

**The Almost Painless Guide to the Branches of Government  
The Legislative Branch**

**Program Produced and Distributed by:**

**Media Rich Learning  
[www.mediarichlearning.com](http://www.mediarichlearning.com)**



## TABLE OF CONTENTS

- [Unit of Study - Introduction](#)
- [Unit of Study - Blackline Master Descriptions](#)
- [Unit of Study - Answer Key](#)
- [Legislative Branch - Program Description](#)
- [Legislative Branch - Instructional Notes](#)
- [Legislative Branch - Suggest Instructional Procedures](#)
- [Legislative Branch - Student Objectives](#)
- [Legislative Branch - Blackline Master Descriptions](#)
- [Legislative Branch - Answer Key](#)
- [Legislative Branch - Script of Video Narration](#)
- [Unit of Study - Blackline Master Index](#)
  - [Unit of Study - Pre-Test](#)
  - [Unit of Study - Political Cartoon](#)
  - [Unit of Study - Branches of Government](#)
  - [Unit of Study - More Branches of Government](#)
  - [Unit of Study - Still More Branches of Government](#)
  - [Unit of Study - Post-Test](#)
- [Legislative Branch - Blackline Master Index](#)
  - [Blackline Master #1: Pre-Test](#)
  - [Blackline Master #2: Video Quiz](#)
  - [Blackline Master #3: Vocabulary](#)
  - [Blackline Master #3: Discussion Questions](#)
  - [Blackline Masters #4:a-4b: State Student School Board Proposal](#)
  - [Blackline Masters #5a-5b: Powers of Congress](#)
  - [Blackline Master: Congress Comparison](#)
  - [Blackline Masters: Post-Test](#)
  - [Blackline Masters: Congressional Simulation](#)

**THE ALMOST PAINLESS GUIDE  
TO THE BRANCHES OF GOVERNMENT  
Unit of Study  
Grades 5-Up**

**INTRODUCTION**

This three-part Unit of Study examines the three branches of the American federal government. The three programs (“The Executive Branch,” “The Legislative Branch,” and “The Judicial Branch”) may be used independently, or as a Unit of Study, intended to present a comprehensive approach to all three branches, their independent functions, and their extensive interactions, especially the system of “checks and balances” between the branches.

The Unit of Study includes Unit Goals, which govern the entire three-part package; Unit Assessment Tools, intended to be used prior to and after the presentation of all three lessons; and Unit Culminating Activities, intended to provide closure for the Unit. The Unit of Study materials and goals are delineated at the beginning of this Teacher’s Guide, and the individual lessons are presented thereafter.

The individual programs include lesson assessment tools, intended to be used prior to and after the presentation of each lesson. Each program has its own Teacher’s Guide, which follows the Unit of Study information. The Guide presents the contents of the program, Student Objectives for the lesson, and ensuing activities for each lesson.

**MATERIALS IN THE UNIT OF STUDY**

- Three video programs;
- Three teacher’s guides, including lesson plans, student objectives, follow-up activities, and scripts;
- Unit pre- and post-tests, unit goals, and unit culminating activities

Student Preparation

The students should be supplied with the necessary copies of blackline masters required to complete the activities supplied. Teachers can extend any of the lessons on the Constitution by analyzing current events articles.

**UNIT GOALS**

Unit goals for student comprehension govern the entire three-part Unit of Study. Unit assessment tools and culminating activities reflect these goals.

After participating in all three lessons included in this Unit of Study, students should be able to:

- Identify and explain the basic function of the three branches of federal government

- Explain how the powers of the national government are distributed, shared, and limited
- Explain how the three opening words of the Preamble to the U.S. Constitution, “We the People...,” embody the principle of the people as sovereign, the ultimate source of authority
- Explain how legislative, executive, and judicial powers are distributed and shared among the three branches of the national government.
- Explain how each branch of government can check the powers of the other branches.

## UNIT BLACKLINE MASTERS

The following blackline masters present the Unit Assessment Tools and Culminating Activities. A Unit Answer Key may be found on pages 3-6 of this Guide.

1. Unit Blackline Masters #1a-1b: Unit of Study Pre-test is a Unit Assessment Tool to be used before you present any of the materials in the Unit Study. This tool should clarify student knowledge and misconceptions prior to the commencement of the Unit, and may be contrasted with Blackline Masters #6a-6h: Unit of Study Post-Test to gauge student comprehension of the Unit Goals, stated above, after the Unit has been completed.
2. Unit Blackline Master #2: Political Cartoon asks students to interpret a political cartoon based on the division of power between the branches of government.
3. Blackline Masters #3, 4, and 5: Checks and Balances, More Checks and Balances, and Still More Checks and Balances asks students to delineate between the powers and responsibilities of the three branches of government.
4. Unit Blackline Masters #6a-6h: Unit of Study Post-test provides a Unit Assessment Tool based on the Unit Goals, and should be administered after the completion of all three components of the Unit of Study and its Culminating Activities.

## UNIT ANSWER KEY

### Unit Blackline Masters #1a-1b: Pre-Test

1. A
2. B
3. B
4. A
5. A
6. C
7. A
8. D
9. A
10. D

### **Unit Blackline Master #3: Checks and Balances**

1. A. legislative, B. executive, C. judicial
2. A. executive, B. legislative, C. judicial
3. A. judicial, B. executive, C. legislative
4. The different powers guarantee that no one branch of the government can become too powerful. While the legislative branch and executive branch are both elected the source of their constituency is different. The executive branch must gain support nationally while the legislative branch need only gain the support of the members of the states they represent. This helps to guarantee that issues will be viewed from both a national and state point of view. In addition, Supreme Court justices are appointed by the executive branch and confirmed by the legislative branch. Also, the term of office for the legislative branch and executive branch are limited so that the people may control how powerful these officials become. This is especially true of the legislative branch which does not have term limits. Lastly, the term for a member of the judicial branch is for life so as to prevent them from being influenced by political elections or reappointment.

### **Unit Blackline Master #4: More Checks and Balances**

1. executive
2. legislative
3. judicial
4. legislative
5. executive
6. legislative
7. judicial
8. legislative
9. executive
10. judicial
11. legislative
12. executive
13. legislative
14. legislative
15. executive

### **Unit Blackline Master #5: Still More Checks and Balances**

1. Possible actions taken by the executive branch: The president would have two basic options; (1) sign the bill into law, or (2) veto the bill.
2. Possible actions taken by the legislative branch: If the president vetoed the bill, the legislative branch could override the veto with a two-thirds majority vote. Because the bill passed with so much support in both the House and Senate, this probably would occur.
3. Possible actions taken by the judicial branch: If a court case made its way through the lower courts to the Supreme Court, the Supreme Court could decide to hear the case. If the

Supreme Court decided to hear the case, it could rule the law as either constitutional or unconstitutional because it violates the Second Amendment of the Constitution.

**Unit Blackline Masters #6a-6h: Post-Test**

- |           |       |                              |
|-----------|-------|------------------------------|
| 1. true   | 21. C | 41. bicameral                |
| 2. false  | 22. D | 42. electoral college        |
| 3. true   | 23. D | 43. Speaker of the House     |
| 4. false  | 24. C | 44. House of Representatives |
| 5. true   | 25. A | 45. judicial review          |
| 6. false  | 26. D | 46. appellate jurisdiction   |
| 7. false  | 27. B | 47. impeach                  |
| 8. false  | 28. C | 48. Congress                 |
| 9. true   | 29. D | 49. original jurisdiction    |
| 10. false | 30. C | 50. veto                     |
| 11. true  | 31. B | 51. E                        |
| 12. false | 32. B | 52. L                        |
| 13. false | 33. D | 53. J                        |
| 14. false | 34. A | 54. L                        |
| 15. false | 35. B | 55. E                        |
| 16. true  | 36. D | 56. L                        |
| 17. false | 37. D | 57. J                        |
| 18. true  | 38. B | 58. L                        |
| 19. true  | 39. A | 59. E                        |
| 20. true  | 40. D | 60. J                        |

61. legislative branch: make laws; executive branch: enforce laws; judicial branch: interpret laws
62. The President appoints a candidate to fill a vacancy. This candidate is then confirmed by the Senate (legislative branch). The term of the justice is for life; therefore, he is immune from any influences by the other two branches.
63. The executive branch (President) can either sign the bill or veto the bill. If so, the legislative branch can override this veto with a 2/3 majority vote. In this case, the bill will be signed into law. If the law is challenged, it will go to the federal judicial system, which is the judicial branch. The case can eventually be appealed until it reaches the Supreme Court. In which case they can declare it constitutional or unconstitutional.
64. Answers will vary.

**THE ALMOST PAINLESS GUIDE  
TO THE BRANCHES OF GOVERNMENT  
The Legislative Branch  
Grades 5-Up  
Running Time: 21 minutes**

**GENERAL DESCRIPTION OF THE PROGRAM**

The Almost Painless Guide to the Branches of the Government: The Legislative Branch uses contemporary footage, archival footage and photographs, original graphics, and dialog narration to provide students in grades five and up with information on the legislative branch of the federal government.

Although the program focuses on the legislative branch, it is considered in context with the executive branch and the judicial branch to examine how each branch checks the others to create a balance of power.

The program looks at the United States Constitution as the foundation of federal government and the concept of “We the People” as the ultimate authority. The system of checks and balances is examined in detail with various graphic and video examples provided. Additionally, we see how power is divided between state and federal governments.

The creation of the legislative branch and the offices of Senator and Representative are examined, along with the powers and responsibilities that their offices entail. We also look at the requirements of their positions, how they are elected, the concept of a bicameral legislature, and the “great compromise.” The law-making process is also considered in a step-by-step analysis.

The program concludes with “The Almost Painless Review,” which offers an excellent synopsis of the entire program. Also, a Video Quiz is provided after the closing credits.

**INSTRUCTIONAL NOTES**

It is suggested that you preview the video and read the related Suggested Instructional Procedures before involving your students in the lesson activities. In this way, you will become familiar with the materials and be better prepared to adapt the program to the needs of your class.

You will probably find it helpful to follow the video and lesson activities in the order in which they are presented in this Teacher’s Guide, but this is not necessary.

It is also suggested that the video presentation take place before the entire class and under your direction. The lesson activities focus on the content of the video; therefore, the presentations should be a common experience for all students.

As you review the instructional program outlined in the Teacher’s Guide, you may find it necessary to make some changes, deletions, or additions to fit the specific needs of your students. We encourage you to do so, for only by tailoring this program to your students will they obtain the instructional benefits afforded by the materials.

## SUGGESTED INSTRUCTIONAL PROCEDURES

### Teacher Preparation

- Preview the video The Legislative Branch
- Duplicate any blackline masters you intend to use.
- Read the descriptions of the blackline masters.

### Student Preparation

The students should be supplied with the necessary copies of blackline masters required to complete the activities supplied. Teachers can extend any of the lessons on the Constitution by analyzing current events articles.

