



Lesson Plan: Separation of Powers and the Power Grab Game

Context of the lesson within the unit:

This is the 3rd lesson in the United States Constitution Unit. This lesson will occur in the unit after the students have learn why the United States of America in the early 1780's needed to revise the current form of government. The students have studied the problems with the Articles of Confederation and reviewed the principles behind the Preamble of the United States Constitution. The basis for our Constitution was to implement a new government with three equal branches that balance and check each other. This lesson will explore those checks and balances.

Standards Addressed:

CA State Content Standards for Social Studies

12.4 Students analyze the unique roles and responsibilities of the three branches of government as established by the U.S. Constitution.

12.4.2 Explain the process through which the Constitution can be amended.

12.4.4 Discuss Article II of the Constitution as it relates to the executive branch, including eligibility for office and length of term, election to and removal from office, the oath of office, and the enumerated executive powers.

12.4.5 Discuss Article III of the Constitution as it relates to judicial power, including the length of terms of judges and the jurisdiction of the Supreme Court.

Common Core State Standards for English Language Arts and Literacy in History/Social Studies, Science, and Technical Subjects Grades 11-12 Students

Integration of Knowledge and Ideas

7. Evaluate the hypotheses, data, analysis, and conclusions in a science or technical text, verifying the data when possible and corroborating or challenging conclusions with other sources of information.



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Objective(s)

- Identify the three branches of American government.
- Describe the function of each branch of government.
- Explain how the "checks and balances" system functions to protect the individual citizen from illegal power hungry politicians.
- Describe how each branch of government is "separate" in its powers to the other branches of government.



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Essential Questions/Issues:

Why did the founders of the Constitution want change to be hard in our democracy?

Does social capital strengthen a republic?

Higher Order Thinking Questions

Even though there are three equal branches of our government defined by our constitution, do you believe that one has more power over the other two and why? (Analysis)

Evaluate and explain what you believe the most important power each of the 3 branches of government possess. Which branch has the single greatest power? (Evaluation)

Find a time in history in which the system of checks and balances was challenged the most. What was the result? (Application)



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Assessment:

Students will be evaluated through informal checks for understanding, teacher observation, self-reflections, and performing an authentic task (GRASPS) evaluated by a rubric. (See rubric and GRASPS)

	GRASPS: The purpose of this is to make the assessment (and therefore the lesson very realistic
GOAL	Your goal is to successfully check the powers of the other two branches of government.
Role	You will be assigned to one of the 3 branches of government defined by the United States Constitution. The roles will be either a congress person, a member of the President's Cabinet or a federal court judge.
Audience	Your audience will be the other two branches of government.
Situation	The year is 2015 and the United States Government has run rampant. The 3 branches of government have been trying to create and pass laws that go beyond their powers defined in the United States Constitution. A meeting has been called with representatives from each branch attending in order to check and balance the power once and for all. Situations that each branch has tried to pass will be brought to the table giving the other two branches the opportunity to check and stop that action from happening.
Performance	Your performance will take place in a secluded and secret meeting location, allowing you the opportunity to speak freely and voice your power over the other two branches.
Standards for Success	Armed with your copy of the constitution and your own knowledge of the power of your branch, you will race against the other branches to locate where a breach in the constitution has occurred by another branch. If you successfully check the other branch, points will be awarded to you. The group with the most points will be declared the winner. Once the game is over each group will be given five minutes to prepare a three-minute argument explaining why they believe their branch in reality is the most powerful branch of our government, as well as addressing the essential questions of the lesson.



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Quality Criteria

Level of Understanding demonstrated	Advanced	Proficient	Basic	Below Basic
Argument for the most powerful branch	The groups' argument explaining why their branch of government was the most powerful showed clear understanding of the powers that their branch possesses and the powers of the other branches.	The groups' argument explaining why their branch of government was the most powerful showed clear understanding of the powers that their branch possesses, but was not as clear about the other branches powers.	The groups' argument explaining why their branch of government was the most powerful lacked a solid idea of the powers that they possessed. The group did not recognize any of the other branches powers.	There was no understanding of the concept of the separation of powers outlined by the constitution.
Essential questions	<p>The group mastered the concepts of both essential questions.</p> <p>1. Why did the founders of the Constitution want change to be hard in our democracy?</p> <p>2. Does social capital strengthen a republic?</p>	<p>The group mastered one of the essentials but only showed proficiency on the other...</p> <p>1. Why did the founders of the Constitution want change to be hard in our democracy?</p> <p>2. Does social capital strengthen a republic?</p>	<p>The group had some knowledge of the essential questions but lacked the high level thinking.</p> <p>1. Why did the founders of the Constitution want change to be hard in our democracy?</p> <p>2. Does social capital strengthen a republic?</p>	<p>The group had only a basic understanding of the essentials, showing no ability to address any higher order thinking questions.</p> <p>1. Why did the founders of the Constitution want change to be hard in our democracy?</p> <p>2. Does social capital strengthen a republic?</p>
Time Limit	2:55 -3:05	2:45-3:15	2:35-3:25	Below 2:35 Over 3:25



