

# **Branches of Government for middle/high school**



**Special Needs for Special Kids**







This unit was created  
with this guy in mind. He  
has autism and an  
intellectual disability. He  
is a non-reader but shows  
interest in what his peers  
are learning. He is my  
tester!!



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This unit contains almost 200 pages of material. But, don't worry!! I have included a **18 day lesson** plan to help you make the most of everything packed in this unit. The activities highlighted in yellow have a digital version included.

# Branches of Government Lesson Plan for High School

## Preparation

- Print out a vocabulary board for each student to use throughout unit
  - Laminate or place in page protector
- Books
  - Print out, laminate, and bind
  - OR your students can listen to the pre-recorded version
- Vocabulary cards
  - Print out a set of cards onto cardstock and laminate
  - Make one set for each student and also one for the teacher to use in I Spy games

## Preassessment (do day 1 before starting lesson)

- Choose the form of the assessment that best fits the learning level of your students
- Give the assessment to assess what your students may already know
- I cannot emphasize enough how important this step is. If you want to see growth, this preassessment is so important!!

## Teaching Tips

1. *Color Coding:* this is a really easy way to add more structure to a matching activity. Outline or color in an empty box or sorting label. Outline or color in the corresponding picture symbols the same colors. Becomes a color matching task.
  - a. For more info, read more here:  
<https://specialneedsforspecialkids.org/2015/09/05/using-color-coding-for-differentiation/>
  - b. I also have a blog post on differentiating one activity 3 ways:  
<https://specialneedsforspecialkids.org/2018/10/22/differentiating-1-activity-3-ways-easily-and-effectively/>
2. *Make your own copies of the activities:* Every day I review the activity we did yesterday. For that reason:
  - a. I often complete the activity myself and often laminated it for easy review that I could use year after year.
  - b. My copies were also helpful as either a model for students who needed more support or as a way for more advanced students to self-check their

The lesson plans contain:

Overall tips for teaching students with significant needs



# Quick Look

Day	Activity	Day	Activity	Day	Activity
1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Book</li> <li>• Vocab cards intro</li> <li>• Circle map</li> </ul>	8	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Book</li> <li>• Vocab cards activity</li> <li>• Matching activity</li> </ul>	15	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Book</li> <li>• Vocab cards activity</li> <li>• Close worksheet</li> </ul>
2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Book</li> <li>• Vocab cards activity</li> <li>• Circle map</li> </ul>	9	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Book</li> <li>• Vocab cards activity</li> <li>• Check and balances activity</li> </ul>	16	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Book</li> <li>• Vocab cards activity</li> <li>• Close worksheet</li> </ul>
3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Book</li> <li>• Vocab cards activity</li> <li>• Circle map</li> </ul>	10	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Book</li> <li>• Vocab cards activity</li> <li>• Check and balances activity</li> </ul>	17	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Book</li> <li>• Vocab cards activity</li> <li>• Close worksheet</li> </ul>
4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Book</li> <li>• Vocab cards activity</li> <li>• Flow chart</li> </ul>	11	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Book</li> <li>• Vocab cards activity</li> <li>• Sequencing activity</li> </ul>	18	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Assessment</li> </ul>
5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Book</li> <li>• Vocab cards activity</li> <li>• Flow chart</li> </ul>	12	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Book</li> <li>• Vocab cards Cut and paste</li> <li>• Sudoku puzzle</li> </ul>		
6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Book</li> <li>• Vocab cards activity</li> <li>• Flow chart</li> </ul>	13	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Book</li> <li>• Vocab cut and paste</li> <li>• Word search</li> </ul>		
7	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Book</li> <li>• Vocab cards activity</li> <li>• Matching activity</li> </ul>	14	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Book</li> <li>• Vocab cards activity</li> <li>• Close worksheet</li> </ul>		

The lesson plans contain:

A quick look at what you will do each day



### Day 3

Activity	Notes	Materials
Read or listen to a recording of the book: (10 minutes)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Read through the story, asking lots of questions</li><li>• Continue to make connections between book and vocabulary board</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Book</li><li>• Vocabulary board</li></ul>
Vocabulary cards I Spy Game (10 minutes)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• I play this game see description on day 2</li><li>• Today, try to give clues about the card your student needs to find<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>◦ Read definition</li><li>◦ Show real photo that relates to card from book</li><li>◦ Describe the picture</li></ul></li><li>• Discuss relevant points on the card<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>◦ You can also play this game in this manner having them find the symbol on their vocabulary board</li></ul></li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Vocabulary cards (student set and teacher set)</li><li>• Vocabulary board</li></ul>
Circle map review (5 minutes)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Review the circle map completed yesterday</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Worksheet completed yesterday</li></ul>
Circle map (10 minutes)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Do the circle map on the Judicial Branch</li><li>• Choose the best version depending on the learning level of your students (see worksheet directions for more details)</li><li>• Add color coding if needed</li><li>• Students complete the worksheet</li><li>• Make connections to the book as necessary</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Worksheet</li><li>• Scissors</li><li>• Glue</li></ul>
Sharing (10 minutes)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Each student shares their finished worksheet with the group using the communication method of their choice</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Completed worksheets</li><li>• Communication devices</li></ul>

The lesson plans contain:

Detailed instructions on how that day's lesson should run



The President is also in charge of making sure people follow new laws. He has lots of people to help him make sure this happens.



Christa Joy, Special Needs for Special Kids

Next, the **Department of Defense** is the largest of all of the departments. It is in charge of all the military and keeping our country safe.



Christa Joy, Special Needs for Special Kids

This unit contains 2 books. One is on the powers each branch of government has. There is simple text and engaging photos and is 59 pages.



A member of Congress, either a Senator or Representative, will then take that idea and **sponsor** it.



Christa Joy, Special Needs for Special Kids

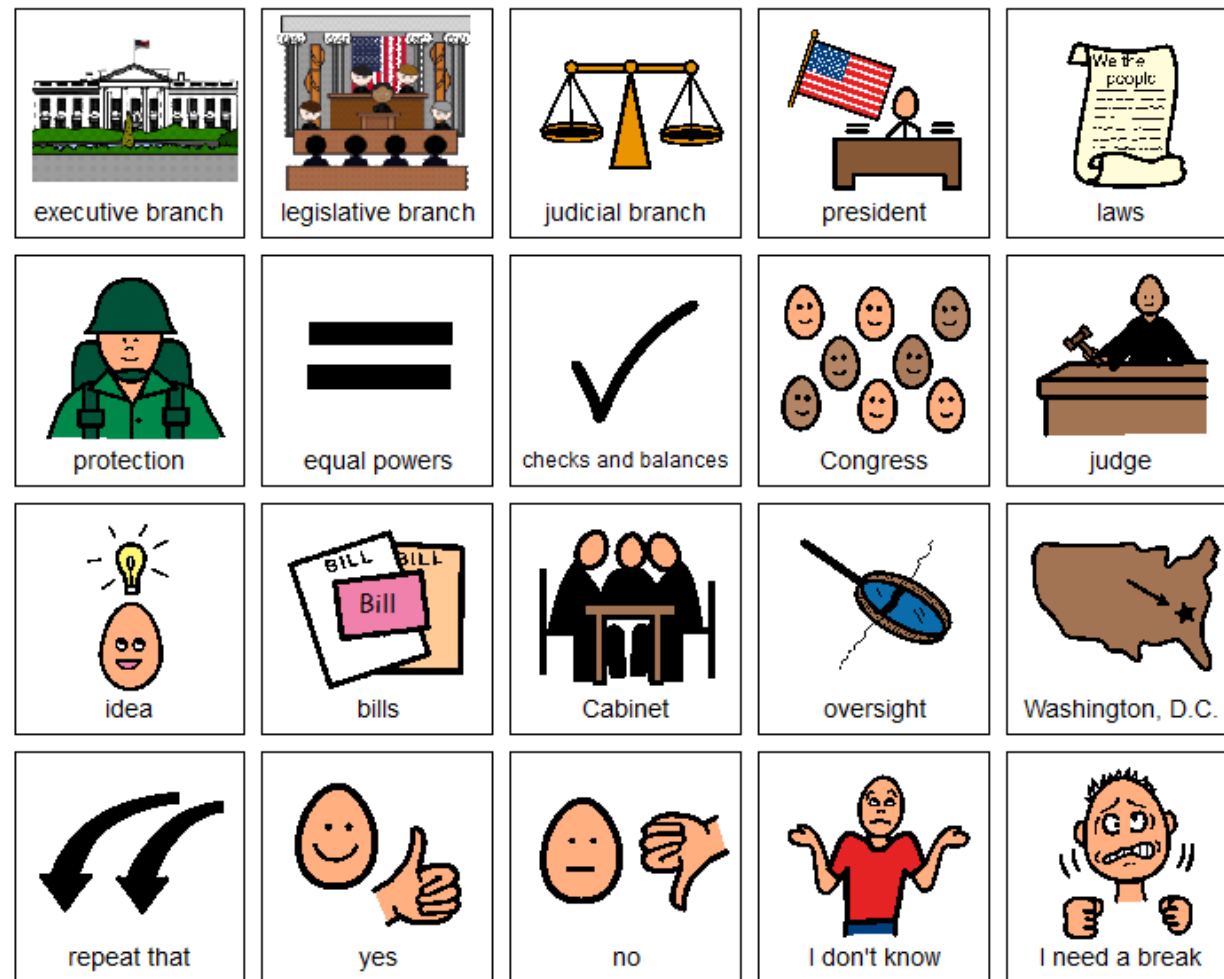
The committee has the power to change to the bill if they feel it is necessary. Once satisfied with the final draft, it is time for **approval**.