## STUDENT OBJECTIVES

After viewing the program, The Legislative Branch, and participating in the follow-up activities, students should be able to:

- Define the powers of the legislative branch as the power to:
  - \* establish committees to oversee activities of the executive branch;
  - \* impeach the president, other members of the executive branch, and federal judges;
  - \* pass laws over the president’s veto by a two-thirds majority vote of both houses;
  - \* disapprove appointments made by the president;
  - \* propose amendments to the United States Constitution
- Describe and define the following:
  - \* the creation and function of the legislative branch
  - \* requirements for becoming a member of Congress
  - \* the process by which a bill becomes a law
  - \* the structure of the House of Representatives and the Senate
  - \* the role of committees
  - \* the role of the Speaker of the House
  - \* the role of the vice-president
  - \* the powers of Congress



## FOLLOW-UP ACTIVITIES BLACKLINE MASTERS

The following duplicable blackline masters are included with this guide.

1. **Blackline Master #1: Pre-Test** is an assessment tool intended to gauge student comprehension of the Objectives prior to the launching of the executive branch lesson, which includes the video and the ensuing activities. The results of the Pre-Test may be contrasted with the results of the Post-Test to assess the efficacy of the lesson in achieving the Student Objectives.
2. **Blackline Master #2: Video Quiz** is a printed copy of the questions which appear at the end of the video presentation. The Video Quiz is intended to reinforce the salient points of the video immediately following its completion and may be used for assessment or as a catalyst for discussion.
3. **Blackline Master #3: Vocabulary** is a list of pertinent terms and definitions.
4. **Blackline Masters #4: Discussion Questions** offers a series of questions to spur discussion and help identify student misconceptions and comprehension.
5. **Blackline Masters #5: State Student School Board Proposal** asks students to propose an election process for a student-run school board.
6. **Blackline Master #6a-6b: Powers of Congress** helps students identify actions allied with expressed powers of Congress.
7. **Blackline Masters #7a-7b: Congress Comparison** contrasts the House of Representatives and the Senate.
8. **Blackline Masters #8a-8c: Post-Test** is an assessment tool to be administered after the lesson (Pre-Test, video, and follow-up activities) have been completed.

### EXTENDED LEARNING ACTIVITY

The following activity may be assigned to more advanced students:

**Congressional Simulation** is a game in which students assume the position of legislators. Students are divided into committees which develop and try to enact legislation. At the end of the game, the results of the attempts to pass specific legislation are tallied, based on a point system. The game is designed to take place over several days, or “terms.”

Instructions and materials for the game are included with the blackline master sheets for this program and may be duplicated and distributed as needed. They are labelled “Extended Learning Activity” and numbered 1 through 18.

A Teacher's Instruction Sheet accompanies the game. You may wish to review this information before commencing the game.

## ANSWER KEY

### Blackline Master #1: Pre-Test

1. false
2. false
3. true
4. false
5. true
6. true
7. false
8. false
9. false
10. false

### Blackline Master #2: Video Quiz

1. A
2. B
3. A
4. A
5. A
6. B
7. B
8. D
9. C
10. C

### Blackline Master #4: Discussion Questions

1. Two groups make up the legislative branch: the House of Representatives and the Senate. Bicameral means that the legislature (law-making body) is made up of two houses.
2. Amendments are “new rules,” or modifications, that are made to the Constitution.
3. The citizens of our country grant the government and its leaders the privilege of governing us for the common good. “We the People” are the ultimate authority. The framers of the Constitution made sure there were checks and balances built in, so that no one branch of government could become too powerful.
4. Congress can make an effort to remove the President; this process is called “impeachment.” The Senate (one-half of Congress) also has the ability to approve or disapprove of an appointment made by the President.
5. Congress, or both the Senate and the House of Representatives.
6. The “great compromise” was the combination of both the Virginia and New Jersey Plans, which resulted in a bicameral legislature. The Virginia Plan was the concept of having a law-making body whose composition was based upon state population. The New Jersey plan was the concept of having all states represented equally in the

legislature. Thus, the Senate was created as a result of the New Jersey plan, and the House of Representatives was created as a result of the Virginia Plan.

7. A Senator: at least 30 years of age, a citizen of the United States, and a resident of the state from which s/he was elected. The term of office is six years, with unlimited possibilities for re-election. New elections are held every two years. A Representative: at least 25 years of age, a citizen of the United States for at least seven years, and a resident of the state s/he is representing. The term is for two years, with unlimited possibilities for re-election.
8. Most of the work of Congress is done in committees. There are 16 standing committees in the Senate and 22 in the House.
9. Congress has the power to propose and pass new laws and to assess and collect taxes. However, only the House of Representatives has the power to originate bills to raise money. Both houses can decide how the money is spent.
10. Once Congress has passed a law, the President can veto it, which is to say that s/he refuses to allow that bill to become law. However, Congress can override a Presidential veto by a 2/3 majority vote. If a law is contested through the court system, it can eventually reach the Supreme Court, in which case the Supreme Court can either uphold the law or identify it as unconstitutional.
11. Veto - refusal by the President to approve a law. Pocket Veto - means by which the President may kill a bill passed during the last ten days Congress is in session by simply refusing to act upon it. Line Item Veto - the ability of the President to veto individual items on a bill.

#### Blackline Master #6a-6b: Powers of Congress

1. E
2. F
3. C
4. A
5. V
6. S
7. G
8. H
9. L
10. K
11. I
12. J

#### Blackline Master #7a-7b: Congress Comparison

*How does the House of Representatives differ from the Senate?*

1. The House has more committees: 23; the Senate has 20.
2. There are more Representatives than Senators.

3. The House's leader is directly elected by the members of the House, but the leader of the Senate is the Vice-President. He is indirectly elected with the President in a national election.
4. The House has the power to call to start the proceedings of impeachment. While the Senate hold the hearings for the impeachment process.
5. House members can be as young as 25 to be elected to office, whereas Senators must be at least 30.
6. House members must be a citizen for at least seven years and Senators must be citizens for at least nine years.
7. A House member serves a two year term, but a Senator serves a six year term.

*How is the House of Representatives similar to the Senate?*

1. They must both be a resident of the state from which they are elected.
2. They both represent the people who elected them, their constituents.
3. Both houses have the same legislative powers, neither has power over one another.
4. They both have individuals which are selected from their membership to lead both of the political parties.
5. Both are elected by a direct popular vote.

Blackline Master #8a-8b: Post-test

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. B</li> <li>2. A</li> <li>3. A</li> <li>4. B</li> <li>5. A</li> <li>6. B</li> <li>7. D</li> <li>8. B</li> <li>9. C</li> <li>10. C</li> <li>11. E</li> <li>12. D</li> <li>13. A</li> <li>14. B</li> <li>15. C</li> </ol> | <p>ESSAY:</p> <p>Answers will vary, but all should have supporting details to prove their arguments: The election of the members of the legislative branch is done through a popular vote. All actions that are taken by the legislature are done by either a majority or a 2/3 majority vote. Due to the fact that the legislature is voted on by the people, the actions by Congress are an extension of the people. This includes the passing of laws, impeachment, and confirmation of judges and other officials. If a member of Congress does not act in a fashion which reflects the will of the people, s/he may not be re-elected.</p> |
|--|---|

**The Legislative Branch**  
**Script of Narration**

HARLAN:

Hang on! Hang on! We have to stop right there.

MARIE:

What are you doing? We just got started, Harlan.

HARLAN:

Look at that title art, Marie!

MARIE:

Oh, I see what you mean. It is a little extravagant?

HARLAN:

No, no, no, no.

MARIE:

Overly impressive?

HARLAN:

No.

MARIE:

Patriotic?

HARLAN:

Well, yeah, all those things perhaps, but that never stopped us before.

MARIE:

Obviously.

HARLAN:

This title is simply untrue!

MARIE:

Chill, Harlan! There. Does that help?

HARLAN:

Well, at least it's a little more honest.

MARIE:

It's totally true! The fact is I find the branches of government fascinating, especially the legislative branch. It's the most complex...

HARLAN:

Torture.

MARIE:

The most challenging...

HARLAN:  
Torture.

MARIE:  
And, in many ways, the most fun branch to learn about!

HARLAN:  
Torture, torture, torture. Worse! Required torture!

MARIE:  
Learning about the branches of government and, in particular, the legislative branch, may be required, Harlan, but it's certainly not torture!

HARLAN:  
To you.

MARIE:  
What?

HARLAN:  
I said, "I'm sure that'll be true!"

MARIE:  
Really?

HARLAN:  
Thanks to you!

MARIE:  
Oh, well, I'm flattered.

HARLAN:  
It's just that I get confused, especially between all those "houses" and the Congress and...

MARIE:  
The Senators.

HARLAN:  
That I understand.

MARIE:  
You do?

HARLAN:  
Yeah, great team, good outfield, great potential. Oooh, look at that hit!

MARIE:  
Not those Senators! But, since all life revolves around sports for you, let me put this in terms even you can understand.

HARLAN:  
Now, I'm flattered.

MARIE:  
Think of the branches of the U.S. government as one big game plan, only for our country.

HARLAN:  
Makes sense, at least to me. So then the "teams" would be the executive branch, the judicial branch, and the legislative branch. And the "players" would be the President, the Supreme Court Justices, and the members of the House of Representatives and the Senators. Great team.

MARIE:  
Right. And the game "rule book" would be our Constitution!

HARLAN:  
Got it! Unchangeable, unbendable rules!

MARIE:  
Close. Though actually, as times change, the rules can change, through "amendments," or modifications to our Constitution.

HARLAN:  
I knew that.

MARIE:  
Today, we'll concentrate on the legislative branch and the role of the Congressmen and women who make up the Senate and the House of Representatives. But first, we have to mention the most important players in our system of government.

HARLAN:  
Who are they?

MARIE:  
Us.

HARLAN:  
Us?

MARIE:  
We, the people.

HARLAN:  
"We, the people." Pretty fancy-schmancy. I would have just said "us," but, and correct me if I'm wrong...

MARIE:  
Count on it.

HARLAN:  
Haven't I heard that phrase before somewhere?



MARIE:

Well, I certainly hope so! Those three words are vitally important to understanding our entire system of government, Harlan. They're the first three words of our Constitution. Unlike other countries, we, the citizens of The United States, granted our government and its leaders the privilege of governing us for our common good. But, this is very important, "we the people" are the ultimate authority

HARLAN:

No kings, queens, or dictators for us!

MARIE:

Got it! And the framers of our Constitution made sure there were checks and balances built in, so that no one branch of the government that we established could become too powerful.

HARLAN:

So the branches operate sort of like "referees" for each other.

MARIE:

You could say that.

HARLAN:

Just did.

MARIE:

Back in 1788, our Constitution went into effect, creating a federal government. In April of the following year, the first Congress met, with 20 Senators and 59 Representatives.

HARLAN:

And popular, good-looking Senator Fred W. Federal was voted "most likely Congressman to have a major movie career" and ever since then it's been known as a "federal government."

MARIE:

I'm not going to dignify that nonsense with a comment. It's called a "federal system of government" because it shares its power and responsibilities with the individual states.

HARLAN:

I get it, so that's why a state like say, Nebraska, doesn't coin its own money, or decide to declare war on Tonga.

MARIE:

Right, you won't see any "Corn Husker currency" or even a "Nebraska Navy," but, at the same time, the states reserve many powers for themselves, like operating schools, setting local laws, collecting taxes.

HARLAN:

They're real good at that.

MARIE:

No comment. Now, at the Constitutional Convention...

HARLAN:

Held in Fred Federal's oh-so-cozy ski chalet.

MARIE:

Held in Philadelphia!

HARLAN:

Bad skiing choice.

