

Unit 2 Study Guide – The Three Branches of Government

Directions

This is your study resource to use as we progress through our unit. It lists objectives, concepts, terms, and an outline of items that may appear on the unit exam. The essential guiding questions will help you tie together the important information from the chapter.

As you familiarize yourself with these terms, it is important to not only DEFINE or IDENTIFY the term, but also to know the term's importance. Ask yourself: Why is it important? How does it relate to the material we are studying? What relationship does a term have to another term on the list? IF YOU MERELY IDENTIFY OR DEFINE THE TERM WITHOUT KNOWING ITS IMPORTANCE YOU WILL FIND IT DIFFICULT TO SUCCEED ON TESTS AND QUIZZES.

Reading Assignments

United States Government: Our Democracy (chapters 5-7, 9-11 and 13-14)

By the end of Unit 3, students will be able to...

- **Explain** the structure and purpose of the United States Congress.
- **Analyze** how the powers of Congress have changed over time.
- **Explain** how the separation of powers influence the work of Congress.
- **Identify** the steps of the legislative process (how a bill becomes a law).
- **Identify** the structure and functions of the executive branch.
- **Analyze** how the roles of the president help fulfill the requirements of the office.
- **Provide examples** of how the role of the president has changed over time.
- **Explain** the role of the judicial system in our democracy.
- **Explain** the dual court system in the United States.
- **Identify** the “constitutional” checks each branch of government has over the other branches.

Legislative Branch – Chapters 5-7 (Structure of Congress, Congressional Powers, Congress at Work)

Essential Guiding Questions

1. Explain why the Constitution provides for a bicameral Congress. Explain why the House and Senate serve different terms.
2. How were senators originally chosen? How chosen today?
3. Identify the qualifications for the House and Senate
4. Describe the powers of Congress
5. Identify the differences between the House and Senate in terms of size, powers, and operation.
6. Describe the checks Congress has over the two branches and the checks the two branches have over Congress
7. Explain why members of Congress vote the way they do
8. Explain the process of how a bill becomes a law
9. Describe the various roles of Congressional leadership (Speaker, Majority Leader, Whip)
10. Who is responsible for drawing Congressional districts?

Key Vocabulary

“Necessary and Proper”

Bicameral

Cloture

Commerce Clause

Conference Committee

Expressed Powers

Filibuster

Gerrymander

Gibbons v. Ogden (1824)

Impeachment

Implied Powers

Iron Triangle

McCulloch v. Maryland (1819)

Pocket Veto

President Pro Tempore

Pork barrel Legislation

Pro Tempore

Redistricting

Speaker of the House

Veto

Whip

Executive Branch – Chapters 9-11 (The Presidency, Choosing the President, Structure and Function of the Executive Branch)

Essential Guiding Questions

1. Identify the qualifications of the presidency
2. Understand the basic order of Presidential succession
3. Describe the Constitutional Powers of the President
4. Describe the system of checks and balances as related to the Presidency
5. Explain how the powers of the president have expanded throughout our nation's history
6. Explain the various roles the president plays
7. Explain how the various branches govern the federal bureaucracy. What checks does Congress have?
8. What checks does the President have?

Key Vocabulary

22 nd Amendment	Chief of the Party	Impeachment
Bureaucracy	Chief of State	Iron Triangle
Chief Diplomat	Commander in Chief	Pardon
Chief Executive	Electoral College	Presidential Succession Act
Chief Guardian of the Economy	Executive Agreement	War Powers Act
Chief Legislator	Executive Order	

The Judicial Branch – Chapters 13-14 (Federal and State Court Systems, Supreme Court of the United States)

Essential Guiding Questions

1. Identify the terms, qualifications and selection process of federal judges
2. Explain how the power of the Judiciary may be checked by the Executive and Legislative branches.
3. Explain how the Judiciary checks the other branches of government.
4. Identify the courts established under Article III of the Constitution (District, Circuit, Supreme)
5. Describe the dual court system of the United States (federal and state/ civil and criminal).
6. Why are Presidential appointments of the Supreme Court important?

Key Vocabulary

<i>Amicus Curiae</i>	District Courts	Precedent
Appellate Courts	Judicial Activism	Rule of Four
Appellate Jurisdiction	Judicial Restraint	Supreme Court
Civil Law	Judicial Review	<i>Writ of certiorari</i>
Court of Appeals	<i>Marbury v. Madison</i>	
Criminal Law	Original Jurisdiction	

Unit Review and Enduring Understandings

- Congress makes the law and serves as a check on the other branches of government by among other things confirming presidential nominees, overseeing the executive branch, approving treaties, and using the impeachment power.
- Members of Congress may be influenced by their constituents and key supporters, staffers, political party, their own beliefs, the president, special-interest groups, and lobbyists when making laws.
- The president, as the head of the executive branch, executes laws, commands the arm forces, and engages with foreign leaders. The president's veto power and appointment powers serve as a check on the other branches.
- The president has several roles, both ceremonial and constitutionally, that help fulfill the job requirements.
- The judicial branch interprets the law and resolves disputes between parties and the power of judicial review serves as check on the other branches of government.
- The primary function of the Supreme Court is to resolve conflicts so that federal law and the Constitution are

uniform across the country.