

BRANCHES OF GOVERNMENT

- SS.7.CG.3.7** Explain the structure, functions and processes of the legislative branch of government.
- SS.7.CG.3.8** Explain the structure, functions and processes of the executive branch of government.
- SS.7.CG.3.9** Explain the structure, functions and processes of the judicial branch of government.

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HYBRID LESSON INFORMATION

- Elements of this lesson plan can be used prior to teaching SS.7.CG.3.7, SS.7.CG.3.8, and SS.7.CG.3.9 or after teaching the individual benchmarks
- These activities are designed to introduce or review all three branches of government together
- For specific information on each branch of government, review each individual lesson plan that covers benchmark clarifications, background knowledge, and vocabulary

Lesson Summary

ESSENTIAL QUESTION		
How do the structure, functions, and processes of the three branches of government vary at the national, state, and local levels?		
BENCHMARKS		
SS.7.CG.3.7 Explain the structure, functions and processes of the legislative branch of government. SS.7.CG.3.8 Explain the structure, functions and processes of the executive branch of government. SS.7.CG.3.9 Explain the structure, functions and processes of the judicial branch of government.		
CIVICS EOC REPORTING CATEGORY		
N/A		
OVERVIEW		
In this lesson, students will learn about/review the structure, functions, and processes of the three branches at each level of government. This lesson focuses on how the branches overlap and work together.		
INSTRUCTIONAL STRATEGIES		
Close reading of complex text	Collaborative learning	Inquiry-based learning
MATERIALS		
<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Student digital devices● Highlighters● U.S. Branches of Government activity sheet● Three Ring Government video (external link)● Who Represents Me? activity sheet● State and Local Government activity sheet● The Great State reading● How Laws Are Made in Florida's Cities reading		
B.E.S.T. STANDARDS		
<ul style="list-style-type: none">● ELA.7.R.2.1- Explain how individual text sections and/or features convey a purpose in texts.● ELA.7.R.3.2- Paraphrase content from grade-level texts.● ELA.V.1.3- Apply knowledge of context clues, figurative language, word relationships, reference materials, and/or background knowledge to determine the connotative and denotative meaning of words and phrases, appropriate to grade level.● ELA.K12.EE.1.1- Cite evidence to explain and justify reasoning.		

Suggested Student Activity Sequence & Pace

DAY	ACTIVITY SEQUENCE
DAY 1	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Have students brainstorm with a partner and write down as much as they know about the main structure and responsibilities for each of the three branches of government at the national level. 2. Explain/Remind students that each branch of government (whether speaking about the national, state, or local level) has a specific structure, function, and responsibilities. 3. Pass out the “U.S. Branches of Government” activity sheet and project the activity on the board. <i>Teacher Note:</i> Reference the specific branch lesson plans for exact definitions, if your students need to recall the meanings. 4. Provide students with an overview of the legislative, executive, and judicial branches at the national level of government using the “Three Ring Government” video from Schoolhouse Rock. 5. While watching the video, have students take notes regarding the structure, function, and processes of the three branches in the appropriate sections of the activity sheet. 6. Review as a whole class. <i>Teacher Note:</i> Use the sample answer key below to guide the discussion. 7. Next, explain to students that using the choices in the box at the bottom of the page, they will place each process under the correct branch of government. Work with students to model the activity and then release to students to complete individually or in pairs. 8. Review the activity after the students have finished to ensure that they have all of the correct answers. 9. Ask a student to name the current U.S. president and to explain whom they represent. Lead students to the understanding that the president represents all the people of the United States. Their job is to make decisions in the best interest of the entire nation. 10. Ask students if they know how many U.S. congressional districts are in Florida (28) and if they know who their representative is. <i>Teacher Note:</i> Anticipate that most students will not know the answer to either question. 11. Pass out the “Who Represents Me?” activity sheet and explain to the students that it is important to know who in government represents them, what these representatives do, and to understand that they are considered constituents for many different people and levels of government. <i>Teacher Note:</i> There is not an answer key for this activity, as answers will vary. Please use the most up to date information that pertains to your students. 12. Instruct students that they will conduct an inquiry-based research assignment to complete the first box, labeled ‘National Government’. <i>Teacher Note:</i> The rest of the activity will be completed during Day 2. 13. Review the ‘National Government’ box as a whole class and fill in the answers for anything that the students were missing. 14. To wrap up the lesson, ask the students: Why is it important to know who represents them at a national level? Do you think that the national government or a different level of government has the most influence on peoples’ everyday lives?