MARIE:

Stop it already. Now, remember that the individual colonies that later became states were understandably very concerned about creating too strong a central government.

HARLAN:

Well, naturally, they'd just finished a war over the tyrannical rule of England. Does England even have any ski slopes?

MARIE:

I can't hear you. So, to protect and preserve the states' rights, but at the same time establish an effective national government, a federal system was designed in which the three main functions of government would be held by three separate branches: the legislative branch, or Congress, was empowered to make laws; the President, through the offices of the executive branch, was charged with assuring the laws were faithfully executed; and the judicial branch, or the Supreme Court, was established to interpret the laws as they apply to the Constitution. Their powers were clearly defined, and limited, at the Constitutional Convention.

HARLAN:

And that provides a system of checks and balances!

MARIE:

That's right. For example, while the President is our Commander-in-Chief of the armed forces, only Congress can declare war.

HARLAN:

When we say Congress, we mean the legislative branch, right?

MARIE:

Correct. And while the President can veto any law passed by Congress, Congress, made up of the Senate and the House of Representatives, can override an executive branch veto with a two-thirds majority vote; and Congress can impeach federal judges, or even the President.

HARLAN:

Impeach?

MARIE:

With a majority vote, the House of Representatives can bring legal action against a President to try to remove him from office. And the Senate could remove a President by that same two-thirds majority vote, if he were convicted.

HARLAN:

Bummer!

MARIE:

The legislative branch can also approve or reject appointments made by the executive branch.

HARLAN:

That's the President.

MARIE:

Right. For example, the Senate can approve or reject the appointment of a Supreme Court Justice, or a treaty made by the President.

HARLAN:

So this checks and balances system really seems to work. You were right, those convention farmers did real good!

MARIE:

Well. They did well. But not all of them were farmers.

HARLAN:

Okay fine, but you called them, and I quote, "the farmers of the Constitution."

MARIE:

Framers of the Constitution, Harlan, framers.

HARLAN:

Whatever. The important thing is that Article one, section one, of the Constitution says, "All legislative powers shall be vested in a Congress Of The United States,"

MARIE:

"Which shall consist of a Senate"

HARLAN:

"And a House of Representatives." One Congress with two houses. That's known as "bi-cameral."

MARIE:

Right. The Senate consists of two Senators from each state.

HARLAN:

Hold on. Every state gets two Senators?

MARIE:

Right.

HARLAN:

Texas and Rhode Island?

MARIE:

Two each.

HARLAN:

California and Wyoming?

MARIE:

Two each.

HARLAN:

Is that fair?

MARIE:

Very. Fair representation in Congress was a major stumbling block during the Constitutional Convention.

HARLAN:

Held in scenic...

MARIE:

Philadelphia! See, the larger states, such as Virginia, naturally wanted representation to be in proportion to population. That was known as the "Virginia Plan," but that would have allowed the big states to dominate legislation. The smaller states wanted equal representation regardless of size. This was called the "New Jersey Plan."

HARLAN:

Hold on, I get it! That's why it was called "the great compromise," and why the legislative branch has two parts! The Senate, with only two representatives from each state regardless of size,

MARIE:

And the House of Representatives, with each state being represented according to its population. I'm proud of you, Harlan.

HARLAN:

All right, I'm on a roll here. Actually this is pretty painless. Now, "splain" to me how I get to be a Senator or a Representative.

MARIE:

"Splain?"

HARLAN:

It's an expression.

MARIE:

Next year: "Marie's Painless Guide To Vocabulary."

HARLAN:

Let's say I want to be a Senator.

MARIE:

Frightening thought, but you're certainly old enough, because you must be at least 30 years old, a citizen of the United States for nine years, and a resident of the state from which you were elected.

HARLAN:

Oh, you mean I have to be elected to the Senate? Shoot.

MARIE:

Actually, up until 1913, Senators were appointed by state legislatures.

HARLAN:

Born too late.

MARIE:

Yeah, right. The 17th amendment,

HARLAN:

Rule change!

MARIE:

Requires Senators to be chosen by popular election.

HARLAN:

Well, that lets me out. You have to be elected and popular!

MARIE:

Your term, and I use the term “your” loosely, would be for six years. New elections are held every two years, when one third of the Senate’s terms expire.

HARLAN:

I don’t suppose it’s any easier to get in to the House of Representatives, is it?

MARIE:

Well, the age requirement drops to 25, which doesn’t help you any.

HARLAN:

Thanks for pointing that out.

MARIE:

You must be a citizen of the United States for at least seven years, and a resident of the state you are representing. There are, however, a lot more members of the House.

HARLAN:

More members, better chance!

MARIE:

More like, no chance. Anyway, the number of representatives from each state is in proportion to the state’s population. More population, more representatives. But, each state gets at least one member.

HARLAN:

What if a state’s population goes up or down?

MARIE:

Actually that’s a good question. I’m amazed. After each national census, the House is “reapportioned” to reflect the population of the states accurately.

HARLAN:  
That seems fair.

MARIE:  
I agree. All the members of the House are elected as direct representatives of the public every two years.

HARLAN:  
So let's just say I'm elected a Senator. I zip on over to the White House, crack a few jokes with the Supreme Court, then all the Representatives and the Senators jam ourselves into the conference room and pass a bunch of new laws!

MARIE:  
As usual, you have managed to capture the spirit of the subject with none of the facts. The House and Senate do meet jointly for the President's annual State of the Union address at which the President...

HARLAN:  
The executive branch.

MARIE:  
Usually propose his agenda for the both houses to consider in their lawmaking sessions. The House and the Senate also meet jointly every four years to count electoral votes during presidential elections, and when the President or foreign dignitaries address both houses. But normally each house of Congress meets separately in the Capitol building.

HARLAN:  
So our Congressmen and women...

MARIE:  
Thank you.

HARLAN:  
You're welcome. ...spend all day passing laws, huh?

MARIE:  
Hardly, the fact is most of the work is done in committees. There are 16 standing committees in the Senate and 22 in the house. And before you even get a chance to make any dumb jokes about it, "standing" just means they are permanent committees.

HARLAN:  
Marie? A joke that bad? It's beneath me.

MARIE:  
So, I stand corrected then.

HARLAN:  
(Groan) So then it's the committees who spend the most time considering new legislation.

MARIE:  
Right, and don't forget that the Constitution gives Congress powers other than just proposing and approving new legislation, Harlan. Congress also has the power to assess and collect taxes. However,

only the House of Representatives has the power to originate bills to raise money, although both houses decide how to spend the money collected.

HARLAN:

And only the House of Representatives can begin those messy impeachment proceedings. In that case, the Senate would act as the court in which an impeachment trial would be held.

MARIE:

Congress, as well as individual states, can also recommend amendments to the Constitution, which the states would then have to approve. But now, lets get to the real nitty-gritty: How a resolution, a proposed law, or "bill," becomes a law.

HARLAN:

"Nitty-Gritty." Marie, you're starting to sound like me. Scary!

MARIE:

Here we go: Bills introduced in either house are first sent to the committee having jurisdiction over them.

HARLAN:

And they give it two thumbs up or down and then go to lunch!

MARIE:

No, the committee can kill a bill.

HARLAN:

Ouch.

MARIE:

Bury it.

HARLAN:

Almost as bad.

MARIE:

Or amend, and change it.

HARLAN:

Congress sure seems to love to amend.

MARIE:

Sometimes it sure seems that way.

HARLAN:

So, our bill has been altered, but it's still alive and kicking! What then?

MARIE:

It goes to the floor of the house of Congress that originated it, for debate and passage, and, of course, it may be amended.

HARLAN:

Changed again, but still...

HARLAN & MARIE:  
Alive and kicking.

MARIE:  
A bill passed in one house is sent to the other for debate, it may be passed as is, amended and passed, or defeated.

HARLAN:  
What happens if one house doesn't accept the version of a bill passed by the other house, Marie?

MARIE:  
It gets sent to a conference committee made up of members of both houses to try to reach a compromise.

HARLAN:  
And if the bill was approved by both houses?

MARIE:  
In that case, the bill is signed by the Speaker of the House, who presides over the House of Representatives, and the Vice-President of the United States, who presides over the Senate.

HARLAN:  
I could be a Speaker. Heck, I'm one right now! How is he chosen?

MARIE:  
Traditionally, the Speaker of the House is the choice of the political party in the House of Representatives with the most members—the majority.

HARLAN:  
Got it. Okay, then what happens?

MARIE:  
Then, the bill goes to the President for his approval.

HARLAN:  
Do I see that "balance of power" concept creeping right about here?

MARIE:  
Yep, the system of "checks and balances" at its finest, between the Legislative and executive branches before a bill become a new law. And, after the bill becomes a law, the judicial branch provides a further check and balance by making sure the proposed legislation doesn't violate the Constitution.

HARLAN:  
What if the President doesn't sign the bill?

MARIE:  
It's called a veto, Harlan. But the Congress can override the President's veto by a two-thirds vote by both houses in favor of the new law.



HARLAN:  
More checks and balances.

MARIE:  
Correct-a-mundo! If the bill doesn't get a two-thirds vote in both houses, it's dead.

HARLAN:  
So close, and yet so far. What would happen if a President simply didn't sign or veto a bill?

MARIE:  
Well, if a bill is not signed or returned to the houses by the President within ten days, it become law. That's assuming Congress is meeting at the time, of course. If Congress has adjourned, the bill wouldn't automatically become law.

HARLAN:  
Naturally.

MARIE:  
By the way, that's called a "pocket veto."

HARLAN:  
Kind of an indirect way to kill the bill, huh?

MARIE:  
Exactly.

HARLAN:  
You know, I don't think I'm going to run for the House or the Senate.

MARIE:  
Wise move. Too much work, huh?

HARLAN:  
Yeah, way more than I imagined.

MARIE:  
And you know, Harlan, Congress has a lot of other responsibilities I haven't even mentioned yet.

HARLAN:  
Really?

MARIE:  
Yeah. For example, it has legal control over the employment of government personnel, and oversees government printing, the Congressional budget, the Botanic Garden, the Copyright Royalty Tribunal, the Library of Congress, and many more.

HARLAN:  
Enough already! I'm convinced I should put my considerable talent to work elsewhere.

MARIE:

I'd love to see the day where you work anywhere!

HARLAN:

Very cute. You know, all this talk about Congressmen and the Capitol building and Washington, D.C., I'm starting to get that strange urge I...

HARLAN & MARIE"

...always seem to get about now.

HARLAN:

FIELD TRIP!!!

HARLAN:

Wow! It looks just like I imagined it! I wonder if my library card would work in the Library of Congress?

MARIE:

Wow, did you know that dome is 288 feet high?

HARLAN:

No I didn't, although I don't remember asking.

MARIE:

You know, Harlan, our first President, George Washington, helped choose this site for the seat of our government.

HARLAN:

Gee, can't we just have a fun-filled field trip like everybody else, does it have to be so educational? Shoot, we're almost out of time.

HARLAN:

Home!

MARIE:

That was fun. Capitol Hill is so beautiful, but I'm glad to be back. And I'm ready for one of our soon-to-be-famous painless reviews.

HARLAN:

I'll try to stay awake.

MARIE:

What?

HARLAN:

I said, "I can hardly wait."

MARIE:

Ready? I promise this won't hurt a bit:

MARIE:

The Congress of the United States, is the legislative branch of the federal government, established in Article One of the Constitution.