Christa Joy, Special Needs for Special Kids

The other book is on how a bill becomes a law. There is simple text and engaging photos and is 17 pages.





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This unit comes with a vocabulary board.

Vocabulary boards are great for ALL students to assist with participation and engagement in group discussions.

Tips on how to use in the unit!!

Also in black and white



### executive branch

Branch of government led by the president. Also includes the Vice President and people who help the President make decisions.



### legislative branch

Branch of government that writes laws. It is made up of the House of Representatives and the Senate.



### judicial branch

Branch that interprets the law and is made up of the Supreme court and federal judges.



### President

Leader of the country and the military. Also the leader of the executive branch.



### Department of Defense

Largest department, responsible for keeping our country safe.



### Department of Education

Responsible for educating all students.



### Department of Homeland Security

Responsible for protecting our country from terrorism.



### Department of Justice

Responsible for making sure the law is enforced. Includes the FBI and US Marshalls.



This unit comes with 28 vocabulary cards.

Every day students will do a group activity using these cards to get more familiar with words that are likely new to them.

Also in black and white



### Executive Office of the President (EOP)

Part of the executive branch. Made up of the White House Staff and keep things running smoothly.



### Press Secretary

Person in the EOP who is responsible for communicating with the press and general public.



### Cabinet

Part of the executive branch. Made up of the heads of 15 big departments that help advise the President.



### Department of Agriculture

Responsible for keeping our food safe and protects the land for farming.

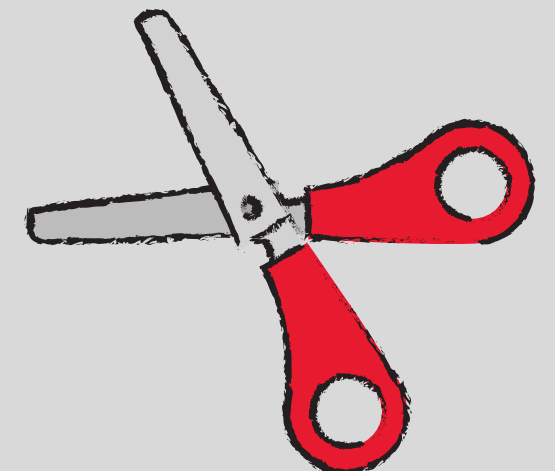


Match the pictures with the definitions on the previous pages.



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Students will also test their knowledge of these new words and symbols with a cut and paste activity on days 12&13.




Also in black and white




commander in chief



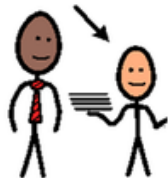
veto



pardon



Vice President



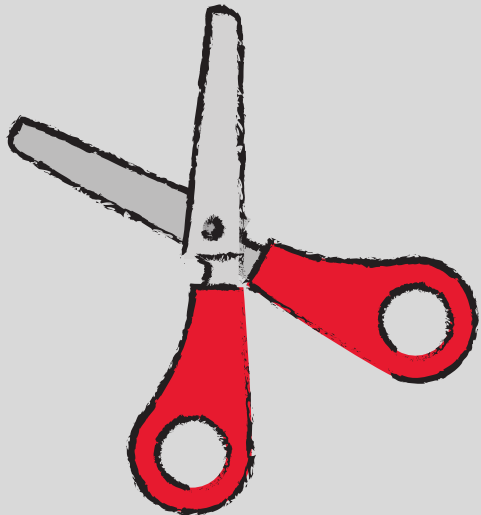
Match with the correct picture.

