

FEDERALISM—THE ROLE OF GOVERNMENT IN MY LIFE

Learning Objectives: The students will:

1. Understand the role of local, state, and the federal governments in their lives.
2. Analyze which level of government (local, state, or federal) is involved in everyday life.

TEKS: 7.14A; 8.15D; Govt 7.D; Govt 8.H

Materials Needed: A set of the three government cards for each group of three students

Teaching Strategy:

1. This activity is to be used after students have been taught the division of power between the levels of government (national, state, and local) in a federal system.
2. Divide the class into groups of three and give each group a set of government cards.
3. Explain that in this activity, they are going to hear everyday scenarios in the life of an American citizen. Upon hearing the scenario, they are to discuss with their teammates which level of government, local, state, and/or federal is responsible for the action described.
4. Explain to the students that some of the scenarios will only involved one level of government, two levels of government, or all three levels.
5. Have each team keep tally of the scenarios that they got correct.
6. After all twenty scenarios are covered, ask the following debriefing questions:
 - a. What reasons do you think prompted the founding fathers to choose a federal system of government?
 - b. What are the benefits of dividing power in a federal system rather than a unitary system which would give the central government all of the power? Or a confederation which has equal powers for the levels of government?
 - c. What are the disadvantages of a federal system?
 - d. What would happen if the national government and the state disagreed over the exercise of a power that is shared by both.

Scenarios:

1. Your parents are issued a birth certificate that records your name, date, place of birth, and parentage. (Local)
2. You are assigned a Social Security number which is used for identification purposes throughout your entire life. (National)

3. You use services such as safe water supply, clean air, and the building and maintenance of roads for your transportation purposes are regulated and maintained all of your life. (All three)
4. Because you were born in the U.S., you automatically become a citizen. (nation and state)
5. You are to pay taxes for support of public schools. (local)
6. Your food, medicine, and clothing are protected by safety standards. (national)
7. You are required to attend public, private, or home schooling until you reach a certain age or meet high school graduation requirements. (state)
8. Taxes are deducted from your first paycheck. (only national in Texas)
9. You pay property taxes on your house. (local)
10. You are issued a drivers' license after passing the required test. (state)
11. Your first employer is required to pay at least the set minimum wage for your work. (national)
12. If you are male, you are required to register for Selective Service at age 18. (national)
13. The tuition to the public university you attend is raised. (state)
14. You are issued a marriage license and take a blood test in preparation for marriage. (state)
15. You are issued a passport in order to travel outside of the United States. (national)
16. You decide to support the proposal for an increase in the police force. (local)
17. You decide to create a collection of the new presidential quarters. (national)
18. You receive Social Security benefits upon retirement. (national)
19. You are required to file an annual income tax return. (only national in Texas)
20. Your death certificate is issued detailing the cause of death. (local)