

Unit #1: The Constitution & Executive Power

During this unit, our class will examine the roots of the U.S. Constitution and the power structure it set up. Attempting to avoid the dangers of a government that has too much power, the Founders originally set up an extremely weak central government under a document called The Articles of Confederation. The Articles, however, proved to be wholly inadequate to the needs of the new nation.

Following a revolt of Massachusetts farmers called Shay's Rebellion, 55 men met in Philadelphia to amend the Articles, but they quickly chose to scrap that plan of government. The new structure of government forged during this Constitutional Convention of 1787 created a much stronger central government, but that also had built-in limits: three federal branches (executive, legislative, and judicial) that could check and balance each other, a system of federalism in which the individual member states retained significant powers, and a Bill of Rights that specified limits on government power. Within the structures the Founders set up, what are the appropriate roles of national vs. state government power and executive (presidential) vs. legislative (congressional) power have been debated and yes, even fought over, right up to the present day.

We will also scrutinize the executive power established in the Constitution. We will delve into the powers the president has and how through industrialization, economic crises, and war, presidential power has grown immensely over time compared to what the Founding Fathers intended. We will explore the federal bureaucracy that has evolved over time to carry out the hundreds and hundreds of functions required in a nation of over 300 million people. We will analyze current and past presidential actions to determine if such actions were appropriate uses or abuses of presidential power.

During this unit, we will explore the following "Essential Questions":

What is the Constitution, and how did it become our structure of government?

In what ways does the Constitution divide up and limit government power?

To what degree and why has presidential power grown over time?

How much power should the president have & what constitutes an abuse of presidential power?

What is the Bureaucracy, how does it affect our everyday lives & why is it called "The 4th Branch of Government?"

Unit Assignments:

Current Event HW Article: Due Thurs. 1/19

Questionnaire Plus One Page about Self Plus Syllabus Quiz: Fri. 1/10

Completed Constitution Search: Due Fri. 1/17

Federalist Papers Socratic Seminar: Block Day, Thurs. 1/23

Federalism HW Article Due: Mon. 1/27

****Presidential Power Textbook HW Assignment Due: Fri. 1/31***

Presidential Abuse of Power Presentations: Block Day, Thurs. 2/6 & Fri. 2/7

Exam: Block Day, Thurs. 2/13

Unit Assignments Packet Due: Fri. 2/14

***Textbook HW #1 due Fri. 1/31:** Read Chapter 14 (pp. 390-97, 405-7 (on line-item veto)) and answer the questions referenced below in complete sentences-- Due Friday 9/6: Page 392 #1-6; Page 397 #1-7; Page 408 #1, 2, 4; Pp. 410-11 #11, 15, 31

Elections in the U.S.

Presidential elections are held on _____ after _____
_____ in November in years evenly divisible by _____.

Mid-term elections are held in _____ years in between presidential elections.

Current Composition of the California State Legislature and U.S. Congress

The California State Legislature (the state's congress) has two parts:

--- _____ : currently has _____ Democrats + _____ Republicans

--California State _____ has _____ Democrats + _____ Republicans

U.S. Congress of course has two parts:

--the U.S. House of Representatives currently has _____ Democrats + _____ Republicans

--the U.S. Senate currently has _____ Democrats + _____ Republicans

How a president is elected

Primaries/Caucuses	National Convention	Election Day	Electoral College meets
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In presidential races, each party's candidate is chosen from a pool of potential candidates through _____
_____ and _____.

Voters choose who they want to _____ in the general election.

The primaries are held from _____.

Depending on the _____ of the popular vote, each candidate gets that % of the
_____ from that state pledged to vote

for him/her at the convention.

What is a caucus? (take notes from video clip)

National party conventions are held during the _____ before the election. Among other things, three major events that happen during the convention are:

- 1)
- 2)
- 3)

General Election Campaign (_____)

—the parties' _____ make their case through _____, _____, etc.

On Election Day, the voters vote for their candidate of preference which determines what _____ are chosen.

In mid-December the electors from each state meet in _____ to cast their _____.

How the Electoral College works

Each state has a _____, that is, a _____ equal to the number of _____ from the state plus the number of _____.

Examples:

California has _____ Representatives + _____ Senators = _____ Electoral Votes

Alabama has _____ Representatives + _____ Senators = _____ Electoral Votes

In most states, whichever candidate gets more _____ votes gets _____ that states electoral votes

Whoever gets _____ electoral votes WINS.

Why did the Founding Fathers set it up this way in Article 2 of the Constitution?

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-

Main problems with the Electoral College

- a)
- b)
- c)

Name _____

The Constitution in Brief

The Constitution is a _____ based on two key principles:

1)

2)

Three branch division of powers

Branch	Power

House of Representatives: Term Length: _____
 Number of possible terms: _____
 Minimum Age: _____
 Circle one: Can IMPEACH TRY the president

U.S. Senate : Term Length: _____
 Number of possible terms: _____
 Minimum Age: _____
 Circle one: Can IMPEACH TRY the president

Special Powers that ONLY the SENATE has: _____

Together House & Senate can _____

Expressed Powers of Congress--powers specifically and explicitly given to Congress in the Constitution's Article I Section 8:

_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

The Necessary and Proper Clause--Article I, Section 8, Clause 18:

The Congress shall have Power ... To make all Laws which shall be necessary and proper for carrying into Execution the foregoing Powers...

What does this mean? Does "necessary and proper" mean ABSOLUTELY NECESSARY or CONVENIENT AND USEFUL?

Implied Powers

President : Term Length: _____
Number of possible terms: _____
Minimum Age: _____
Must be a _____

In your opinion, should a person have to be born in the U.S. to be eligible to run for president?

Presidential powers: Makes _____
Appoints _____
Serves as _____

Judicial Branch = _____ + _____

Length of Term: _____

Can declare laws _____; this power is known as

Limits to Government Power

The Constitution sets up a _____ that has a lot of power, but is _____ in four major ways:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.

The Great Compromise created a Congress with _____:
The House of Representatives based on _____ and
The Senate where there is equal representation _____,

	Senate	House of Representatives

The Three Branches: The Checks and Balances Triangle

The Federalism Venn Diagram

Federalism = _____

The Seven Roles and Multiple Powers of the President

1. _____-in-Chief

2. Chief _____

3. Chief _____

4. Chief _____

5. Chief of _____

6. Chief of _____

7. Chief _____

Name _____

The Federal Bureacracy

Bureaucracy definition: _____

1. Executive Office of the President:

2. The Cabinet-- _____ to the president

Each Cabinet member _____

Each is appointed by _____ and approved by _____.

The Big 4 Cabinet Departments

Department	Responsibilities	Current Head

Other Cabinet Departments

3. Independent Agencies

4. Independent Regulatory Commissions

5. Government Corporations