Instructional Design

U.S. Branches of Government



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**Rationale**

Social Studies, a subject many students find dreary to learn, is actually a subject they must learn. Learning about this topic, open the doors for several topics to be explored and evaluated. Topics such as American history, geography, government, civic participation, etc. are included in the subject Social Studies. The National Council for the Social Studies standards states, “In social studies, students develop a core of basic knowledge and ways of thinking drawn from many academic disciplines, learn how to analyze their own and others’ opinions on important issues, and become motivated to participate in civic and community life as active, informed citizens.” Through this subject is how students learn civic duty, geography, history, global network, and government functions. These topics are relevant for students to learn because it affects their everyday lifestyle, as well as, their environment.

This unit will be compromised of lesson plans aligned with the Basic Lesson Planning Model format and incorporate both the behaviorist and constructivist theories of teaching and learning (Chiarelott, 2006). Throughout the unit, I will conduct observations to determine if the student learning activities and teaching strategies used are effective learning methods that will increase student’s knowledge of material. If they are not, then I will make modifications accordingly, but if they are, then we will move forward toward the next concept. The student’s performance will determine what should be assessed and to what extent of assessment should be given.

This unit will introduce students to the United States three branches of Government. It will familiarize them to how the Government was created and how it is relevant to today’s society. Students will learn about the Legislative branch, judicial branch, and Executive branch of government. They will learn the powers of each branch, as well as, the system of check and balances. With this unit, students will learn the importance of why each branch is separate but equal. With the information learned, student will be able to relate past events to today’s current issues. This unit also utilizes authentic assessments, project methods, and self-directed learning that align with the contextualized teaching and learning curricular practices which can all be linked to the work of John Dewey, Colonel Francis Parker, and William Wirt (Chiarelott, 2006).

In conclusion, this unit will help students learn the concepts, skills and techniques that will help them to understand the U.S. three branches of Government. The need for learning about the three branches of government will clearly help students based on contextual teaching and learning methods and conception. Students will learn why they were established and how they relate to current issues today. The National Council for Social Studies states, “The primary purpose of social studies is to help young people develop the ability to make informed and reasoned decisions for the public good as citizens of a culturally diverse, democratic society in an interdependent world.”

**Unit Intended Outcomes**

***U.S. Branches of Government***

**Subunit One: Legislative Branch**

* Students will read and analyze Article 1 of the Constitution.
* Students will define the purpose of the legislative branch.
* Students will describe the role of Congress.
* Students will examine the functions of the Senate
* Students will examine the functions of the House of Representatives.
* Students will research and identify current Congressional issues.
* Students will read and analyze past events, such as the Great Compromise.
* Students will examine the importance of various agencies under the legislative branch.

**Subunit Two: Executive Branch**

* Students will read and analyze Article 2 of the Constitution.
* Students will define the purpose and role of the Executive Branch.
* Students will define and examine the roles of the Presidents and Vice Presidents.
* Students will be able to describe the similarities and differences of the President and Vice President.
* Student will research and identify the current President and evaluate his leadership role.
* Students will examine the role and functions of Cabinet members.
* Students will understand and describe the Executive agencies.
* Students will understand and describe the Independent agencies.

**Subunit Three: Judicial Branch**

* Students will read and analyze Article 3 of the Constitution
* Students will define the purpose and role of the Judicial Branch.
* Student will read and analyze the role of the Supreme Court and its functions.
* Students will research and identify current Supreme Court Justice appointed by the President.
* Students will describe the similarity and differences of the Supreme Court and the Federal Court.
* Students will evaluate the Judicial Review process.

**Subunit Four: Checks and Balances**

* Students will define the Separation of Powers among all three branches.
* Students will determine which level of branch can veto bills and the process involved.
* Students will determine how laws are declared unconstitutional and who decides this action.
* Students will examine and enact the impeachment process.
* Students will research cases of Presidential impeachments and evaluate their validity.