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Lesson Activity Steps: Lesson Activity Steps: DAY 1

Purpose?	Teacher	Students
<p>Into (Hook) 5 minutes</p> <p>Magazine Brainstorm.</p>	<p>Pass out one magazine to each student. Tell the students that they all have different types of magazines but all of them have one very important thing in common. Have the students shout out what they believe is the important common trait throughout all the magazines. After a few minutes tell them that they are all wrong and that the common important trait all the magazines have in common is that they all contain clear examples of the Articles of the Constitution within them.</p>	<p>Will brainstorm and shout out answers to the teachers opening question.</p>
<p>Through</p> <p>Notes and activity on the Articles of the Constitution.</p> <p>35 minutes</p>	<p>However you feel best go over the seven articles of the constitution making sure to point out the key aspects of each article. Have the students take notes.</p> <p>Once you have gone over the seven Articles of the Constitution have the students get out a blank piece of paper and tell them that they will now focus on Articles 1-3. Their assignment is to thumb through the magazines and find three different examples for Article 1, Article 2, and Article 3 of the constitution. They will cut out the picture they found, paste it to their paper and then jot down the exact article they are using. For example, if a student finds a picture of soldiers, they can cut that picture out, paste in on their paper and underneath the picture write the following:</p> <p>Article II Executive Power, Section 2, Clause 1: <i>the President is the Commander in Chief of the armed forces, and of the state militias when these are called into federal service.</i></p> <p>The students will do 3 of these for each section.</p>	<p>Students will be taking notes on the lecture of the Articles of the Constitution, following along with their own constitutions.</p> <p>Students will flip through their magazines looking for pictures that represent the first three articles of Government. They will cut them out and paste them on their blank piece of paper and write the appropriate response under the picture.</p>



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<p>Beyond</p> <p>40 Minutes</p>	<p>See GRASPS for the Situation:</p> <p>Divide the class into three groups: Executive, Legislative and Judicial branches of government. Each student should have a copy of the Constitution with them.</p> <p>In each round the teacher will give each branch of government an opportunity for an unconstitutional "Power Grab". The remaining two groups have two minutes to find proof from the Constitution (amendments included) by Article, section and clause, why the power grab is unconstitutional.</p> <p>When a person thinks he finds the appropriate check he yells "check". He must be prepared to respond with the answer immediately. If wrong, others may try to block the grab for power with the two minutes, alternating between branches until the two minutes are gone or the answer is correct.</p> <p>When checked correctly, the branch received 10 points. If no one gets the correct answer, the branch grabbing power gets 5 points. No penalty for wrong answers.</p> <p>A round is a question for each branch</p> <p>See attached sheet for Power Grabs. Once the game is over each group will be given 5 minutes to prepare a 3 minute argument to why they believe their branch in reality is the most powerful branch of our government as well as addressing the essential questions of the lesson.</p>	<p>The students will take on the role of a member of the executive, legislative or judicial branches of government. They will try and locate the unconstitutional "power grab" in the time allotted to earn points for their team.</p> <p>Students will group up and prepare a 3 minute presentation on why they believe their branch is the most powerful branch of our government. They will also include within the three minute presentation their answers to the essential questions of the lesson.</p>
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Special Needs of students are considered in this lesson:

Students with special needs are considered in this lesson as students can be partnered with another student taking into account any special needs regarding use of technology, research skills, and writing abilities. In addition the notes given will be differentiated for EL and below grade level learners with guided notes. On grade level learners will be given differentiated notes with the key terms listed to guide their learning. Above grade level learners will have the opportunity to practice and use their own note taking system.

Extension Ideas:

Have the students research some of the most famous presidential vetoes, impeachments of any government official, or a Supreme Court case checking another branch of government.



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Materials and Resources Needed:

Copies of the United States Constitution, White board, magazines scissors glue sticks or tape.