Responsible for educating all students.	Branch of government that writes laws. It is made up of the House of Representatives and the Senate.
Power of the President to forgive a person of a crime.	A judge. Usually refers to a judge on the Supreme Court.
The steps how an idea becomes a bill and then becomes a law.	Person in the EOP who is responsible for communicating with the press and general public.
Leader of the country and the military. Also the leader of the executive branch.	Part of the Judicial branch. The highest court in the US.
Part of legislative branch. Each state elects representatives based on how many people live in the state.	Large

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Also in black and white

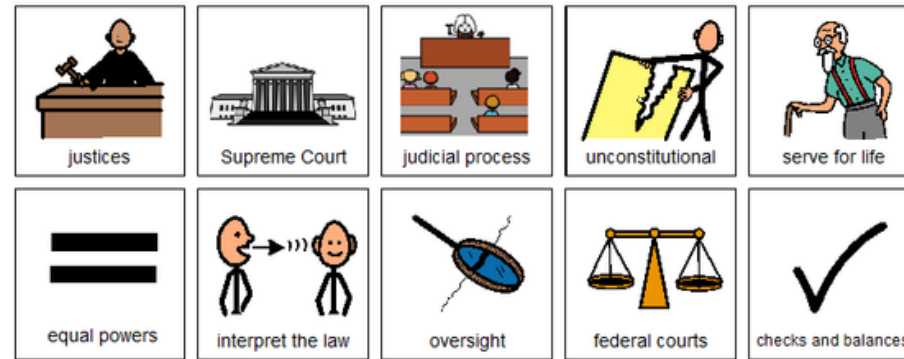
- You have 2 choices:
- 1. Students match the picture to the definition (easier).
  - 2. Students match the definition to the picture (harder).



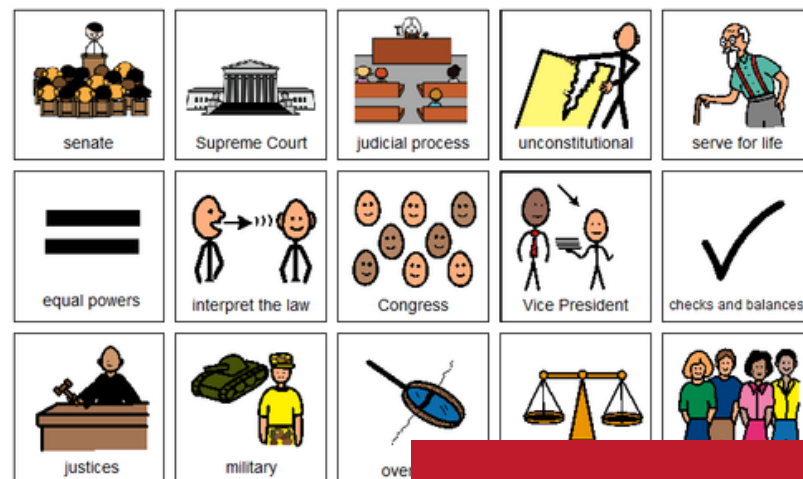


Errorless version

Cut apart pictures and place in circle map about the Judicial Branch.



Cut apart pictures and place in circle map **ONLY IF** they relate to the Judicial Branch.