**Pre-Assessment**

**A. Circle the term for each branch of government trait:**

**1. Contains the Supreme Court and other Executive Judicial Legislative**

**Courts.**

**2. Established in Article I of the Constitution Executive Judicial Legislative**

**3. Make laws Executive Judicial Legislative**

**4. Its head chooses ambassadors and Executive Judicial Legislative**

**department leaders.**

**5. Established in Article II of Executive Judicial Legislative**

**the Constitution.**

**6. Called Congress Executive Judicial Legislative**

**7. Review laws Executive Judicial Legislative**

**8. Created in a special way to protect the Executive Judicial Legislative**

**rights of small states**

**9. Vetoes laws Executive Judicial Legislative**

**10. Functions of the Senate Executive Judicial Legislative**

**11. Define the role of the President Executive Judicial Legislative**

**12. Have Cabinet members Executive Judicial Legislative**

**13. Established in Article III, of the Executive Judicial Legislative**

**Constitution**

**14. Role of the Judicial Review Executive Judicial Legislative**

**15. The House of Representatives Executive Judicial Legislative**

B. Short Response:

1. Describe the similarities and differences between the executive and

Legislative branches of government.

2. Which branch of government is most closely connected to the citizens?

**Lesson Plan-Day One**

U.S. Branches of Government:

**Legislative Branch**

**Unit Outcomes**:

* Students will read and analyze Article 1 of the Constitution.
* Students will define the purpose of the legislative branch.
* Students will describe the role of Congress.
* Students will examine the functions of the Senate
* Students will examine the functions of the House of Representatives.
* Students will research and identify current Congressional issues.
* Students will read and analyze past events, such as the Great Compromise.
* Students will examine the importance of various agencies under the legislative branch.

**Lesson Objectives**:

* Students will be able to define the role and functions of the Legislative Branch
* Students will be able to research and identify current Congress members.

**Materials Needed**:

* Pencils
* Journal Notebook
* Highlighter Marker
* Legislative Branch Handout
* Computer: website ([www.whitehouse.gov](http://www.whitehouse.gov))

**Procedures:**

1. Introductory Activity: (10 min)

* Inform student they will learn the Legislative Branch.
* Have student’s copy down terms from the board into their journal notebooks.
* Have them write down what they think the terms mean. Tell them to leave space for the correct definition.

**Terms**: **Constitutional Convention, population, The Great Compromise,**

**Senate, House of Representatives, distinguished, stability, resident, treaties, ambassadors, unanimous consent, debating, amending, filibuster, cloture, and Speaker of the House.**

2. Developmental Activity: (30 minutes)

* Handout Legislative worksheet to each student
* Read as a whole group
* As they read, have students use their markers to highlight the role and functions.
* After reading, discuss as a class, the role and functions of the legislative branch of government.

**Ex**: Due to the Great Compromise the legislative was divided into two groups: Senate and House of Representatives.

House of Rep is called the lower Congress

The Senate gives small states an equal voice in the government.

* Have students reflect back to their journal to compare the terms after reading the selection. Correct the terms in their journals.

3. Concluding Activity: (10-15 minutes)

* Have students complete the questions 1-10 of the worksheet.
* Discuss answers as a group.

**Assessment/Closure/Evaluations**:

1. Closure: (5 minutes)

* Have students explain the role of the legislature branch, the Senate, and the House of Representatives.

1. Evaluations: (15 minutes)

* Complete the essay questions for homework
* If time permits in class, have students research our current Senate and House of Representative members on the computer using website: [www.whitehouse.gov](http://www.whitehouse.gov)

[The Legislative Branch worksheet](../legislature%20branch.pdf): worksheet created by EdHelper.com

**Lesson Plan-Day Two**

U.S. Branches of Government:

**Executive Branch**

**Unit Outcomes:**

* Students will read and analyze Article 2 of the Constitution.
* Students will define the purpose and role of the Executive Branch.
* Students will define and examine the roles of the Presidents and Vice Presidents.
* Students will be able to describe the similarities and differences of the President and Vice President.
* Student will research and identify the current President and evaluate his leadership role.
* Students will examine the role and functions of Cabinet members.
* Students will understand and describe the Executive agencies.
* Students will understand and describe the Independent agencies.