HARLAN:

Congress consists of two houses, the Senate and the House of Representatives.

MARIE:

The Senate has two Senators from each state, who serve six-year terms and are chosen by popular election. Every two years, one-third of the Senate is elected.

HARLAN:

The House of Representatives consists of members apportioned among the states according to their population in the federal census.

MARIE:

Representatives are elected from Congressional districts drawn up by the state legislatures and serve two-year terms.

HARLAN:

The House's elected presiding officer, the Speaker, is traditionally the consensus choice of the majority party. The Vice-President of the United States is the presiding officer of the Senate, but the agenda is set by the majority leader.

MARIE:

Most of the work in both houses is transacted by standing committees in which both majority and minority members are represented.

HARLAN:

Each chamber has an equal voice in legislation, although revenue bills must originate in the House.

MARIE:

The Senate must ratify all treaties by a two-thirds vote. It also confirms important presidential appointees.

HARLAN:

A presidential veto of Congressional legislation can be overridden by a two-thirds vote in each house.

MARIE:

Whenever an item of legislation is approved in varying forms by the two houses, the differences are reconciled by a joint, or conference, committee that includes members of both chambers

HARLAN:

Wow! Painless and fast!

MARIE:

Thank you and I think pretty interesting as well.

HARLAN:

Yeah, particularly the field trip. I love Washington, D.C.

MARIE:

Oh, and the Capitol Building is too cool. Did you know the British burned down the first one in 1814?

HARLAN:  
Do they never learn? We always whip 'em...

The Almost Painless Guide to the Branches of Government

UNIT OF STUDY

BLACKLINE MASTERS

[Blackline Master #1: Pre-Test](#)

[Blackline Master #2: Political Cartoon](#)

[Blackline Masters #3: Branches of Government](#)

[Blackline Masters #4: More Branches of Government](#)

[Blackline Masters #5: Still More Branches of Government](#)

[Blackline Master #6: Post-Test](#)

Activity: **Pre-Test**

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Subject: **Branches of Government**

Date \_\_\_\_\_

**DIRECTIONS:** Read the following statements and indicate the correct answer.

1. The executive branch is made up of the president and his/her cabinet.  
 True  
 False
  
2. The judicial branch is made up of solely the Supreme Court.  
 True  
 False
  
3. The President of the United States cannot be removed from office.  
 True  
 False
  
4. The legislative branch is made up of two houses: the Senate and the House of Representatives.  
 True  
 False
  
5. The majority of the work that is accomplished by the legislative branch is done in committees.  
 True  
 False
  
6. Which of the following is not a branch of the federal government?
  - A. executive branch
  - B. legislative branch
  - C. military branch

- D. judicial branch
7. This was created in order to prevent any one branch of the federal government from becoming too powerful.
- A. checks and balances
  - B. the Bill of Rights
  - C. the office of the president
  - D. the Supreme Court
8. According to the U.S. Constitution, which of the following qualifications is not needed to become president.
- A. be at least 35 years of age
  - B. be a naturalized citizen
  - C. live in the U.S. for fourteen years
  - D. be a male
9. The role of the legislative branch is to:
- A. make laws
  - B. interpret laws
  - C. enforce laws
  - D. suspend laws
10. Supreme Court justices serve for:
- A. four years
  - B. six years
  - C. twelve years
  - D. life

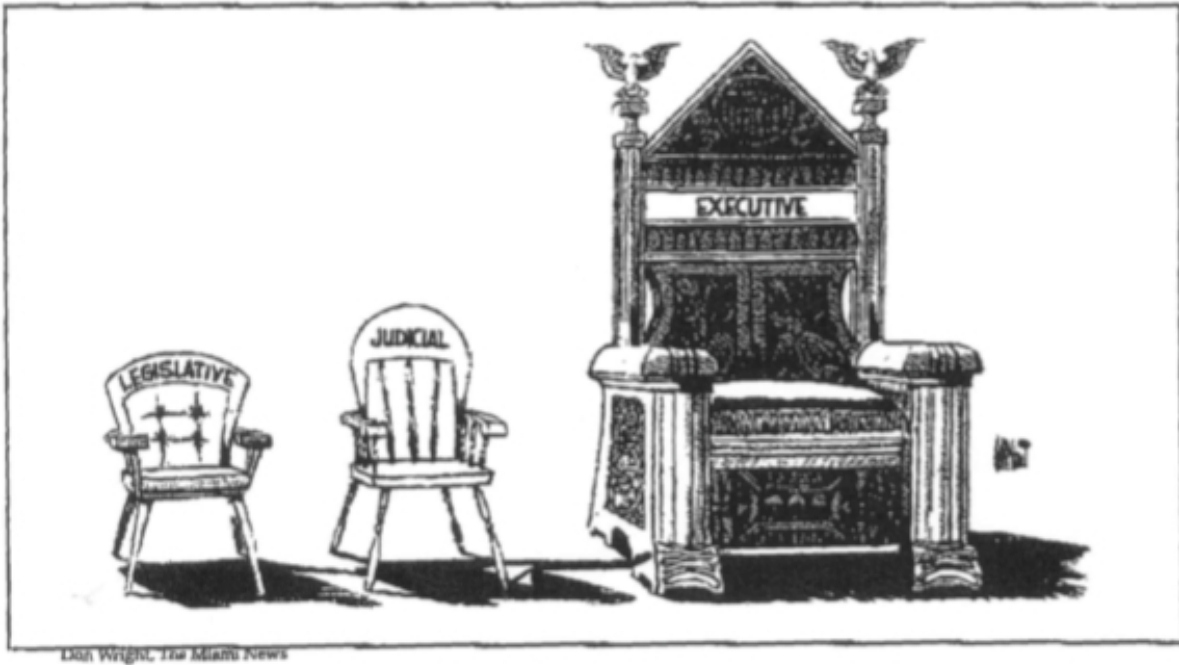
Activity: **Political Cartoon**

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Subject: **Branches of Government**

Date \_\_\_\_\_

**DIRECTIONS:** Analyze the political cartoon below and answer the questions in the spaces provided. Use the back of the sheet if necessary.



1. What do all three chairs represent?
2. What is the intended message of the cartoonist?
3. What does this message say about the checks and balances system in U.S. government?
4. Do you agree or disagree with the message of the cartoon? Explain your opinion.



Activity:     **Checks and Balances**                     Name \_\_\_\_\_  
Subject:     **Branches of Government**             Date \_\_\_\_\_

**DIRECTIONS:** Read the questions carefully and write either executive, legislative or judicial.

1. Write the name of the branch of government that has each of the following responsibilities.
  - A. to write laws and establish policies for the government
  - B. to carry out, administer, and enforce the policies of government
  - C. to interpret the laws of the government
  
2. Write the name of the branch of government next to the body of people who elects them.
  - A. elected in a national election using an electoral college
  - B. elected in a state election by residents of that state
  - C. members of this branch are appointed not elected
  
3. Write the name of the branch of government next to the appropriate length of term.
  - A. length of term is for life
  - B. length of term is for four years
  - C. length of term is for either two or four years
  
4. How do all of these differences help to create a system of checks and balances?

Activity: **More Checks and Balances**

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Subject: **Branches of Government**

Date \_\_\_\_\_

**DIRECTIONS:** Listed below are some of the checks and balances of the three branches of government. In the spaces provided write “E” if it is a power possessed by the executive branch; “L” if it is a power possessed by the legislative branch; and “J” if it is a power possessed by the judicial branch.

1. \_\_\_\_\_ Can veto acts of Congress
2. \_\_\_\_\_ Can impeach and remove the president or vice-president
3. \_\_\_\_\_ Can declare executive acts unconstitutional
4. \_\_\_\_\_ Can propose amendments to overturn court decisions
5. \_\_\_\_\_ Appoints judges
6. \_\_\_\_\_ Can override a presidential veto
7. \_\_\_\_\_ Appointed for life, so as to be free from executive control
8. \_\_\_\_\_ Can refuse to confirm presidential appointments
9. \_\_\_\_\_ Can suggest laws or policies
10. \_\_\_\_\_ Can declare acts of Congress to be unconstitutional
11. \_\_\_\_\_ Can refuse to ratify treaties
12. \_\_\_\_\_ Can pardon federal offenders
13. \_\_\_\_\_ Can impeach and remove federal judges
14. \_\_\_\_\_ Can declare war
15. \_\_\_\_\_ Can call special sessions of Congress

Activity: **Still More Checks & Balances** Name \_\_\_\_\_

Subject: **Branches of Government** Date \_\_\_\_\_

**DIRECTIONS:** Read the following scenario. What actions might the executive, legislative, and judicial branches take if such a scenario were to occur.

Congress has passed a law making all guns illegal. The House of Representatives approved the law by a vote of 415 to 20. The Senate approved the law by a vote of 80 to 20. The president is strongly against this law.

1. Possible actions by the executive branch:

2. Possible actions by the legislative branch:

3. Possible actions by the judicial branch:

Activity: **Post Test**

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Subject: **Branches of Government**

Date \_\_\_\_\_

**TRUE OR FALSE**

**DIRECTIONS: Indicate if each statement is true [T] or false [F].**

1. The term of office for a Supreme Court justice is for life.  
 True  
 False
  
2. The legislative branch may override a presidential veto only if the judicial branch agrees.  
 True  
 False
  
3. Most of the work that is done by the legislative branch is done in committees.  
 True  
 False
  
4. Supreme Court justices are voted on by popular vote.  
 True  
 False
  
5. In order to become President of the United States, an individual must be a native-born citizen.  
 True  
 False
  
6. The President does not have the power to “check” the judicial branch.  
 True  
 False

7. The legislative branch plays no role in the filling of Supreme Court vacancies.
- True
- False
8. Every state has the same number of votes (members) in the legislature.
- True
- False
9. The Supreme Court can “check” Congress and the President by declaring a law “unconstitutional.”
- True
- False
10. The Senate has more committees than the House of Representatives.
- True
- False
11. The New Jersey Plan required that each state receive the same number of seats in the federal legislature.
- True
- False
12. The President is elected to a six-year term of office.
- True
- False
13. The President is elected when he receives a majority of the popular vote.
- True
- False

14. The judicial branch is made up solely of the Supreme Court.
- True
- False
15. Reapportionment is when seats in the House of Representatives are redistributed based upon the most recent census of state populations.
- True
- False
16. A amendment is a law which changes the Constitution.
- True
- False
17. A Supreme Court justice must be at least thirty years of age.
- True
- False
18. A Supreme Court justice can be impeached.
- True
- False
19. The Supreme Court is the highest court in the United States.
- True
- False
20. The Executive Branch is made up of the President and his or her Cabinet.
- True
- False

## MULTIPLE CHOICE

DIRECTIONS: Read the question then choose the letter of the answer which is correct.