DAY 2

1. Review the three branches of government at the national level and instruct students that today's lesson will be about the branches of government at the state and local levels. During this activity, have students take out their "U.S. Branches of Government" activity sheet.
Teacher Note: The activity sheet will be used again during Step 6.
2. Pass out the "State and Local Government" activity sheet and "The Great State" reading from iCivics.
3. Explain to students that they will read the passage as a whole class and that during the reading they need to underline the words or phrases that explain the structure of the state government.
4. Read the introductory paragraphs aloud and ask students to summarize the central ideas.
5. Ask a student volunteer to read 'The State Legislative Branch' paragraph aloud.
6. Point out the national legislative branch on their activity sheet from yesterday and ask the students: Based on what you have read, is the structure of the legislative branch at the state level different than at the national level? (no) What are the two houses of the state legislature called? (the Senate and the House of Representatives).
7. Instruct students to write the Florida Senate and the Florida House of Representatives on their activity sheet under the Legislative Branch.
8. Ask a student to point out from the reading: What is the job of the state legislature? Instruct students to circle the lines that explain the function of the legislative branch. Explain to students that members of the state legislature (Florida House of Representatives and Florida Senate) are also known as state legislators.
9. Continue this process with the following two sections: 'The State Executive Branch' and 'The State Judicial Branch'.
10. Pass out or project the "How Laws Are Made in Florida's Cities" reading.
11. In the 'Local Government' box at the bottom of the "State and Local Government" activity sheet, have students complete the guided notes using the reading.
12. Once students have a deeper understanding of the branches at the state and local levels, ask if they know who their representatives are at these levels.
13. Have students take out the "Who Represents Me?" activity sheet from Day 1 to complete. Explain that they will conduct inquiry-based research to learn about their representatives at the state, county, city, and school board levels. Explain that students will determine who their representative is at every level of government and to write a summary sentence explaining the primary job of the position.
14. Allow students time to conduct research individually or in pairs.
15. Ask students to share some of the information they learned while completing the research assignment. Pose the following questions for discussion: Why is it important to know who represents you? Do you think most people know this information? Why or why not? Should everyone know this information? How do lawmakers differ between levels of government? How are they similar?
16. Checking for Understanding (Formative Assessment):
Instruct students to write a well-crafted response using the following prompt:
Prompt A
Using what you have learned in this lesson, create a trifold brochure illustrating the three branches of government at the national level. Each flap should be devoted to a specific branch and provide information regarding the structure, functions, and processes. Be sure to include specific evidence from your activity sheets, readings, and notes
Prompt B

	<p>Based on what you have learned during your research for the “Who Represents Me?” assignment, compare the primary responsibilities of lawmakers at the national, state, and local levels. Be sure to include information you researched related to your local city/county commission or council, state legislators, and U.S. congressperson.</p>
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ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

[Civics 360 Resources](#)

Florida Department of Education's Civic Literacy Reading List

- *Government and Democracy* by Charlie Ogden

ANSWER KEYS

Sample Answers: U.S. Branches of Government activity sheet

Note: The "Who Represents Me?" activity does not have an answer key as that will vary based on student location.

Sample Answers: State and Local Government activity sheet

Written Response: Sample Scoring Rubric

SOURCES

Who Represents Me? Activity Adapted from Who Represents Me? Webquest from iCivics:

<http://www.icivics.org/web-quests/who-represents-me>

State Representatives of Florida:

<http://www.myfloridahouse.gov/Sections/Representatives/myrepresentative.aspx?Address=&City=&Zip5=&>

<http://www.fl-counties.com/directory>

The Great State Reading: <http://www.icivics.org/teachers/lesson-plans/great-state>

Florida State Government Images: <http://www.floridamemory.com/items/show/44071>,

<http://www.floridamemory.com/items/show/94967> and <http://www.floridamemory.com/items/show/47097>

Home Rule:

<https://www.vpsfl.org/486/Protecting-Home-Rule#:~:text=Home%20Rule%20authorizes%20the%20governmental,functions%2C%20and%20render%20municipal%20services>.

Three Ring Government video from SchoolHouse Rock: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-EISWIY9bG8>

How Laws Are Made in Florida's Cities Reading: www.floridaleagueofcities.com,

<http://www.floridaleagueofcities.com/docs/default-source/Civic-Education/abcs-of-city-government---elementary-level-curriculum-grades-2-5.pdf>,

<http://www.floridaleagueofcities.com/resources/publications/official's-manual>