**Time Period Objectives:**

* Students will be able to define the purpose and role of the Executive Branch.
* Students will be able to examine the roles of the President and Vice President.

**Materials Needed**:

* Student Journal Notebook
* Pencils
* Highlighter Marker
* Executive Branch Worksheet
* Computer: website ([www.whitehouse.gov](http://www.whitehouse.gov))

**Procedures**:

1. Introductory Activity: (10 minutes)

* Inform students they will learn about the Executive Branch today. Ask them if they know the powers of the **Executive Branch**.
* Read the new terms aloud and have them copy the terms from the board into their notebook and define them in their own words.

**Terms**: **independent, influential, schedule, Chief of Staff, federal budget, foreign policy, financial, predict, Attorney General, terrorism.**

* Remind them to leave space between the words for the correct definitions, in necessary.

1. Developmental Activity (30 minutes)

* Handout Executive Branch worksheet to each student.
* Read as a whole group.
* As they read, have students use their markers to highlight the role and functions of the branch.
* After reading, discuss as a class, the role and functions of the Executive Branch of Government.

**Ex**: The **Executive Branch** carries out the laws made by Congress.

The president is the leader of this branch of our government.

The Chief of Staff is the most **influential** person in this office

* Have students reflect back to their journal to compare the terms after reading the selection. Correct the terms in their journals.

3. Concluding Activity: (10-15 minutes)

* Have students complete questions 1-6 in handout, the word search and Fill-in the Blank portion.
* Discuss and correct as a whole group.

**Assessment/Closure/Evaluation**

1. Closure: Closure: (5 minutes)

* Have students explain the role of the Executive Branch, the President, The Vice President and the Independent Agencies.

1. Evaluations: (15 minutes)

* Complete the essay questions for homework.
* If time permits in class, have students research our current President and Vice President on the computer using website: [www.whitehouse.gov](http://www.whitehouse.gov)

The [Executive Branch worksheet](../executive%20branch.pdf): worksheet created by EdHelper.com

**Lesson Plan-Day Three**

U.S. Branches of Government:

**Judicial Branch**

**Unit Outcomes**:

* Students will read and analyze Article 3 of the Constitution
* Students will define the purpose and role of the Judicial Branch.
* Student will read and analyze the role of the Supreme Court and its functions.
* Students will research and identify current Supreme Court Justice appointed by the President.
* Students will describe the similarity and differences of the Supreme Court and the Federal Court.
* Students will evaluate the Judicial Review process.

**Time Period Objectives:**

* Students will be able to define the role and functions of the Judicial Branch.

**Materials Needed:**

* Student Journal Notebook
* Pencils
* Highlighter Marker
* Judicial Branch Worksheet
* Computer: website ([www.whitehouse.gov](http://www.whitehouse.gov))

**Procedures**:

1. Introductory Activity: (10 minutes)

* Inform students they will learn about the Judicial Branch today. Ask them if they know the powers of the **Judicial Branch**.
* Read the new terms aloud and have them copy the terms from the board into their notebook and define them in their own words.

**Terms: Supreme Court, jurisdiction, president, sued, jury, petitioner, verdict, circuits, affirm, endorsement, concurring opinion, dissenting opinion, controversial, grievances.**

* Remind them to leave space between the words for the correct definitions, in necessary.

1. Developmental Activity (30 minutes)

* Handout Judicial Branch worksheet to each student.
* Read as a whole group.
* As they read, have students use their markers to highlight the role and functions of the branch.
* After reading, discuss as a class, the role and functions of the Judicial Branch of Government.

**Ex**: The Constitution created the Supreme Court and gave the power of

establishing other courts to the Congress.