21. Which of the following is not true of the House of Representatives?
- A. It has 435 members.
  - B. A term for a representative is two years.
  - C. Each state gets the same number of seats in the House.
  - D. A representative must be a resident of the state and district which he or she represents.
22. According to the current law (the Presidential Succession Act of 1947), which of the officers follows the President in the line of presidential succession?
- A. the Speaker of the House
  - B. the Majority Whip
  - C. the Secretary of State
  - D. the Vice-President
23. According to the Constitution, which of the following qualifications is not needed to become president?
- A. be at least thirty-five years of age
  - B. be a naturalized citizen
  - C. live in the United States for at least fourteen years
  - D. be a male
24. The members of Congress do not do which of the following things?
- A. make laws
  - B. represent their constituents
  - C. enforce laws
  - D. serve on committees

25. The \_\_\_\_\_ nominates individuals to be Supreme Court justices and the \_\_\_\_\_ approves the.
- A. President/Congress
  - B. Congress/President
  - C. Congress/Supreme Court
  - D. President/Supreme Court
26. One of the duties of the \_\_\_\_\_ is to insure that laws created by Congress are constitutional.
- A. Congress
  - B. President
  - C. Pentagon
  - D. Supreme Court
27. The outcome of a Supreme Court decision is determined by a:
- A. 1/2 vote
  - B. majority vote
  - C. 3/4 vote
  - D. unanimous vote
28. Which of the following is not a lower court in the federal court system?
- A. U.S. Court of Appeals
  - B. U.S. District Courts
  - C. U.S. Grand Jury Court
  - D. U.S. Claims Court
29. The means by which the Supreme Court has the authority to rule on the constitutionality of federal and state laws is called:
- A. appeals review
  - B. supreme decision



- C. ultimate authority
- D. judicial review

30. The Constitution requires that a member of the House of Representatives be at least \_\_\_\_\_ years of age and a Senator be at least \_\_\_\_\_ years of age.

- A. 21/25
- B. 21/35
- C. 25/30
- D. 20/20

31. Another term for a legislative body that has two houses is:

- A. federalism
- B. bicameral
- C. bilegislature
- D. capitalism

32. Which of the following is not true of the Senate?

- A. it has 100 members
- B. the term for a senator is four years
- C. a senator must be a resident of the state that he or she represents
- D. a senator must be a citizen of the U.S. for at least nine years

33. The presiding officer of the House of Representatives is the:

- A. President
- B. Vice-President
- C. Majority Whip
- D. Speaker of the House

34. When the President refuses to sign a bill that is passed by Congress, this is called:

- A. a veto
- B. an executive order
- C. executive privilege
- D. impeachment

35. The number of electoral college votes that each state receives is determined by the:

- A. number of senators from each state
- B. number of sets each state has in Congress
- C. executive branch
- D. Bill of Rights

36. Which of the following positions are appointed by the President?

I. Cabinet members   II. Speaker of the House   III. National Security Council   IV. Senators

- A. I, II, IV
- B. II, III
- C. II, III, IV
- D. I, III

37. Which of the following is not a role of the President?

- A. chief legislator
- B. chief of staff
- C. commander and chief
- D. chief of the senate

38. Which of the following are not presidential powers?

- A. legislative power
- B. congressional power
- C. executive power
- D. military power

39. There are \_\_\_\_\_ electoral college votes available. In order for a presidential candidate to win the presidency he or she must win at least \_\_\_\_\_ electoral votes?
- A. 538/270
  - B. 450/450
  - C. 500/250
  - D. 300/200
40. When the President nullifies individual items on a bill it is called a:
- A. veto
  - B. presidential veto
  - C. pocket veto
  - D. line item veto

**FILL IN THE BLANK**

**DIRECTIONS:** Use the terms below as a list of choices to place in the blank spaces for the definitions that follow.

appellate jurisdiction	bicameral	Congress
Electoral College	House of Representatives	impeach
judicial review	jurisdiction	legislature
original jurisdiction	pocket veto	redistricting
Senate	Speaker of the House	veto

41. \_\_\_\_\_ is a two-house legislative body.
42. \_\_\_\_\_ is a group of persons (presidential electors) chosen in each State and the District of Columbia every four years who make a formal selection of the President and Vice-President.
43. \_\_\_\_\_ is the presiding officer of the House of Representatives, chosen by and from the majority party in the House.
44. \_\_\_\_\_ is one of the two law-making bodies in Congress and its representation is based upon state population.

45. \_\_\_\_\_ is the power of the courts to determine the constitutionality of the actions of the legislative and executive branches of government.
46. \_\_\_\_\_ is the authority of a court to review decisions (hear appeals) of a lower court.
47. \_\_\_\_\_ is to accuse a public official of misconduct in office.
48. \_\_\_\_\_ is the law-making body of the government.
49. \_\_\_\_\_ is the authority of a court to hear and decide a case for the first time.
50. \_\_\_\_\_ is the refusal by the President to approve a law.

### **CHECKS AND BALANCES**

**DIRECTIONS:** Listed below are some of the checks and balances of the three branches of government. In the spaces provided write “E” if it is a power possessed by the executive branch, “L” if it is a power possessed by the legislative branch, and “J” if it is a power possessed by the judicial branch.

51. \_\_\_\_\_ can veto acts of Congress
52. \_\_\_\_\_ can impeach and remove the President or Vice-President
53. \_\_\_\_\_ can declare executive acts unconstitutional
54. \_\_\_\_\_ can propose amendments to overturn court decisions
55. \_\_\_\_\_ appoints judges
56. \_\_\_\_\_ can override a presidential veto
57. \_\_\_\_\_ appointed for life, so as to be free from executive control
58. \_\_\_\_\_ can refuse to confirm presidential appointments
59. \_\_\_\_\_ can suggest laws or policies
60. \_\_\_\_\_ can declare acts of Congress unconstitutional

## **SHORT ANSWER**

**DIRECTIONS: Answer each of the following questions in the spaces provided. Use the back of the sheet if necessary.**

61. What are the three branches of government and what are each of their major responsibilities with respect to laws?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
62. How is the appointment of a Supreme Court justice an example of checks and balances?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
63. If a bill were to be passed by Congress that legalized prayer in schools, what would be some possible actions that the (1) executive branch, (2) legislative branch, and (3) judicial branch could take concerning the bill?

## **ESSAY**

**DIRECTIONS: Answer the following question as completely as possible. Make sure that you use specific examples to support your thoughts.**

64. The Preamble of the Constitution starts off with the words, "We the People..." How do the three branches of government embody this idea?

The Almost Painless Guide to the Branches of Government

THE LEGISLATIVE BRANCH

BLACKLINE MASTERS

[Blackline Master #1: Pre-Test](#)

[Blackline Master #2: Video Quiz](#)

[Blackline Master #3: Vocabulary](#)

[Blackline Master #3: Discussion Questions](#)

[Blackline Masters #4:a-4b: State Student School Board Proposal](#)

[Blackline Masters #5a-5b: Powers of Congress](#)

[Blackline Master: Congress Comparison](#)

[Blackline Masters: Post-Test](#)

[Blackline Masters: Congressional Simulation](#)

Activity: **Pre-Test**

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Subject: **Legislative Branch**

Date \_\_\_\_\_

**DIRECTIONS:** Read the following statements and mark true or false.

1. The Constitution can never be changed.  
A.  True B.  False
2. The only duty that the legislative branch has is to make laws.  
A.  True B.  False
3. The legislative branch is made up of the Senate and the House of Representatives.  
A.  True B.  False
4. The legislative branch may override a presidential veto only if the judicial branch agrees.  
A.  True B.  False
5. All members of the legislative branch must be at least twenty-five years of age.  
A.  True B.  False
6. Most of the work that is done by the legislative branch is done in committees.  
A.  True B.  False
7. Members of the legislative branch can only serve two terms in office.  
A.  True B.  False
8. The President of the United States is the leader of the House of Representatives.  
A.  True B.  False
9. The legislative branch plays no role in the filling of Supreme Court vacancies.  
A.  True B.  False
10. Every state has the same number of votes, or members, in the legislature.  
A.  True B.  False

Activity: **Video Quiz**

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Subject: **Legislative Branch**

Date \_\_\_\_\_

**DIRECTIONS: Read the following statements and mark the correct answer**

- Most of the work that is done by the legislative branch is done in committees.  
A.  True B.  False
- The Senate has more committees than the House of Representatives.  
A.  True B.  False
- The New Jersey Plan required that each state receive the same number of seats in the federal legislature.  
A.  True B.  False
- An amendment is a law which changes the Constitution.  
A.  True B.  False
- The legislative branch is made up of the Senate and the House of Representatives.  
A.  True B.  False
- Another term for a legislative body that has two houses is:  
A.  federalism B.  bicameral  
C.  bilegislative D.  capitalism
- Which of the following is not true of the Senate?  
A.  It has one-hundred members  
B.  The term for a senator is four years  
C.  A senator must be a resident of the state he/she represents  
D.  A senator must be a citizen of the United States for at least nine years
- The presiding officer of the House of Representatives is:  
A.  the president B.  the vice-president  
C.  the Majority Whip D.  the Speaker of the House
- Which of the following is not true of the House of Representatives?  
A.  it has 435 members  
B.  a term for a representative is two years  
C.  each state gets the same number of seats in the House  
D.  a representative must be a resident of the state and district that he or she represents
- The members of Congress do not do which of the following things:  
A.  make laws B.  represent their constituents  
C.  enforce laws D.  serve on committees



Activity: **Vocabulary** Name \_\_\_\_\_  
Subject: **The Legislative Branch** Date \_\_\_\_\_

**apportionment** - the process of determining the number of representatives to which each state is entitled

**bicameral** - a two-house legislative body

**bill** - a proposed law

**caucus** - a closed meeting of party members from one house of the legislature to select leaders or decide legislative business

**Congress** - consists of a bicameral, or house, legislature. The House of Representatives represents the people by population, and the Senate represents each state equally. The role of congress is to translate public will into public policy in the form of laws.

**House of Representatives** - one of the two law making bodies in Congress, its representation is based upon state population

**legislature** - the law-making body of the government

**lobbying** - organized efforts, usually by interest groups, to contact government officials in an attempt to influence legislation or policies

**line item veto** - the ability of the President to veto individual items on a bill

**pocket veto** - means by which the President may kill a bill passed during the last ten days Congress is in session by simply refusing to act on it

**President of the Senate** - in Congress, the vice-president of the United States. He governs over the Senate when it is in session.

**redistricting** - to set up new district lines after a census

**Senate** - one of the two law-making bodies in Congress; all states are given two senators to represent them

**Speaker of the House** - the presiding officer of the House of Representatives, chosen by and from the majority party in the House

**subcommittees** - one of six or eight groups within a standing committee that specializes in a subcategory of that committee's responsibility

**veto** - refusal by the President to approve a law

Activity: **Discussion Questions**

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Subject: **The Legislative Branch**

Date \_\_\_\_\_

1. What groups make up the legislative branch? What does “bicameral” mean?
2. What are amendments?
3. How did the framers of the Constitution insure that our government represented “We the People?”
4. What powers does the legislative branch have over the executive branch?
5. Which branch of government has legislative power?
6. What is the significance of the “great compromise?”
7. What are the requirements for a Senator and a member of the House of Representatives? What is the term of office for each?
8. Where is most of the work of Congress accomplished?
9. What are the duties of Congress according to the video?
10. How is the system of checks and balances between all three branches used in the law-making process?
11. What are the three types of vetoes that a President may use?

Activity: **State Student School Board Proposal**

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Subject: **The Legislative Branch**

Date \_\_\_\_\_

**DIRECTIONS:** In an unprecedented decision, the Department of Education has decided to create a special "State Board of Education" completely comprised of students who attend school in the state. This special board will have the power to write, recommend, and even pass certain laws pertaining to education. The Department of Education believes that with increased student cooperation and input, the quality of education offered to young adults in the state will improve.

