

THREE BRANCHES OF THE CLASSROOM

Learning Objectives: The students will

1. Gain understanding of how the three branches of government interact with each other.
2. Recognize the roles of each branch of government.
3. Simulate the actions of the three branches of government.

TEKS: SS 3.10 (A), 4.16(B), 5.17(A), LA 3.1(E), 3.3(C), 4.1(C), 4.11(A), 5.1 (C),

Materials Needed: Chart tablet, markers

Vocabulary: Government, legislative, executive, judicial, constitution

Teaching Strategy:

1. Remind students that September 17 is Constitution Day, when we celebrate the document that provides the guidelines for how our government is structured.
2. Compare the Constitution to classroom rules, stating what is allowed and what is not allowed, and how the classroom will operate.
3. Display the chart of the three branches of government and simply outline the responsibilities of each. (See Attachment) Additional resources include:
 - a. Three Branches of Government game located at www.texaslre.org
 - b. Ben's Guide: Branches of Government located at <http://bensguide.gpo.gov/3-5/government/branches.html>
4. Announce to the class that they will simulate the three branches of government in forming their classroom rules for the year.
 - a. The teacher will be the President (Executive Branch)
 - b. Five students selected by the teacher will be the Supreme Court (Judicial Branch)
 - c. The remainder of the class will be Congress (Legislative Branch)
5. Simulation Part One – The teacher will deliver a State of the Classroom address, similar to the State of the Union address by the President every January. In this short speech, the teacher will outline what the goals of the school year will be for the class. Possible key points are:
 - a. That everyone will learn
 - b. That all students will be respected and respectful
 - c. That all students will be safe and comfortable in the classroom

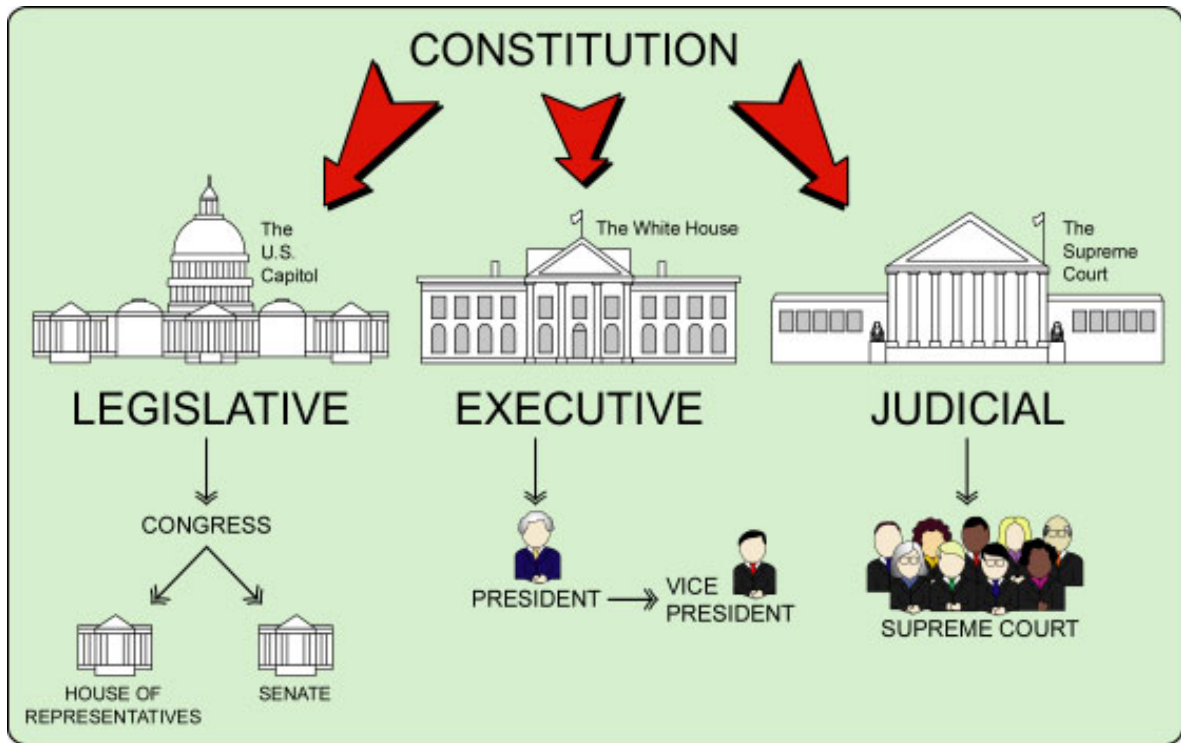
6. Simulation Part Two – The Congress should be divided into 3 groups, representing different political parties. Explain that political parties often have different views of how to accomplish the same goals. Each group will propose laws (rules) that will provide for the goals of the year to be accomplished. For example, the teacher might ask the students what laws need to be made in order to insure that all children can learn? What laws need to be made to insure that everyone is respected?
7. Simulation Part Three – The Supreme Court will decide on several criteria for what makes a good law (rule). Possibilities include:
 - a. A law should be fair to everyone, not favoring one group over another.
 - b. A law should be possible to follow.
 - c. A law should be easily understood by everyone.
 - d. A law should be changeable if it is needed.
8. Simulation Part Four - As laws are written by “Congress,” the “Supreme Court” will decide if they are good laws or not. If they are approved, the laws will be sent to the “President.” When all the laws are gathered, the President will work with the Congress to create a composite list, since some of the laws will probably be duplicates. The President may also veto some of the laws, if necessary.
9. Simulation Part Five - When all three branches of government approve the final list of rules, the President will sign the document, and the rules will become law.

G/T Extension

The students will do further research on the three branches of the U.S. government on the Ben’s Guide to the U.S. Government website, <http://bensguide.gpo.gov/3-5/government/branches.html> , as well as the White House website for children www.whitehouse.gov/kids , discovering the names of the Supreme Court justices and their own Representatives and Senators.

Ben's Guide to the U.S. Government for Kids

<http://bensguide.gpo.gov/3-5/government/branches.html>



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