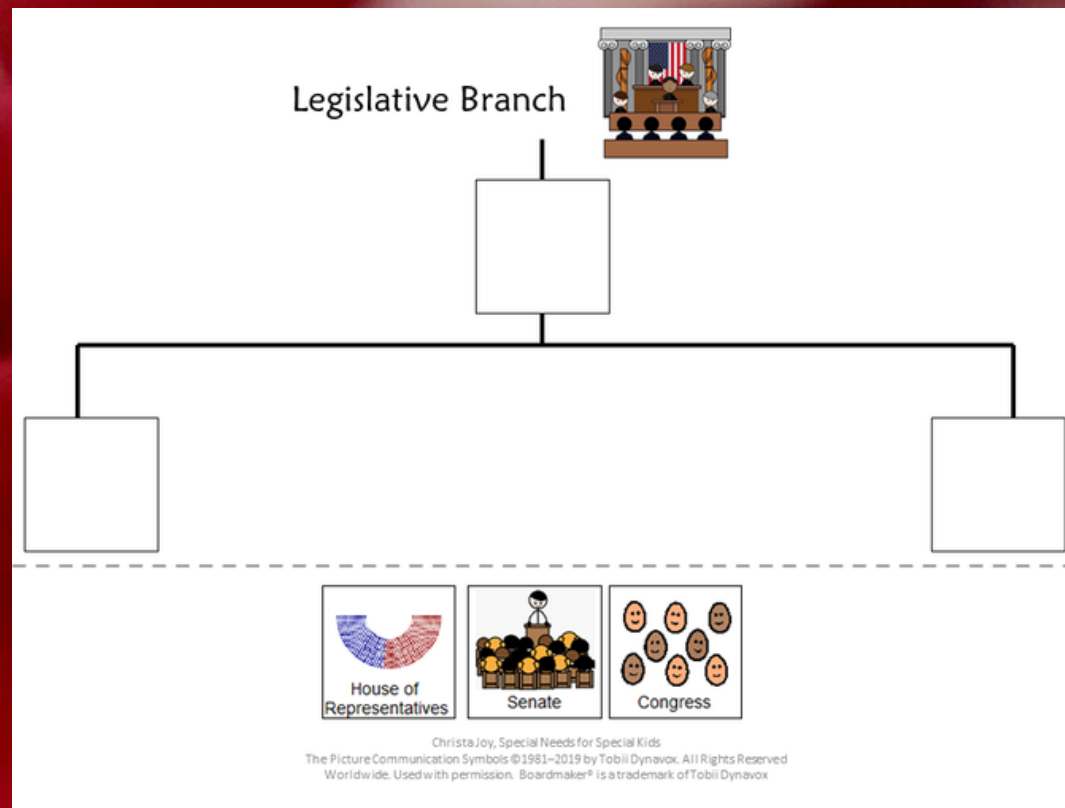
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This unit contains 3 circle maps, one for each branch of government. Circle maps are a great way to get the "big picture" of a topic. There are **2 versions**:

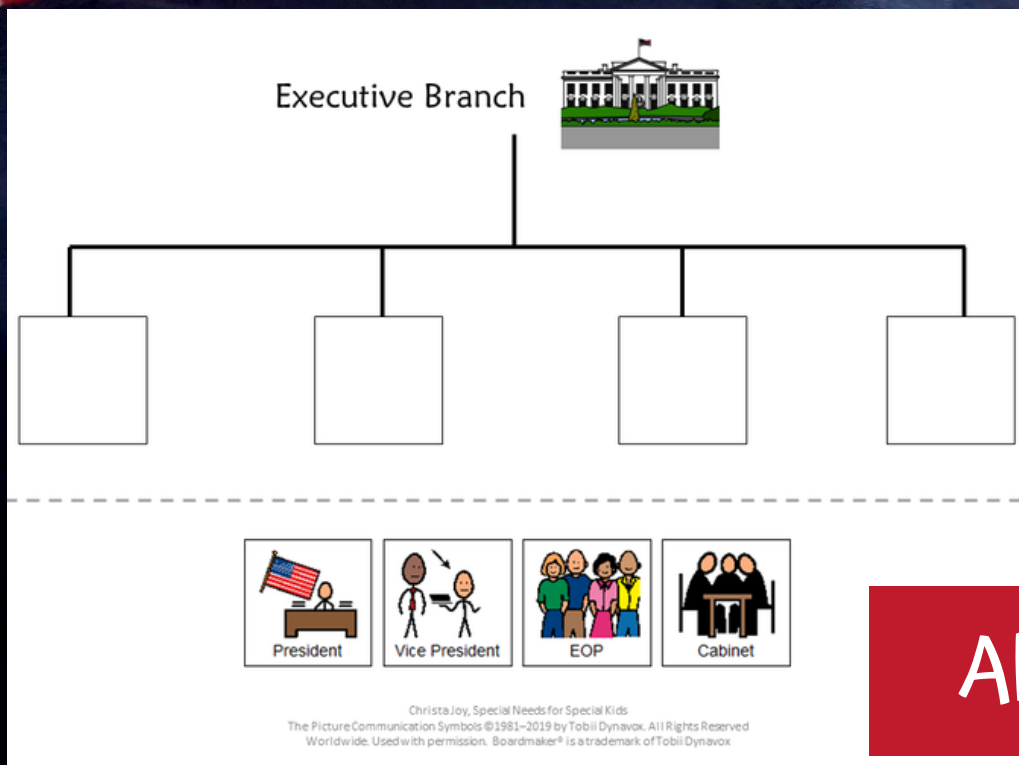
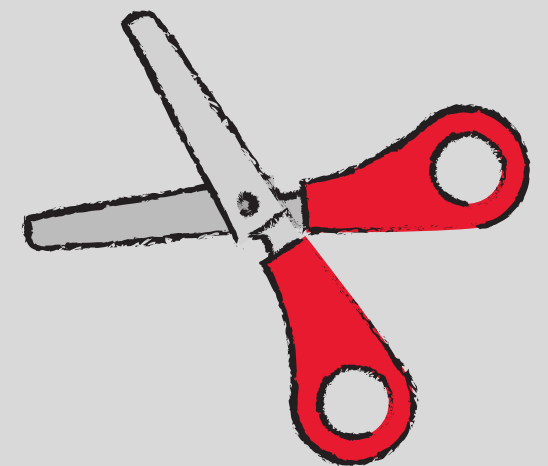
- Errorless option with only correct answers
- Wrong answers mixed in that students will have to set aside.

