

Structure of the Constitution: Three Branches of Government

Name: _____ Date: _____

LEARNING OBJECTIVE

The student will build a visual model showing the three branches of government and their basic powers.

MATERIALS NEEDED

- poster board or paper plate/construction paper for a mobile
- string or yarn
- markers or colored pencils
- scissors
- hole punch (optional)
- a hanger or ruler (optional, for hanging mobile)

HANDS-ON ACTIVITY

1. Cut 3 shapes (circles, triangles, or rectangles) out of construction paper or paper plates, one for each branch: Legislative, Executive, and Judicial.
2. On the Legislative shape, write 'Congress (House + Senate)' and list 2 of its powers (e.g., makes laws, declares war, controls spending).
3. On the Executive shape, write 'President' and list 2 of its powers (e.g., enforces laws, commands the military, can veto bills).
4. On the Judicial shape, write 'Supreme Court' and list 2 of its powers (e.g., interprets laws, can declare laws unconstitutional).
5. Punch a hole in each shape and hang them from a hanger or ruler with string at 3 different lengths to create a mobile, OR arrange and glue them onto poster board connected with arrows showing they are equal and connected.

QUESTIONS

1. Name the three branches of government and one power of each.
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2. Which branch is responsible for making laws, and what two parts make up that branch?
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3. Why do you think the framers of the Constitution divided government power into three separate branches instead of giving it to one group?

4. Which branch has the power to declare a law unconstitutional, and why is that power important?