The **Judicial Branch** is made up of courts and judges.

Three separate court levels in this branch, **District Courts, Court of**

**Appeals**, and the **Supreme Court.**

* Have students reflect back to their journal to compare the terms after reading the selection. Give them time to correct the terms in their journals.

3. Concluding Activity: (10-15 minutes)

* Have students complete questions 1-10 in handout.
* Discuss and correct answers as a whole group.

**Assessment/Closure/Evaluation**

1. Closure: Closure: (5 minutes)

* Have students explain the role of the Judicial Branch, the Supreme courts and federal courts.

1. Evaluations: (15 minutes)

* Complete the essay questions for homework.
* If time permits in class, have students research our current Supreme Court Justices on the computer using website: [www.whitehouse.gov](http://www.whitehouse.gov)

The [Judicial Branch worksheet](../judicial%20branch.pdf): worksheet created by EdHelper.com

**Lesson Plan-Day Four**

U.S. Branches of Government:

**Checks and Balances**

**Unit Outcomes:**

* Students will define the Separation of Powers among all three branches.
* Students will determine which level of branch can veto bills and the process involved.
* Students will determine how laws are declared unconstitutional and who decides this action.
* Students will examine and enact the impeachment process.
* Students will research cases of Presidential impeachments and evaluate their validity.

**Time Period Objectives:**

* Students will be able to explain the three branches of Government.
* Students will be able to explain the system of Checks and Balances.

**Materials Needed:**

* Student Journal Notebook
* Pencils
* Highlighter Marker
* Three Branches Worksheet
* Computer: website ([www.whitehouse.gov](http://www.whitehouse.gov))

**Procedures**:

1. Introductory Activity: (15 minutes)

* Have students review each branch: Judicial, Executive, and Legislative.
* Inform students they will learn how all three branches work together to keep each on in check.
* Read the new terms aloud and have them copy the terms from the board into their notebook and define them in their own words.

**Terms: Override, unconstitutional, amendment, enforcement, dignitaries, treaties, appointed, political, tyrannical, judge, conflict of interest and impeachment**

* Remind them to leave space between the words for the correct definitions, in necessary.

1. Developmental Activity (30 minutes)

* Handout **Three Branches** worksheet to each student.
* Read as a whole group.
* As they read, have students use their markers to highlight the importance of the system of “Checks and Balances”.
* After reading, discuss as a class, how each branch works and what role they play to keep our government a democracy.

**Ex**: Our government has three branches.

A system of check and balances prevent them from gaining more

power.

The Constitution made sure our government was setup for the people.

* Have students reflect back to their journal to compare the terms after reading the selection. Give them time to correct the terms in their journals.

3. Concluding Activity: (10-15 minutes)

* Have students complete questions 1-8 in handout.
* Discuss and correct answers as a whole group.

**Assessment/Closure/Evaluation**

1. Closure: Closure: (5 minutes)

* Have students name each branch of government and explain their powers.
* Have students explain the system of checks and balances.

1. Evaluations: (15 minutes)

* Complete the essay questions for homework.
* If time permits in class, have students research the impeachment process and identify any Presidents who have been impeached on the computer using website: [www.whitehouse.gov](http://www.whitehouse.gov)

The [Three Branches worksheet](../three%20branches.pdf): worksheet created by EdHelper.com

**Post-Assessment**

**A. Circle the Branch for each government trait:**

**1. Contains the Supreme Court and other Executive Judicial Legislative**

**courts.**

**2. Established in Article I of the Constitution Executive Judicial Legislative**

**3. Make laws Executive Judicial Legislative**

**4. Its head chooses ambassadors and Executive Judicial Legislative**

**departmental leaders.**

**5. Established in Article II of Executive Judicial Legislative**

**the Constitution.**

**6. Called Congress Executive Judicial Legislative**

**7. Review laws Executive Judicial Legislative**

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Legislative branches of government.

2. Which branch of government is most closely connected to the citizens?