



**Lesson Plan: *Balancing Act***

**Activity Steps:**

Purpose	Teacher	Students
<p>INTO</p>	<p><u>Teacher Instruction Strategies</u></p> <p>Pass out object (ball, dice, cards, etc) to students who are arranged in groups of five. Tell them to play a game (purposefully do not say a name of a game, rules of a game, etc.). Allow students about 7-10 minutes of play.</p> <p>Have students discuss what it was like to play a game without a name or established set of rules. Write down what student share on poster paper.</p> <p>Review with students how as a class you set up class rules using United States Constitution as model. Refer to Class Constitution that was created the first week of school. (Note: posting of Classroom Constitution and the signatures of all students on the document with poster heading <i>below</i>.)</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>Classroom Constitution Rights/Responsibilities/Rules</i></p>	<p><u>Student Activities</u></p> <p>Students dialogue what game they will play, and determine what rules they will need</p> <p>Students will share out frustrations and lessons gleaned from group experience</p> <p>Students will observe original class document</p>



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	<p>Ask students what kinds of things might happen in a classroom without rules, without a leader or consequences. Note any “links” or “tie-in” to the playing of the object game at beginning of lesson.</p> <p>Remind students that all 13 colonies were doing their own thing with money, armies, and government. They needed some conformity.</p> <p>*Three-legged stool story with one leg breaking shows “balance” and keeping one in place...all three legs must be same length and bear the same weight to make things work.</p> <p><i>Teacher Talk: While milking a cow by hand, the farm lad or dairy maid would sit on a low, sturdy stool, usually constructed with three legs in a tripod arrangement. Even if they were never used for this specific purpose, such three-legged stools are today collectively known as milking stools. The splayed leg arrangement provided stability on the often uneven stone or dry earth floors that were typical of early farm buildings.</i></p>	<p>Students will comment/discuss, share out difficulties they might experience while the teacher writes comments on poster paper.</p> <p>Students respond in class discussion to the inadequacies of weight bearing objects – if unequal.</p>
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<p>Other options: Use a seesaw with three equal weight items or use a balance scale from science lab or kit</p> <p>Using tri-fold graphic organizer students take notes and use icons during teacher talk (see sample graphic organizer in teacher resource section) provide paper/folding instructions to students...</p> <p>Teacher Talk: <i>Label tri-fold with each branch of government as headings: legislative, judicial and executive. List descriptors for each legislative-congress; judicial-supreme court; executive-president. Under each branch label sections as: Main Responsibility; Members; Key Powers (see model).</i></p> <p>Read Aloud: <u>Shh! We're Writing the Constitution</u> by Jean Fritz  <u>If You Were There When They Signed the Constitution</u> by Elizabeth Levy  <u>A More Perfect Union: The Story of Our Constitution</u> by Betsy Maestro/Giulio Maestro</p> <p>Introduce vocabulary:  checks and balances, Constitution, three branches: legislative, judicial, executive; veto, election, appointment, compromise, rights, due process, Continental Congress, Preamble, Amendments, Declaration of Independence.</p>	<p>Students will follow teacher directions for creating a tri-fold note taking graphic organizer. Make sure all tri-folds are labeled correctly in no particular order</p> <p>Students may be making notes in tri-fold or listening quietly</p> <p>Students will write vocabulary words and definitions on one of the organizer flaps.</p> <p>Students take notes.  Students will periodically turn and share with classmate information they just wrote down.</p>
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<p>Teacher Talk:</p> <p>“We have a system in our United States government that allows us to ensure rights, responsibilities, and freedom for law-abiding citizens. To do this we have three branches of government. This created a more stable form of government following the Revolutionary War.”</p> <p>Show the three-legged stool with legs in place</p> <p>Show what happens when one leg does not do what it is supposed to do. Remove one leg, then two. Explain that like a one-legged stool, the central government was weak, ineffective, and very unstable under the Articles of Confederation. The delegates at the Constitutional Convention redesigned the government to create three strong branches (legs) to better meet the needs of a nation that was growing.</p> <p>Information to include in tri-fold:</p> <p><b>EXECUTIVE:</b> This branch allows the President to <b>execute</b> or carry out the laws established in the Legislative branch of government.</p> <p><b>LEGISLATIVE:</b> Congress (US) makes the <b>laws</b> that govern. There are 2 representatives from each state in the Senate and 435 members in the House of Representatives.</p>	<p>Students take notes. Students turn to each other and tell each other why our government is compared to a three-legged stool.</p>