The dilemma that the Department of Education faces is how this "Student School Board" should be selected. Should each school be allowed to select one student to be on the "Student School Board?" Or should the number of the students selected to be on the "Student School Board" be based upon the size of the school's student enrollment?

You are to decide how the "Student School Board" should be elected. Should each school get one representative to serve on the school board? Or should each school receive a different number of delegates based upon the school population? (Schools with a larger population would receive more delegates, schools with a smaller population would receive fewer delegates.) Please select which method you would choose and comprise a list of at least five reasons why your choice is best in the space provided below.

1.

2.

3.

4.

5.

Activity: **Powers of Congress** Name \_\_\_\_\_  
Subject: **The Legislative Branch** Date \_\_\_\_\_

**DIRECTIONS:** Match each definition by placing its letter in the corresponding blank.

The following are some of the expressed powers of Congress. The expressed powers are those power that are outlined in the Constitution and given to Congress to use.

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| 1. ___ <b>power to tax:</b> the power of Congress to collect taxes, duties, and provide for the common defense and welfare of the United States                          | A. Congress decides to take a loan to help pay for the current deficit crisis facing the Medicare system        |
| 2. ___ <b>commerce powers:</b> the power of Congress to regulate interstate and foreign trade  | B. Congress decides that people who violate federal civil rights laws will be jailed for 75 years               |
| 3. ___ <b>currency power:</b> the power of Congress to coin money and regulate the value of it   | C. Congress decides to print a new three dollar bill  |
| 4. ___ <b>borrowing power:</b> the power of Congress to borrow money on the credit of the United States.   | D. Congress decides to purchase 5,000 acres of land in the Florida Everglades and turn it into a national park. |
| 5. ___ <b>power to tax:</b> The power of Congress to collect taxes, duties, and provide for the common defense and welfare of the United States.                         | E. Congress passes a law that will increase the tax on cigarettes by 10%.                                       |
| 6. ___ <b>judicial powers:</b> the power of Congress to create all federal courts below the Supreme Court; and to define federal crimes and provide for their punishment | F. Congress calls for an increased tariff on imported Japanese automobiles.                                     |
| 7. ___ <b>power over territories and other areas:</b> the power of Congress to acquire, manage, and dispose of federal areas   | G. Congress writes a bill that would increase economic aid to Africa nations                                    |
| 8. ___ <b>war powers:</b> the power of Congress to declare war and raise and maintain an army  | H. Congress declares war on Iraq.   |

**Directions: Match each definition of the powers of Congress with the corresponding example.**

The following are non-legislative powers of Congress. These powers do not involve Congress's ability to write law.

- |   |                                   |
|---|-----------------------------------|
| 9. _____ <b>executive powers:</b> the power of Congress to confirm all appointments and treaties made by the president  | I. Congress declares war on Iraq. |
| 10. _____ <b>impeachment powers:</b> the power of Congress to bring formal criminal charges against and remove from office the president, vice-president, and all civil officers  | J. Congress declares war on Iraq. |
| 11. _____ <b>Constitutional amendment:</b> the power of Congress to propose amendments to the Constitution with a two-thirds vote in each house.  | K. Congress declares war on Iraq. |
| 12. _____ <b>investigative powers:</b> the power of Congress to investigate for the purpose of gathering information useful to Congress in making law, to review the effectiveness of laws it has passed, and to find out if programs are being operated properly | K. Congress declares war on Iraq. |

Activity: **Congress Comparison** Name \_\_\_\_\_  
Subject: **The Legislative Branch** Date \_\_\_\_\_

The role of Congress is to translate public will into public policy in the form of laws.

Formation: Congress is bicameral. This is done in order to balance the representation of the large and small states.

Roles of a Congressperson:

1. legislators (law makers)
2. committee members
3. represent their constituents (the people in their state or district)
4. servants of their constituents
5. politicians

## Senate

- \* one-hundred senators; two are elected from each state.
- \* Vice-President is the President of the Senate
- \* President Pro Tempore is the presiding officer if the Vice-President is not present
- \* Senate majority leader is elected by the political party which has the most seats in the Senate
- \* Senate minority leader is elected by the political party which has a smaller number of seats in the Senate
- \* Senate has a total of 20 committees

## House of Representatives

- \* House of Representatives has 435 members
- \* Speaker of the House is the leader of the House; chosen by the political party in the majority
- \* President Pro Tempore is the presiding officer if the Speaker is not present
- \* House majority leader is elected by the party with the most seats to lead the party
- \* House minority leader is elected by the party with the smaller number of seats to lead the party
- \* majority of the work done in Congress is by committee
- \* twenty committees in the Senate
- \* twenty-three committees in the House
- \* four joint committee

Activity: **Congress Comparison**

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Subject: **The Legislative Branch**

Date \_\_\_\_\_

**DIRECTIONS:** Use the facts listed above and you knowledge of the legislative branch to complete the lists below.

How does the House of Representatives differ from the Senate?

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.
- 6.
- 7.

How is the House of Representatives similar to the Senate?

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.





A. 21/25

B. 21/35

C. 25/30

D. 20/20

10. Which of the following is not true of the House of Representatives?

A. it has 435 members

B. a term for a representative is two years

C. each state gets the same number of seats in the House

D. a representative must be a resident of the state and district that he or she represents

### MATCHING

**DIRECTIONS: Match the definitions with the terms listed.**

11. \_\_\_\_\_ This is one of the law-making bodies of the legislature; its membership is based upon equal representation for all states.

A. Congress

B. House of Representatives

12. \_\_\_\_\_ This is the means by which the President may kill a bill passed during the last ten days Congress is in session by simply refusing to act on it.

C. line item veto

D. pocket veto

13. \_\_\_\_\_ The role of this group is to translate public will into public policy in form of laws.

E. Senate

14. \_\_\_\_\_ This is one of the law-making bodies of the legislature, its membership is based upon each state's population.

15. The ability of the President to veto individual items on a bill.

### ESSAY

**DIRECTIONS: In the space provided, answer the following question in a clear and concise manner. Use the back of the sheet if necessary.**

How does the legislative branch embody the phrase "We the people..."

## Congressional Simulation

Activity: **TEACHER INSTRUCTIONS** Name \_\_\_\_\_

Subject: **The Legislative Branch** Date \_\_\_\_\_

### Before commencing the Congressional Simulation game with your students:

1. Read through the rules very carefully.
2. Be sure to photocopy and cut out the Lobby Cards.
3. Be sure to photocopy enough bill and amendment sheets for the entire class. You may want to have a stack of them in the classroom.
4. Be sure to photocopy a daily tally sheet for each committee.
5. Be sure to photocopy committee profile sheets.
6. You will need two dice for the Good News and Bad News rolls.

### Hints:

1. You will probably want to give each committee and the Speaker of the House and Vice President a folder to keep his or her material in.
2. You will want to arrange the desks into two circles. One should represent the House of Representatives and the other should be the Senate.
3. You will probably want to determine the amount of time that each house has to discuss its own bills and the amount of time that it must discuss bills from the opposite house.
4. You will probably want to keep track of each groups Good News and Bad News numbers. You may want to photocopy seven daily tally sheets for your use.
5. Any bill that is passed by both houses should be given to the teacher and signed into law. The teacher acts as President. No bill should be vetoed by the President. The teacher will then record the points that are awarded for the passage of the legislation and return the signed bill to the committee that proposed it.
6. Remind the students that they only get the points on their committee profile sheet if their bill is passed by BOTH houses.
7. Inform the students that if a bill is passed and their committee has amended the bill so as to meet one of their agenda items, the amending committee gets the points detailed on their committee profile.
8. At the start of each round, one committee member should roll a Good News Number and a Bad News Number. A lobby card should also be drawn at this time. Inform the students that this information should only be shared with their committee members.
9. Inform the students that their committee profile sheet should only be seen by committee members. They should not let any other committee members see this sheet.

**THERE ARE 18 EXTENDED LEARNING ACTIVITY SHEETS, INCLUDING THIS ONE.**

Activity: **Congressional Simulation - 2** Name \_\_\_\_\_  
Subject: **The Legislative Branch** Date \_\_\_\_\_

**Before commencing the Congressional Simulation game with your students:**

**The Game:** The class will be divided into several groups which are called committees. These committees are profiled on the Committee Information Sheets. The job of these committees is to pass laws which are advantageous to their committee. Each committee will have specific goals and interests. (Hint: Don't let other committees see these goals and interests). Points will be awarded for achieving or meeting these goals or interests (committees will be defined and outlined later). However, each committee also has interests which are not good for them, thus these will carry negative points. As a committee you will have to create, lobby, defend, reject, and debate bills which are brought to the floor. After doing so you will then vote on the bills as they are brought into your congressional house (e.g. The Senate or The House of Representative). Again, points will be awarded to the interested parties for the passage of these bills by Congress.

**The Process:** The game will take place over several days which will be called terms. Once each student is placed in a committee, the committees should get together and form their respective houses (Senate or House of Representatives). At this time, each house should elect a Speaker of the House or a Vice-President. This person will be in charge of reading bills, keeping track of votes, recognizing people to speak, determining what bill should be addressed, and keeping order within the house. This person is elected by a simple majority. There will be three fifteen-minute sessions per class, or as the teacher sees fit. Once a term has started, follow the steps below:

1. Writing and amending a bill. Each bill and amendment must be written out on an official bill form provided by your teacher. Each bill should start with the following phrase "Be it enacted.....". Following this phrase, you should state what action your committee would like to see implemented. For example, if your committee wanted a bill passed that would increase funding for education by 10%, you would write "Be it enacted that funding for education be increased by 10%." (Note: it is very helpful that each bill contains a percentage if something is going to be increased or decreased.)
2. When your group is organized, send out negotiators to other committees to bargain for and gain support for the passage of your bill. (Hint: If done properly, then a quick passage of your bill will result.) In addition, your committee should never propose a bill unless it has the support of other committees. You must also get somebody from another committee to present your bill in the other house.
3. The Speaker of the House or Vice-President will call each house to order. At this time, bills are submitted to the Speaker of the House or Vice-President. At this time, a bill is read. The person who wrote the bill will then explain why it should be passed. Once this completed, any of the follow steps may occur:

- A. Debate the bill
    - i. Arguments why the bill should be supported or why the bill should not be supported. This can be done by anyone in the house.
  - B. Amend the bill.
    - i. Make changes to the bill. Add other issues to the bill or take certain things out.
    - ii. The amendments must be passed; then the bill is voted on with the amendments. If the amendments are defeated, the bill is voted on as first stated.
  - C. Vote on the bill
    - i. the passage of the bill requires a simple majority vote.
    - ii. if the bill does not receive a majority vote, then it fails. However, the bill can be reintroduced at a later time.
  - D. Call for a caucus
    - i. A caucus is like a time-out and allows your committee to discuss the bill or talk to other committees.
    - ii. Caucuses will be limited to three minutes.
4. In order to do any of steps 3A through 3D (listed above), the following must take place:
- A. A person must be recognized by the Speaker or the Vice President. In fact the only time a person can address the house is to be recognized by the Speaker. This is done when the Speaker or Vic-President says "I acknowledge the honorable (insert person's name)."
  - B. After being recognized, the person then must say "I motion to state the action to be taken." For example: "I motion to debate this bill."
  - C. Once a motion has been made somebody must second the motion by saying "I second that motion."
  - D. Once a motion has been seconded, the Speaker or Vice-President will restate the motion and take a vote on the motion. This is done by saying "All in favor of (proposed motion)" or "All opposed to (proposed motion)." A simple majority will decide whether or not the motion is passed.
  - E. If the motion is passed, then it is acted upon. If the motion fails, then the floor is open.
5. A passed bill is then given to the other house where it is presented by a member of that house. Steps 3A through 3D are then repeated.
6. If the bill is amended in the opposing house it must go back to its original house. Steps 3A through 3D are then repeated. If it is passed by the original house with the amendment, it then goes to the other house for a vote.
7. If a bill is passed by both the House of Representatives and the Senate, then it goes on to the President to be either signed or vetoed. (In the case of the simulation, your goal is to get the bill passed so that it goes to the President.)

