”