Also in black and white






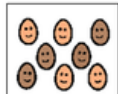




This unit contains flow charts for each branch of government. Suggestions for differentiation are included.



Also in black and white



Match the correct branch of government with each job or responsibility listed.

 Press Secretary	
 Congress	
 EOP	
 Cabinet	
 Commander in Chief	
 federal judge	







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The Picture Communication Symbols  
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Match with duty or entity on previous page. (there are more than you need.)

 executive branch	 executive branch	 executive branch	 executive branch	 executive branch
 legislative branch	 legislative branch	 legislative branch	 legislative branch	 legislative branch
 judicial branch	 judicial branch	 judicial branch	 judicial branch	 judicial branch
 executive branch	 executive branch	 executive branch	 executive branch	 executive branch
 legislative branch	 legislative branch	 legislative branch	 legislative branch	 legislative branch
 judicial branch	 judicial branch	 judicial branch	 judicial branch	 judicial branch

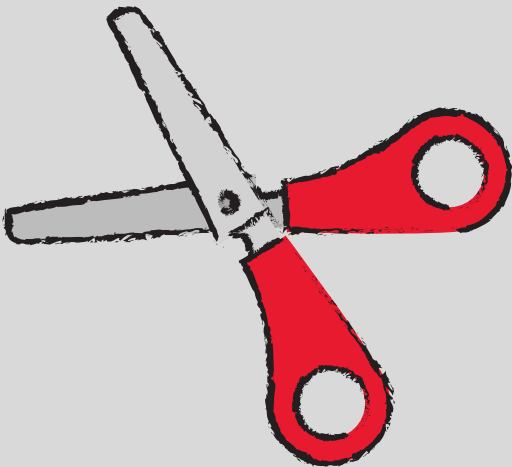
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Match the correct branch of government with each job or responsibility listed.

 justice	
 Speaker of the House	
 Vice President	
 Representative	
 President	
 Senator	

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There is a matching activity where students will match various duties to each branch of government.



Also in black and white






Find the correct pictures to show how each action by one branch is checked by an action of another branch.




 Congress passes Bill	⇔	<div></div>
 President vetos bill	⇔	<div></div>
 President chooses justice	⇔	<div></div>

 Congress approves justice	 Congress can overturn with 2/3 vote	 President signs bill into law
--	--	--

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Find the correct pictures to show how each action by one branch is checked by an action of another branch.

 President signs bill into law	⇔	<div></div>
 President misbehaves	⇔	<div></div>
 tie vote in Congress	⇔	<div></div>

 Supreme Court says unconstitutional	 Vice President votes	 Congress can impeach
--	---	---