Activity: **Congressional Simulation - 4** Name \_\_\_\_\_  
Subject: **The Legislative Branch** Date \_\_\_\_\_

How to Get Points: If your committee passes a bill or adds an amendment to a bill that gets passed by both houses, your committee will get the points which are detailed on your committee profile sheet. In addition, you can be awarded points by following the instructions of each Lobby Card or by rolling the appropriate Good News-Bad News Number. These will be explained in further detail.

Lobby Cards: These cards will be drawn at the beginning of each term or day. These cards are only good for that term(day); they may not be used or accrued overall several days. You may not use cards which are already beneficial to interests that your group already has on itsagenda/ profile. The use of these cards by each committee is optional, it is not required.

Good News Bad News Numbers: These are events that occur throughout the simulation. You must follow them very strictly. They are given randomly, by the roll of the dice, at the beginning of each term (day). Note: The Good News-Bad News may be utilized more than once a term, depending on the progress of the simulation. It all depends upon your involvement.

Individual Responsibility: Each person in the class is responsible for writing and debating his or her own bill. Each bill must be original or different from any other bills created by committee members. You will turn in a written copy of your bill at the time your bill is read or at the end of the simulation. In addition, each committee must keep an up-to-date and accurate account of its Good News Numbers and Bad News Numbers, as well as the bills it has passed in both houses and their point totals. This can be done by using the tally sheet. The Speaker of the House and the Vice-President must record the vote outcome on each bill sheet and record the passage or failure of the bill on the bill sheet as well. This should also be done with amendment sheets.

Activity: **Congressional Simulation - 5** Name \_\_\_\_\_

Subject: **The Legislative Branch** Date \_\_\_\_\_

**LOBBY CARDS**

<p><b>LOBBY CARD</b></p> <p><b>SUPPORT A BILL FROM THE AGRICULTURAL COMMITTEE</b></p> <p><b>GAIN 3 POINTS</b></p> <p><i>* Bill must be passed by your house to gain points</i></p>	<p><b>LOBBY CARD</b></p> <p><b>SUPPORT A BILL FROM THE NATURAL RESOURCES &amp; ENERGY COMMITTEE</b></p> <p><b>GAIN 3 POINTS</b></p> <p><i>* Bill must be passed by your house to gain points</i></p>
<p><b>LOBBY CARD</b></p> <p><b>SUPPORT A BILL FROM THE MILITARY &amp; DEFENSE COMMITTEE</b></p> <p><b>GAIN 3 POINTS</b></p> <p><i>* Bill must be passed by your house to gain points</i></p>	<p><b>LOBBY CARD</b></p> <p><b>SUPPORT A BILL FROM THE ENVIRONMENTAL COMMITTEE</b></p> <p><b>GAIN 3 POINTS</b></p> <p><i>* Bill must be passed by your house to gain points</i></p>
<p><b>LOBBY CARD</b></p> <p><b>SUPPORT A BILL FROM THE HEALTH &amp; WELFARE COMMITTEE</b></p> <p><b>GAIN 3 POINTS</b></p> <p><i>* Bill must be passed by your house to gain points</i></p>	<p><b>LOBBY CARD</b></p> <p><b>SUPPORT A BILL FROM THE COMMERCE &amp; INDUSTRY COMMITTEE</b></p> <p><b>GAIN 3 POINTS</b></p> <p><i>* Bill must be passed by your house to gain points</i></p>
<p><b>LOBBY CARD</b></p> <p><b>SUPPORT A BILL FROM THE TRANSPORTATION COMMITTEE</b></p> <p><b>GAIN 3 POINTS</b></p> <p><i>* Bill must be passed by your house to gain points</i></p>	<p><b>LOBBY CARD</b></p> <p><b>SUPPORT A BILL FROM ANY COMMITTEE OTHER THAN YOUR OWN</b></p> <p><b>GAIN 3 POINTS</b></p> <p><i>* Bill must be passed by your house to gain points</i></p>

Activity: **Congressional Simulation - 6** Name \_\_\_\_\_

Subject: **The Legislative Branch** Date \_\_\_\_\_

**LOBBY CARDS**

<p><b>LOBBY CARD</b></p> <p><b>DO NOT SUPPORT A BILL FROM THE AGRICULTURAL COMMITTEE</b></p> <p><b>GAIN 3 POINTS</b></p> <p><i>* Bill must be defeated in your house to gain points</i></p>	<p><b>LOBBY CARD</b></p> <p><b>DO NOT SUPPORT A BILL FROM THE NATURAL RESOURCES &amp; ENERGY COMMITTEE</b></p> <p><b>GAIN 3 POINTS</b></p> <p><i>* Bill must be defeated in your house to gain points</i></p>
<p><b>LOBBY CARD</b></p> <p><b>DO NOT SUPPORT A BILL FROM THE MILITARY &amp; DEFENSE COMMITTEE</b></p> <p><b>GAIN 3 POINTS</b></p> <p><i>* Bill must be defeated in your house to gain points</i></p>	<p><b>LOBBY CARD</b></p> <p><b>DO NOT SUPPORT A BILL FROM THE ENVIRONMENTAL COMMITTEE</b></p> <p><b>GAIN 3 POINTS</b></p> <p><i>* Bill must be defeated in your house to gain points</i></p>
<p><b>LOBBY CARD</b></p> <p><b>DO NOT SUPPORT A BILL FROM THE HEALTH &amp; WELFARE COMMITTEE</b></p> <p><b>GAIN 3 POINTS</b></p> <p><i>* Bill must be defeated in your house to gain points</i></p>	<p><b>LOBBY CARD</b></p> <p><b>DO NOT SUPPORT A BILL FROM THE COMMERCE &amp; INDUSTRY COMMITTEE</b></p> <p><b>GAIN 3 POINTS</b></p> <p><i>* Bill must be defeated in your house to gain points</i></p>
<p><b>LOBBY CARD</b></p> <p><b>DO NOT SUPPORT A BILL FROM THE TRANSPORTATION COMMITTEE</b></p> <p><b>GAIN 3 POINTS</b></p> <p><i>* Bill must be defeated in your house to gain points</i></p>	<p><b>LOBBY CARD</b></p> <p><b>DO NOT SUPPORT A BILL FROM ANY COMMITTEE OTHER THAN YOUR OWN</b></p> <p><b>GAIN 3 POINTS</b></p> <p><i>* Bill must be defeated in your house to gain points</i></p>

Activity: **Congressional Simulation - 7** Name \_\_\_\_\_

Subject: **The Legislative Branch** Date \_\_\_\_\_

**CONGRESSIONAL BILL**

HOUSE \_\_\_\_\_ COMMITTEE \_\_\_\_\_ NO. \_\_\_\_\_

---

VOTE

HOUSE \_\_\_\_\_

FOR \_\_\_\_\_ AGAINST \_\_\_\_\_

PASSED \_\_\_\_\_ DEFEATED \_\_\_\_\_

VOTE

HOUSE \_\_\_\_\_

FOR \_\_\_\_\_ AGAINST \_\_\_\_\_

PASSED \_\_\_\_\_ DEFEATED \_\_\_\_\_

LAW \_\_\_\_\_



Activity: **Congressional Simulation - 8** Name \_\_\_\_\_

Subject: **The Legislative Branch** Date \_\_\_\_\_

**CONGRESSIONAL AMENDMENT**

HOUSE \_\_\_\_\_ COMMITTEE \_\_\_\_\_ NO. \_\_\_\_\_

---

VOTE

HOUSE \_\_\_\_\_

FOR \_\_\_\_\_ AGAINST \_\_\_\_\_

PASSED \_\_\_\_\_ DEFEATED \_\_\_\_\_

---

VOTE

HOUSE \_\_\_\_\_

FOR \_\_\_\_\_ AGAINST \_\_\_\_\_

PASSED \_\_\_\_\_ DEFEATED \_\_\_\_\_

---

AMENDMENT \_\_\_\_\_



Activity: **Congressional Simulation - 10** Name \_\_\_\_\_  
Subject: **The Legislative Branch** Date \_\_\_\_\_

### GOOD NEWS AND BAD NEWS NUMBERS

#### GOOD NEWS!

1. Your committee finds a way to save the tax payers \$1000 million dollars. Receive 3 points.
2. Your committee heads a special investigation. The investigation uncovers illegal activity. The trial is televised and draws national attention. Your committee does a fair and responsible job. Gain 2 points.
3. Your committee receives support of the President. Gain 2 points.
4. Because your committee successfully appropriates more money to each member's home state, you are all reelected. Gain 3 points.
5. Your group gets to introduce the first bill of the next session.
6. A member of your committee is photographed helping victims of the great flood. This brings positive media exposure to you and your committee. Gain 2 points.
7. No News.....No News.....No News.....No News.....
8. New political elections occur. Of the newly elected members, 20% favor or support many of your committee's ideas. Gain 3 points.
9. *Time Magazine* profiles your your committee. You are seen as hardworking and honest. Gain 2 points.
10. Public opinion begins to sway in favor of the issues that your committee supports. Gain 2 points.
11. No News.....No News.....No News.....No News.....
12. The worlds leaders meet and support issues that your committees support. This sways public opinion in your favor. Gain 3 points.

#### BAD NEWS!

1. "60 Minutes" does an investigative report on your committee. It uncovers that your committee only works 15 hours a week and has not proposed a new piece of legislation for ten months. You must propose and pass a piece of legislation in your house. Failure to do so -2 points.
2. Lose your Lobby Card.
3. You committee must re-propose and pass a bill from your committee this round that has been previously defeated. The bill must be passed in your house. Failure to do so -3 points.
4. Your committee promises a lobbyist group that it will support a piece of legislation that supports them. Your committee does not follow through on its promise. -2 points.
5. Your committee must propose/pass legislation in your house worth at least 6 points. Failure to do so -4 points.
6. Your committee cannot support any legislation from another committee this session. Failure to comply -3 points.
7. No News.....No News.....No News.....No News.....
8. Your committee cannot propose a new bill this session. Failure to comply -3 points.
9. Your committee has been accused of massive pork-barreling. You must propose and pass a bill in your house this round that benefits your committee as well as another. Failure to do so -4 points.
10. Two of your committee members are charged with embezzlement. To save face, your committee must propose and pass a bill in your house worth at least 4 points. Failure to do so -4 points.
11. No News.....No News.....No News.....No News.....
12. The President vetoes a bill from your committee. -2 points.

