

Going Over the LEJ

Analyzing the Legislative, Executive, and Judicial Branches

Benchmark: SS.7.C.3.8 Analyze the structure, functions, and processes of the legislative, executive, and judicial branches.

Also assesses: SS.7.C.3.9 Illustrate the lawmaking process at the local, state, and federal levels.

Clarifications/Objectives:

- Students will examine the processes of the legislative (e.g., how a bill becomes a law, appointment confirmation, committee selection), executive (e.g., executive order, veto, appointments), and judicial (e.g., judicial review, court order, writ of certiorari, summary judgment) branches of government.
- Students will compare local, state, and federal lawmakers (city/county commissioners/council members; state legislators [representatives and senators]; and U.S. congressmen/congresswomen [representatives and senators]).
- Students will distinguish among ordinances, statutes, and acts on the local, state, and federal levels.
- Students will compare and contrast the lawmaking process at the local, state, and federal levels.

Time: 1 class period, plus additional classes for extension activities

Materials:

- Going Over the LEJ PowerPoint
- Computer
- Projector
- Speakers
- Handout A: Going Over the LEJ – Branches Chart
- Chart paper, labeled with branches of government
- Tape
- Process Cards, cut

Lesson Preparation

- Review all handouts and PowerPoints
- Print and review the PowerPoint in “notes view”. The PowerPoint includes notes to guide the lesson.
- Print and cut out “Process Cards”
- Label three pieces of chart paper: Legislative, Executive, and Judicial. Post in the classroom.
- Review lesson for benchmark 3.3 in the Getting to the Point lessons.
- Review the lawmaking processes at each level. Note that the lawmaking processes provided are an overview of the processes and do not provide details of the process. For a more in-depth look at lawmaking, please visit:
 - MyFloridaHouse.gov [How an Idea Becomes a Law](#)
 - FLSenate.gov [How an Idea Becomes a Law](#)
 - Office of the Clerk [How Laws Are Made](#)

Lesson Overview

Warm Up: View the 60 second video from the Center on Congress’ “Facts of Congress” series about Federalism. Students can draw the cake in the video diagramming the local, state, and federal governments. A link to the video is provided on slide 2 of the Going Over the LEJ PowerPoint.

Continue with the PowerPoint. Review the levels and branches of government with the students. View Flocabulary’s Three Branches of Government to review the powers and responsibilities of each branch of government.

Distribute Handout A*. Students should complete the chart as the PowerPoint progresses, outlining the structure, functions, and processes of the branches of government. The notes in the notes section of the PowerPoints will be helpful in guiding the presentation.

*This handout is similar to the handout used in the lesson for Benchmark 3.3 “Branching Out”. Students can complete this handout to review what they have already learned or could add new information (leaders within the branches and processes of government) to the Branching Out Handout A.

Check for Understanding. 3 pieces of chart paper labeled with the branches of government should already be posted as per the lesson preparations. Each pair of students should receive one “process card” identifying a process of one of the branches of government. Students will need to identify which branch of government the process belongs to, and tape the card to the appropriate poster. Debrief by briefly reviewing each process.

Continue with the PowerPoint. The PowerPoint will continue by looking at lawmaking and those responsible for making laws. Discuss the hierarchy of law from local ordinances up to the U.S. Constitution. Explain to students that when there is a conflict between a lower law and a higher one, the higher law generally “prevails”. Also highlight that the U.S. Constitution is the “supreme law of the land” and that this can be found in Article VI, Clause 2 of the U.S. Constitution (the Supremacy Clause).

Check for Understanding. The following slides will have an example of a local ordinance, a state statute, and a federal act. Students will need to identify which law is a local ordinance, a state statute, and a federal act.

Explain that they will now find out how these laws are made at each level of government. Watch the Center on Congress’ video from the “Facts of Congress” series about how a bill becomes a law. Review the process using the following slide. View the Democracy Kids video “House Mouse Senate Mouse” as another review of the lawmaking process. Continue with the presentation and highlight the state lawmaking process and the local lawmaking process.

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 students to explain how they made their decision.

Extension activity (emphasis on “also assesses” Benchmark SS.7.C.3.9). Tell students they will be creating their own children’s book, like House Mouse Senate Mouse. Provide students with printouts of either slide 16 (federal) or slide 18 (state) (depending on which level of government they want to focus on) to help guide them in creating a short children’s book outlining the lawmaking process. If possible, have students read their books to a younger audience or another class of students.

Going Over the LEJ

Take notes about the branches of government as the PowerPoint progresses.

Branches of Government			
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> <i>Name the leaders</i>			
What is the basic role of this branch of government?	_____ the law.	_____ the law.	_____ & _____ the law.
What are some of the powers/functions of this branch of government?			
What are some of the processes of this branch of government?			
	Types of committees:		

<h2>Lawmaking</h2>	<h2>Judicial review</h2> <p>The power of courts to decide the constitutionality of acts of the legislative and executive branches of government.</p>
<h2>Writs of certiorari</h2> <p>A writ of certiorari orders a lower court to deliver its record in a case so that the higher court may review it.</p>	<h2>Confirmation of presidential appointments</h2>
<h2>Court orders</h2> <p>Order that has been written by a judge requiring someone to do something or stop doing something.</p>	<h2>Veto legislation</h2>
<h2>Make appointments</h2> <p>Must be confirmed by a majority vote of the Senate</p>	<h2>Summary judgment</h2> <p>A case that is decided by a judge without a trial because one or both of the parties contend that all necessary factual issues are settled or so one-sided they need not be tried.</p>
<h2>Issue executive orders</h2> <p>Executive orders are orders that are issued by the President that have the force of law</p>	<h2>Selection of members to be on committees</h2>

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Take notes about the branches of government as the PowerPoint progresses.

Branches of Government			
Branch Name(s)	Legislative	Executive	Judicial
Where is it outlined in the Constitution?	Article I	Article II	Article III
Who is in this branch of government? <i>Number of members</i> <i>Name the leaders</i>	U.S. Senate – 100 members President pro tempore Senate majority leader Senate minority leader <hr/> U.S. House of Representatives Speaker of the House House majority leader House minority leader	President Vice President Cabinet members	U.S. Supreme Court 9 Justices Leader Chief Justice
What is the basic role of this branch of government?	Makes the law.	Executes (carries out) the law.	Interprets & applies the law.
What are some of the powers/functions of this branch of government?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Approve the President's budget • Declare war • Senate approval/rejection of treaties • Senate approval and rejection of Presidential appointments • Impeachment (removal from office) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Approve or veto Congress' bills • Direct the military • Write the federal budget • Make foreign policy/treaties • Make appointments • Grant pardons 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Decide if laws are unconstitutional • Decide court cases • Settle cases between 2 or more states
What are some of the processes of this branch of government?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lawmaking • Confirmation of presidential appointments • Committee selection <hr/> Types of committees: <hr/> Standing <hr/> Special <hr/> Conference	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Veto legislation • Executive orders • Appointments 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Judicial review • Court orders • Writ of certiorari • Summary judgment