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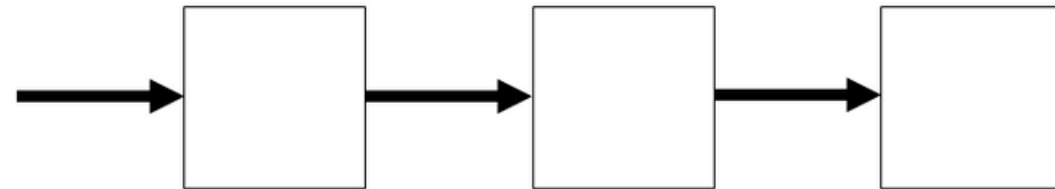
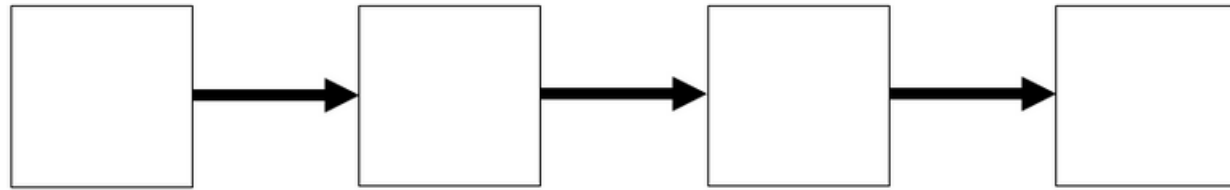
This is a flow chart to show the checks and balances that exist between the three branches of government.



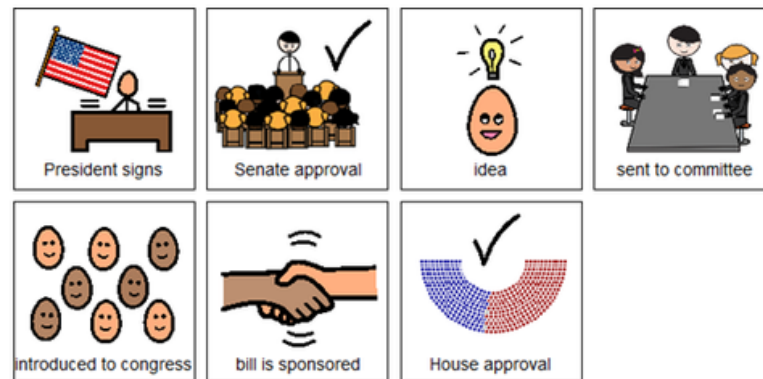
Also in black and white



## How a Bill Becomes a Law



Place in the correct order on the previous page.






















There is a sequencing activity showing how a bill becomes a law. This is covered in the second book included in the unit.















# Branches of Government







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# Branches of Government

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Place the following images in the empty squares on the previous page, completing the sudoku puzzle.

Also in black and white

There are Sudoku puzzles in this unit as well. This is a great way to work with the new vocabulary!!

There are 2 versions plus answer keys.



# Branches of Government

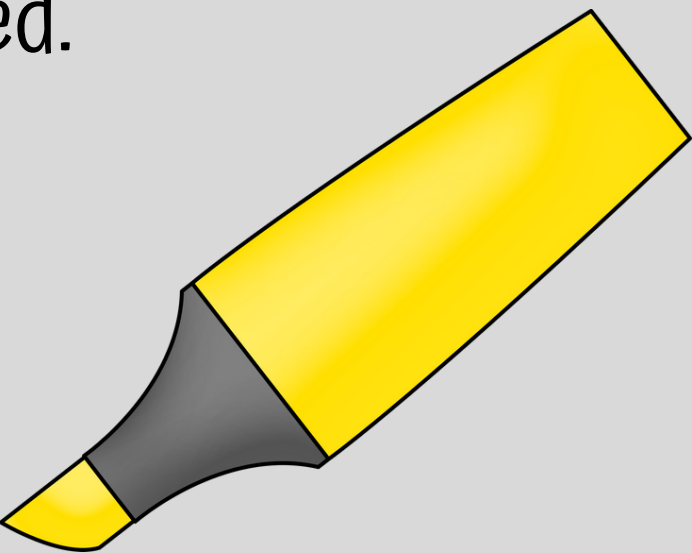
Z	C	N	N	W	P	B	I	L	L	P	S	I	S	C
J	U	S	T	I	C	E	I	B	O	L	J	J	E	A
H	Q	S	U	N	I	M	P	E	A	C	H	G	N	J
C	N	P	N	T	D	V	M	T	O	S	W	R	A	U
O	L	O	G	V	X	D	L	F	J	E	I	Q	T	D
X	H	N	L	E	G	I	S	L	A	T	I	V	E	I
Y	O	S	C	A	B	I	N	E	T	C	L	J	C	C
E	C	O	N	G	R	E	S	S	D	A	A	U	Y	I
H	J	R	M	K	Z	A	U	N	B	Y	K	L	P	A
J	P	R	E	S	I	D	E	N	T	J	R	H	A	L
Q	Y	L	N	H	R	H	R	A	V	K	V	W	R	M
T	S	J	E	X	E	C	U	T	I	V	E	V	D	F
V	R	K	K	Q	C	S	Z	Y	U	K	T	F	O	Y
M	P	F	E	O	O	M	C	X	G	Y	O	F	N	L
U	N	N	Z	G	F	U	J	A	E	X	L	A	W	S