Activity: **Congressional Simulation - 11** Name \_\_\_\_\_

Subject: **The Legislative Branch** Date \_\_\_\_\_

**Follow-Up Questions**

**DIRECTIONS:** After completing the Congressional Simulation, answer the following questions in the spaces provided. Use a separate sheet if necessary.

1. How successful was your group? How could you explain this success or failure?
2. How difficult was it to get laws passed? Explain your answer.
3. Why did your committee support certain committees and not support other committees? What effect did this have upon the simulation?
4. Did the simulation force your committee to compromise with other committees? Is this a good or bad element when writing laws?
5. What role did amendments play in the simulation?
6. How much power did the Speaker of the House and the Vice President have during the simulation?

Activity: **Congressional Simulation - 12** Name \_\_\_\_\_  
Subject: **The Legislative Branch** Date \_\_\_\_\_

### COMMITTEE INFORMATION SHEET

#### The House Committee for Transportation

Your committee is interested in the many means of transportation that consumes our countries population. The committee is responsible for the regulation and funding of the interested parties that contribute to transportation policies. In light of this, there are many companies which are concerned with the decisions made in your committee. The companies that will have a vested interest are General Motors, or other car manufacturers; Amtrak; TWA, or other airlines; Cummins Diesel, and other trucking industries. These groups apply pressure on your committee to represent their interests through lobbyists.

Agenda:

#### **Issues you support:**

1. Propose and pass a bill which places more liberal laws on auto emissions. (10 pts.)
2. Propose and pass a bill which places liberal restrictions on the dumping of waste products by private travel carriers (ie. airplanes dumping fuel and waste). (8 pts.)
3. Propose and pass a bill which transfers the cost of tolls on highways from public, ie. personal payment of tolls, to private business. (6 pts.)
4. Propose and pass a bill which establishes strict regulations on the transportation of chemical products on private transportation lines. (4 pts.)
5. Propose and pass a bill that would increase taxes in order to build highways and railroads through rural areas. (2 pts.)

#### **Issues you oppose:**

1. Any bill requiring high auto emissions standards.
2. Any bill that calls for higher tariffs on imported oil.
3. Any bill that calls for the regulation and reduction of transportation prices.
4. Any bill that calls for increase tariffs on unfinished goods.

Note: If any related bills are passed, then your committee will be penalized 1 point.

Activity: **Congressional Simulation - 13** Name \_\_\_\_\_  
Subject: **The Legislative Branch** Date \_\_\_\_\_

### COMMITTEE INFORMATION SHEET

#### The House Committee for Farming and Agriculture

Your committee is interested in the agricultural and farming concerns in our nation, as well as in foreign countries. The committee is responsible for the regulation of different tariffs on exports and imports, soil conservation concerns, as well as subsidies for farmers. Many groups have an interest in the policies and decisions of your committee. Groups such as the American Agricultural Association, United Dairy Farmers, American Farm Bureau, and the National Farmers Union apply pressure on your committee to represent their interests through lobbyists.

Agenda:

#### Issues you support:

1. Propose and pass a bill which will raise taxes and increase funding for farm subsidies by at least 15%. (10 pts.)
2. Propose and pass a bill which will decrease government regulations concerning the use of pesticides. (8 pts.)
3. Propose and pass a bill which limits the amount of land that is being converted from agricultural to industrial use. (6 pts.)
4. Propose and pass a bill which will regulate the transportation system in both trucking and rail, therefore lowering transportation rates. (4 pts.)
5. Propose and pass a bill which will appropriate more federal funding for low interest loans for farming (2 pts.)

#### Issues you oppose:

1. Any bill that proposes high tariffs on any natural resources. (i.e. oil)
2. Any bill that proposes high tariffs on imported finished goods.
3. Any bill that proposes the destruction of farm land.
4. Any bill that proposes an increase in transportation prices.

Note: If any related bills are passed, then your committee will be penalized 1 point.

Activity: **Congressional Simulation - 14** Name \_\_\_\_\_  
Subject: **The Legislative Branch** Date \_\_\_\_\_

### COMMITTEE INFORMATION SHEET

#### The House Committee for Defense and the Military

Your committee is interested in government contracts for military purposes, therefore you decide who will get contracts and how the funding is handed out. The committee is responsible for supporting businesses which have a definite interest in military spending. Companies which have an interest in your committee are companies such as Boeing, MacDonnell- Douglas, General Motors, and General Dynamics. They apply pressure on your committee to represent their interests through lobbyists.

Agenda:

#### Issues you support:

1. Propose and pass a bill which increases military spending in the federal budget. (10 pts.)
2. Propose and pass a bill which increases foreign military involvement in the Middle East. (8pts)
3. Propose and pass a bill which increases spending for aerospace and technology research. (6 pts.)
4. Propose and pass a bill which increases spending for underwater radar research and the use of dolphins for military intelligence. (4 pts.)
5. Propose and pass a bill which increases the restriction on the number and types of products that can be exported to sensitive nations.

#### Issues you oppose:

1. Any bill that sets employment quotas for government contracts.
2. Any bill that calls for a cut in defense spending.
3. Any bill that restricts the military use of animals in experiments.
4. Any bill that increases tariffs on imported raw materials.

Note: If any related bills are passed, then your committee will be penalized 1 point.

Activity: **Congressional Simulation - 15** Name \_\_\_\_\_  
Subject: **The Legislative Branch** Date \_\_\_\_\_

### COMMITTEE INFORMATION SHEET

#### The House Committee for Commerce and Industry

Your committee is interested in technological business, as well as other forms of business. The committee is responsible for regulating the business practices such as tariffs, trade, trusts, and business standards. The companies which have an interest in you are companies such as IBM, Microsoft, Cisco, Dupont, and GE. They apply pressure on your committee to represent their interests through lobbyists.

Agenda:

#### **Issues you support:**

1. Propose and pass a bill that gives tax breaks to big business. (10 pts.)
2. Propose and pass a bill that lowers or abolishes the quota system for hiring minority employees. (8 pts.)
3. Propose and pass a bill that will increase tariffs on imported goods. (6pts.)
4. Propose and pass a bill that lowers environmental restrictions on industry. (4 pts.)
5. Propose and pass a bill that increases funding for vocational training and apprenticeship programs. (2 pts.)

#### **Issues you oppose:**

1. Any bill that limits exportation of products.
2. Any bill that calls for the increase in taxes on big business.
3. Any bill that limits the amount of land that can be used for or by big business.
4. Any bill that calls for an increase in factory emissions standards and increased penalties for waste disposal.
5. Any bill that calls for an increase on tariffs on imported goods.

Note: If any related bills are passed, then your committee will be penalized 1 point.



Activity: **Congressional Simulation - 16** Name \_\_\_\_\_  
Subject: **The Legislative Branch** Date \_\_\_\_\_

### COMMITTEE INFORMATION SHEET

#### The Senate Committee for Health, Welfare, and Education

Your committee is interested in issues which affect the public. Issues such as teachers salaries and educational funding, Civil Rights and public aid, as well as pharmaceuticals and health care. The committee is responsible for the regulation of these different issues and public interests, therefore groups that would take an interest in you would be the NAACP, AARP NEA, and pharmaceutical companies. They apply pressure on your committee to represent their interests through lobbyists.

Agenda:

#### Issues you support:

1. Propose and pass a bill that increases the taxes on big business in order to support welfare benefits. (10 pts.)
2. Propose and pass a bill that puts a tax hike on utility companies that will go towards education. (8 pts.)
3. Propose and pass a bill that reduces the regulations on experimental pharmaceuticals that are to be tested by the FDA. (6 pts.)
4. Propose and pass a bill that increases the number of equal opportunity positions in the work places. For a company to receive a government contract the company must have at least 30% minorities. (4 pts.)
5. Propose and pass a bill that increases social security benefits which will be funded by cutting back on defense spending. (2 pts.)

#### Issues you oppose:

1. Any bill proposed that will ban the use of animals for medical testing or experiments.
2. Any bill that will increase the defense budget.
3. Any bill that will decrease taxes on big business.
4. Any bill that proposes a decrease in affirmative action regulation
5. Any bill that calls for a decrease in social programs.

Note: If any related bills are passed, then your committee will be penalized 1 point.

Activity: **Congressional Simulation - 17** Name \_\_\_\_\_  
Subject: **The Legislative Branch** Date \_\_\_\_\_

### COMMITTEE INFORMATION SHEET

#### The Senate Committee for the Environment

Your committee is interested in Environmental issues such as chemical dumping, oil drilling, waste management, and pollution. The committee is responsible for pollution control, and chemical waste dumping. Groups which have a vested interest in the goals of your committee are Greenpeace, Sierra Club, Audubon Society, People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals, E.P.A., and waste management companies. They apply pressure on your committee to represent their interests through lobbyists.

Agenda:

#### Issues you support:

1. Propose and pass a bill that places tougher demands on off shore drilling. (10 pts.)
2. Propose and pass a bill that mandates federal standards on auto emissions and safety standards, as well as factory emissions. (8 pts.)
3. Propose and pass a bill that bans the construction and use of nuclear power plants. (6 pts.)
4. Propose and pass a bill that raises the penalties for chemical dumping and oil spills. (4 pts.)
5. Propose and pass a bill that bans animal testing for pharmaceutical companies. (2 pts.)

#### Issues you oppose:

1. Any bill that calls for the mistreatment or misuse of animals.
2. Any bill that eases restrictions on waste disposal and cleanup.
3. Any bill that will allow for further destruction of unspoiled lands.
4. Any bill that lowers restrictions on the use of pesticides.
5. Any bill that calls for the lowering of emissions.

Note: If any related bills are passed, then your committee will be penalized 1 point.

Activity: **Congressional Simulation - 18** Name \_\_\_\_\_  
Subject: **The Legislative Branch** Date \_\_\_\_\_

### COMMITTEE INFORMATION SHEET

#### The Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee

Your committee is interested in natural resources such as oil, iron ore, and other minerals, as well as in the different forms of energy. The committee is responsible for regulation of these different forms of energy and resources. Therefore there are many companies which are concerned with the decisions that are made in your committee. Companies which have a vested interest in your committee are companies such Exxon Mobil, and other oil companies, as well as public utility companies. They apply pressure on your committee to represent their interests through lobbyists.

Agenda:

#### **Issues you support:**

1. Propose and pass a bill that places high tariffs on oil imports. (10 pts.)
2. Propose and pass a bill that limits Federal control on electric prices. (8 pts.)
3. Propose and pass a bill that supports the deposit of nuclear waste on landfills. (6 pts.)
4. Propose and pass a bill that allows for the creation of monopolies on public utilities. (4 pts.)
5. Propose and pass a bill that supports off-shore drilling in ocean oil reserves. (2 pts.)

#### **Issues you oppose:**

1. Any bill that raises the penalty for dumping of chemicals and the cleanup of oil spills.
2. Any bill that proposes a tax hike on utility companies.
3. Any bill that proposes a tax break to business.
4. Any bill that propose a ban on nuclear power.

Note: If any related bills are passed, then your committee will be penalized 1 point.

The Almost Painless Guide to the Branches of Government  
is produced and distributed by:

Media Rich Learning  
[www.mediarichlearning.com](http://www.mediarichlearning.com)

