

POWER, POWER, WHO HAS THE POWER?

Learning Objectives: The students will:

1. Understand three ways to organize governmental power.
2. Understand the types of power in our federal system.
3. Analyze scenarios to determine the type of power being described.

TEKS: 8.15D; Govt.7D; Govt.9B&D

Materials Needed: Power Point (if using the presentation to pre-teach the activity); sets of the power cards for each group of students; access or copies of the Constitution for each student

Teaching Strategy:

1. Ask the students to recall the major concern when the Founding Fathers met at Philadelphia to write a new constitution.

Answer—They were deeply concerned about abuse of power by the government.

2. Explain to the students that this fear led the Founding Fathers to develop a system of government to deal with this several ways. One of these ways was the creating of the federal system as opposed to a unitary system which Great Britain had or a confederation which had been tried with the Articles of Confederation.
3. Use the Power Point presentation on the types of power in our federal system. As each organizational system (unitary, confederation, and federal) is described, have the students develop a definition for each by viewing the visual representation.

Examples:

Unitary—power of the government is all in the hands of the central government. The state governments are created by, get their powers from, and can be destroyed by the central government.

Confederation—power of the central government is given to it by the states that make up the union.

Federal—power of the government is divided between the central and state governments.

Additionally, discuss the role of the citizen in each.

4. Discuss the advantages and disadvantages of each organizational system.
5. After the student have understood the three organizational types, use the remaining slides that describe the definitions of the types of power (enumerated/delegated, reserved, concurrent, and powers denied) in the federal system used in the United States. With each type, have the students refer to the Constitutional citation for examples of each.
6. Divide the class into groups of three and give each group a set of the power cards. Explain that they are to listen to various scenarios and determine which type of power (enumerated/delegated, reserved, concurrent, power denied) is being described in each. Have each group keep track of their score. This portion of the activity can be graded with five points given for each correct answer or a small prize can be awarded to the group(s) that accumulate the most points.
7. Debrief the activity by having the students individually respond to the following question:

Question—How does the federal system of government protect the individual citizens from abuse of power?

GT/AP Extension: Have students research current examples of each of the three types of organization of governmental power. They should find several examples of each. After looking at the list of current countries, debate how the U.S. would change if we adopted one of the other two types of organization.

Directions: At the teacher's signal hold up the correct card for each scenario.

Scenario	Type of Power
Levying taxes to pay for government services	
Setting a uniform starting date for the beginning of school	
Ratifying a constitutional amendment	
Conducting the election of the president	
Establishing the naturalization process for new immigrant citizens	
Summoning citizens to sit on a jury panel	
Punishing a ring of counterfeiters of money	
Conducting the court martial trial of a member of the army	
Conducting a presidential election	
Appointing a senator to fill a vacancy	
Issuing a new presidential dollar	
Granting a title of "Sir" to a retiring Supreme Court Justice	
Borrowing money to pay for a government project	
Negotiating a new highway between Texas and Mexico to encourage free trade	
Establishing graduation requirements for high school students	
Taxing exports from one state to another	
Setting air pollution standards for industry	
Setting regulations regarding marriage	
Deciding to suspend postal services on Saturday	
Denying the right to vote to a certain racial group	

KEY:

Scenario	Type of Power
Levying taxes to pay for government services	Concurrent
Setting a uniform starting date for the beginning of school	Reserved
Ratifying a constitutional amendment	Reserved
Conducting the election of the president	Reserved
Establishing the naturalization process for new immigrant citizens	Enumerated/Delegated
Summoning citizens to sit on a jury panel	Concurrent
Punishing a ring of counterfeiters of money	Enumerated/Delegated
Conducting the court martial trial of a member of the army	Enumerated/Delegated
Conducting a presidential election	Reserved
Appointing a senator to fill a vacancy	Reserved
Issuing a new presidential dollar	Enumerated/Delegated
Granting a title of "Sir" to a retiring Supreme Court Justice	Power Denied
Borrowing money to pay for a government project	Concurrent
Negotiating a new highway between Texas and Mexico to encourage free trade	Enumerated/Delegated
Establishing graduation requirements for high school students	Reserved
Taxing exports from one state to another	Power Denied
Setting air pollution standards for industry	Enumerated/Delegated
Setting regulations regarding marriage	Reserved
Deciding to suspend postal services on Saturday	Enumerated/Delegated
Denying the right to vote to a certain racial group	Power Denied