References:

United States Constitution



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Power Grabs:

1. President - A serious economic crisis takes place in the U.S. The President decides to run for a third term. (Amendment 22) Congress - Congress passes a law taking 10% on lumber being exported. (Article I, Section 9, Paragraph 5) Courts - The Court rules that the government may not issue patents because of the need for technological advance. (Article I, Section 8, Paragraph 8)

2. President - The President declares war on China. (Article I, Section 8, Paragraph 11) Congress - Congress passes a law that people from Washington may not drive cars in Oregon because of pollution. (Article IV, Section 2, Paragraph 1) Courts - Since Washington D.C. is not in any state, residents there may not vote in national elections. (Amendment 23)

3. President - The President appoints Dan Evans to Senator Adams' seat when he resigns due to a personal scandal. (Article I, Section 3, Paragraph 2) Congress - Congress impeaches Bush because he pardons North. The Democratic Congress uses their anger to get him. (Article II, Section 4) Courts - The Court rules that because of our large national debt, the U.S. can no longer borrow money. (Article I, Section 8, Paragraph 2)

4. President - To fight terrorism, anyone found guilty of hijacking will be punished by having their fingernails ripped off. (Amendment 8) Congress - Congress decides that beards are illegal; anyone who wore one in the last year must a \$100 fine. (Article I, Section 9, Paragraph 3) Courts - The Court decides that religion and politics don't mix, therefore; no government official is required to take an oath of office. (Article II, Section 1, Paragraph 8 or Article VI, Section 3)

5. President - The President decides that Congress will meet in regular session on December 15 of each year. (Amendment 20, Section 2) Congress - Congress decides to impeach President Bush with the President Pro-Temp of the Senate presiding. (Article I, Section 3, Paragraph 6) Courts - The ambassador to Spain is brought home and tried in a New York court for crimes. (Article III, Section 2, Paragraph 1)



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6. President - The President orders that a mass murderer be sent back to Washington from Oregon. (Article IV, Section 2, Paragraph 2) Congress - A House member dies, the House takes four days off to mourn but the Senate says they can only have two days off. (Article I, Section 5, Paragraph 4) Courts - The Court rules that the heads of departments may no longer make appointments of inferior officers, but only the President of the U.S. (Article II, Section 2, Paragraph 2)
7. President - Paul Newman comes to town and cuts off the heads of all parking meter. President Bush pardons him. (Article II, Section 2, Paragraph 1) Congress - Congress passes a law naming 15 university students guilty of crimes against the government - orders them expelled from school. (Article I, Section 9, Paragraph 3) Courts - A male teacher sues over sexual discrimination by taking the case directly to the Supreme Court. (Article III, Section 2, Paragraph 2)
8. President - Your land is in the way of a federal highway, so the President takes your land without compensation. (Amendment 5) Congress - Congress passes a law that says you can sue your state in federal court. (Amendment 11) Courts - The Court rules that income tax is illegal and you don't have to pay. (Amendment 16)
9. President - The President orders that since all citizens over 18 want to vote for the President, they may do so by popular vote. (Amendment 26) Congress - Congress decides because of the contributions of Pete Rose in baseball, they will honor him with the title, "Sir Pete Rose". (Article I, Section 10, Paragraph 1) Courts - The Court rules that because of the difficulty of finding honest, law abiding they will allow Senator Mark Hatfield be Secretary of Interior. (Article I, Section 6, Paragraph 2)
10. President - The President, concerned about drug violations in the state of Washington, allows the Governor and Attorney General to suspend democracy for a period of one month. (Article IV, Section 4) Congress - Congress decides to change the Constitution to allow the President to be elected to one term of six years. (Article IV or Amendment 22) Courts - The Courts find Poindexter guilty of treason on the basis of testimony of Ollie North, alone. (Article III, Section 3, Paragraph 1)



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Citizen Essay Prompts

Your assignment is to write a 2 page typed essay to one of the following prompts. RHS writing standards apply as well as proper citation. You must use at least one outside source; in class materials are acceptable. Only choose one of the following prompts.

The 3 prompts have a different point scale value. Please choose carefully after you assess each question and its point scale value:

Prompts:

#1 Point Scale 0-75

Reflect on your own citizenship. What type of citizen have you been in your local community? How can you improve your role as a citizen in the now and in the future?

#2 Point Scale 0-89

Citizens have responsibilities. Citizens have rules to follow. What do you feel are the most important Citizenship qualities and why? Why do many people ignore their citizenship duties?

#3 Point Scale 0-100

Is a good citizen the same thing as a good man? Why or why not?