



VOTE SMART

JUST THE FACTS

Lesson 1 - The Three Branches of Government

Standards: National Council for the Social Studies

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RH.6-8.7 Integrate visual information (e.g., in charts, graphs, photographs, videos, or maps) with other information in print and digital texts.

NCSS 3: People, Places, and Environments

NCSS 10: Civic Ideals and Practices

NCSS 6: Power, Authority and Governance

Objectives:

SWBAT (students will be able to) name the three branches of government.

SWBAT recognize each branch's basic function.

Subject Matter:

Executive Branch, Legislative Branch, Judicial Branch, Checks and Balances

Materials:

- Access to internet
- Warm Up/Cool Down worksheet
- Poster Project worksheet
- Materials for card game (however you choose to make it)

Procedure: (50-60 min)

Set/Hook/Warm up - Worksheet:

Pass out the sheet labeled "Lesson 1 Warm Up/Cool Down." Explain to students to fill out the first part, and to hold onto the sheet until the end of the lesson.

Lesson Essential Question: What are the different branches of government, and what are each of their major responsibilities?

Activity 1 - Videos and Chart:

Start off by showing these two interactive videos and one informative chart about the three branches of government. Before hitting play, pass out the worksheet labeled "Lesson 1 Activity 1." This will make sure students stay engaged during the videos:

1. [Brainpop video](#) on 3 branches of government

2. Followed by this slightly more animated [video](#) - School House Rock - Three Rings of Government.
3. Finally, show students a [chart](#) provided by Vote Smart. This chart should introduce students to the division of powers between branches of government.
4. Go over the activity worksheet with the students. Ask them what they filled out for the answers, correct any incorrect answers and field any questions.

Activity 2 - Poster Project:

Pass out the worksheet labeled "Lesson 1 Activity 2." Allow students to be creative by instructing them to create a poster in the shape of a tree with three branches. Each of these branches must:

1. Identify the branch of government (legislative, executive and judicial) it represents.
2. Label/identify what the branch does. Make sure it's colorful and neat in appearance. [Example](#) of how poster can look.

Activity 3 - Card Game:

Make a series of cards that have the following written on them:

Judicial branch, Legislative branch, Executive branch, House of Representatives, Senate, Vice President, President, Judges, and Supreme Court Justices.

Put students in small groups or pairs and instruct them to sort the cards, matching each branch of government with the people who work in them. Each branch has two matching cards.

Cool Down Exercise:

Have students take the Warm Up/Cool Down worksheet back out. Tell them to fill out the last question.

Assessment:

The teacher will collect the poster project and give a grade based on completion, accuracy and creativity. The teacher will informally assess student comprehension and participation during the card game exercise.

Self-Reflection:

Educational Video Project

Name:_____

1. Watch the two videos shown by the teacher

2. Write two characteristics about each branch of government:

Legislative Branch	Executive Branch	Judicial Branch
1.	1.	1.
2.	2.	2.

Branch Drawing Exercise

Name:_____

Draw a picture of a creative way to represent the three branches of government. Your picture must:

1. Identify each branch of government (legislative, executive and judicial).
2. Label/identify what each branch does.
3. Be colorful and neat in appearance.

(Example: A tree with each branch representing a branch of government)

Warm Up and Cool Down Activities

Name:_____

Warm Up Activity (Beginning of Lesson):

Name any important government positions you can think of.

Cool Down Activity (End of Lesson):

Why do you think there are three separate branches instead of one very powerful branch?