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	<p><b>JUDICIAL:</b> Supreme Court Justices (9) uphold the laws and ensure <b>justice</b> by carrying out the laws established by our national government.</p> <p>Show School House Rock video: <i>Three Ring Circus</i> <i>Or How to Make a Bill</i> Or <a href="http://www.timeforkids.com/branches">www.timeforkids.com/branches</a></p> <p>Determine where students will store tri-fold. Prepare class for group/station activities.</p> <p><b>Activities/ Centers/Groups:</b> <b><u>Station 1</u></b> <b>Power, Power; Who Has the Power Matching</b> Teacher explains directions for activity: Explain that they will play a game that will test their knowledge of the powers held by each branch of government. Tell students to carefully look at each illustration and decide which constitutional power it represents. They should then place the illustration with the matching power card(s). Once the cards are checked, students may sort the cards into three piles by branch of government.</p>	<p>Students continue to take notes Stop them to have them group and share 1 item they just wrote about each branch of government</p> <p>Students continue to take notes during video.</p> <p>Place students in groups (no more than 5 groups).</p> <p>Students play the game. The cards will show nine situations. Each one requires action by one or two or three of the branches of the federal government. In the first 4 situations only one card may be played. In the remaining cards two or more may be played. If students want to they can put the cards in order of action taken by the three branches.</p>
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	<p><b><u>Station 2</u></b></p> <p><b>Our Government Concentration</b></p> <p>Teacher explains directions for activity: Students have three choices as to how this game is played. They must decide if they want to lay all the cards face up and place them on the chart in the matching/corresponding box. Or they may turn all the cards for both sets face up and match the two cards that go together. Or they may turn all cards face down in two separate groupings and match the corresponding pairs by turning them over two at a time.</p> <p><b><u>Station 3</u></b></p> <p><b>Constitutional Preamble Group Write</b> <i>(Write the preamble in the center of a sheet of chart paper)</i></p> <p>Teacher explains directions for this activity: Students will create 6 symbols to represent each of the six parts of the Preamble. In their own words, they will write a sentence that tells what each symbol means. Remind them this will be shared with the class and to plan their poster carefully and neatly. Place the student book <u>We The Kids</u> by David Catrow at the center to guide student brainstorming.</p>	<p>Students will decide if they want to lay all the cards face up and place them on the chart in the matching or corresponding box. They may also decide as a group to turn all the cards for both sets face up and match the two cards that go together. Or they may play the game by turning all cards face down in two separate groupings and match the corresponding pairs by turning them over two at a time.</p> <p>Large paper needed with prewritten preamble on paper for each group (5 total).</p> <p>Students will create 6 symbols to represent each of the six parts of the Preamble. In their own words, they will write a sentence that tells what each symbol means.</p>
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	<p><b><u>Station 4</u></b> <b>Three Branch Hula Hoop Game</b> Teacher explains directions for activity: There will be 3 hula hoops on the floor each representing a branch of our government. Each Branch will have a label. Students are to place a label (a branch of government) in each hoop. Then they decide as a team which cards correctly identify the branch of government that handles what the card states. Extension could include students lining up cards with how each branch checks each other.</p> <p><b><u>Station 5</u></b> <b>Comparison Quick Write</b> Teacher explains directions for playing activity: Tell students they should reflect and discuss how this lesson started. Remind them about the game without rules, the class without rules, and what we learned about states without rules. They should brainstorm together on the sheet all the ideas they can think of for five minutes. When the timer goes off they should begin writing their individual quick write responding to the prompt. Give them about 10 minutes.</p>	<p>Students will place a label of each branch in a different hula hoop. Students are to decide as a team which cards correctly identify the branch of government that handles what the card states. They will place the cards in the correct hula hoop.</p> <p>Need chart paper (1 per group=5 total) with the prompt: <i>Our class is made up of about _____ individuals. Suppose each of us followed only our own rules, our own ideas about learning, and our own way of doing things. Would our class be a pleasant place to be? Would the class be strong or weak? Explain in a brief quick write how that experience is similar to the experience of our founding fathers, and what they chose to do about it.</i></p>
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	<p><b>Lesson Closure</b></p> <p>Culminating Activity/or GATE – Reader’s Theatre</p> <p><u>Unite or Die How Thirteen States Became a Nation</u> by Charlesbridge Locate at: <a href="http://www.charlesbridge.com/client/client_pdfs/downloadables/UniteorDie_ReadersTheater.pdf">http://www.charlesbridge.com/client/client_pdfs/downloadables/UniteorDie_ReadersTheater.pdf</a></p> <p>Give assessments: Multiple Choice and Match Test On Demand Prompts – either assessment choice.</p>	<p>See Teacher Resource section</p> <p>See Teacher Resource section</p>
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**Special Needs of students are considered in this lesson:**

The activities in this lesson such as Power, Power; Concentration; Rewriting the Preamble, Hula Hoop branches and a quick write all provide the opportunity for strategic groups of students and meeting all student learning styles. For example, the hula hoop activity allows for kinesthetic learners and the grouping for the writing activities allows for partnering students with who may need assistance in this area. The Readers’ Theater activity provides another avenue for extending student learning and providing students the opportunity to participate in a visual/performing arts activity.

**Extension Ideas:**

- GATE and/or high achieving students may write their own classroom or family Bill of Rights.
- Utilize resources provided by Time for Kids online and the weekly magazine (Sept. 18, 2009) issue covers the Supreme Court and the three branches of government.