EXECUTIVE  
PRESIDENT  
CABINET  
JUSTICE  
LAW

LEGISLATIVE  
VETO  
SENATE  
IMPEACH  
BILL

JUDICIAL  
PARDON  
CONGRESS  
SPONSOR

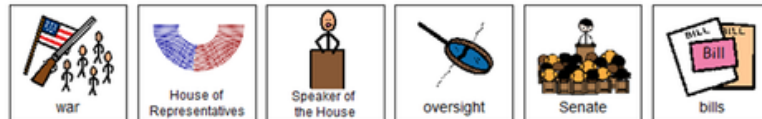
There is also a word search.  
Suggestions on how to  
complete if your students are  
not able to do word searches  
are included.





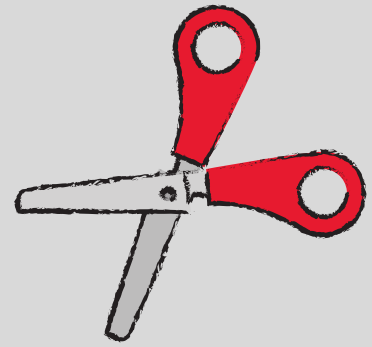
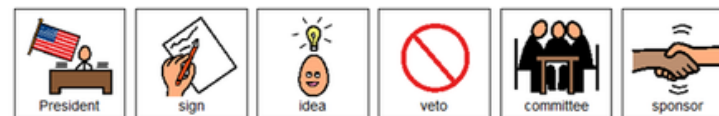
## Legislative Branch

1. The Legislative branch is made of  and .
2. Their main job is to write  that will become laws.
3. Congress can also declare .
4. The leader of the House of Representatives is the .
5. Congress is also responsible for , making sure everyone is doing their job.



## How a bill becomes a law

1. A bill starts with an .
2. Someone in Congress must  the idea and write th
3. The bill then goes to a .
4. After it is approved, the bill goes to the .
5. The President can either  it or  it.

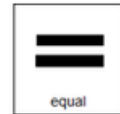


Close worksheets are a great informal assessment. This unit has several of them to review each branch of government as well as one on how a bill becomes a law.

Answer key included.

Also in black and white

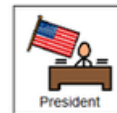
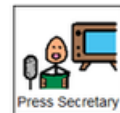
1. All three branches of government have powers that are:



2. Which branch can declare war?



3. The Commander in Chief, in charge of the military, is also the:



4. The legislative process is how a bill becomes a:



5. In order for an idea to become a bill, someone in Congress needs to:



FINALLY the assessment!!  
There are 3 versions. This  
version has 10 questions with 3  
picture choices for each  
question.

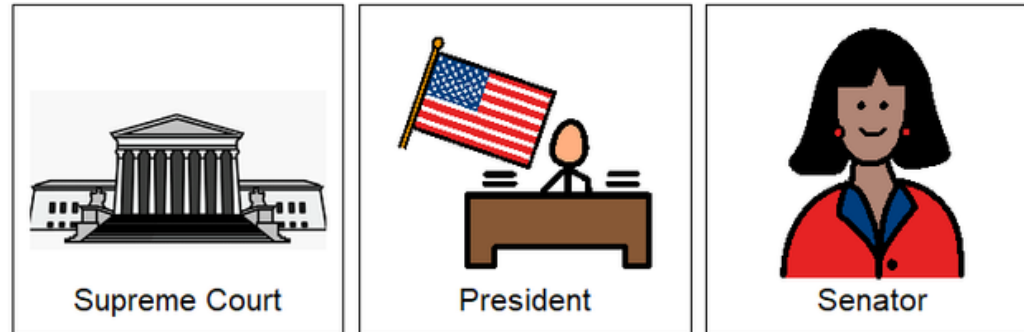
Answer key included.

Also in black and white

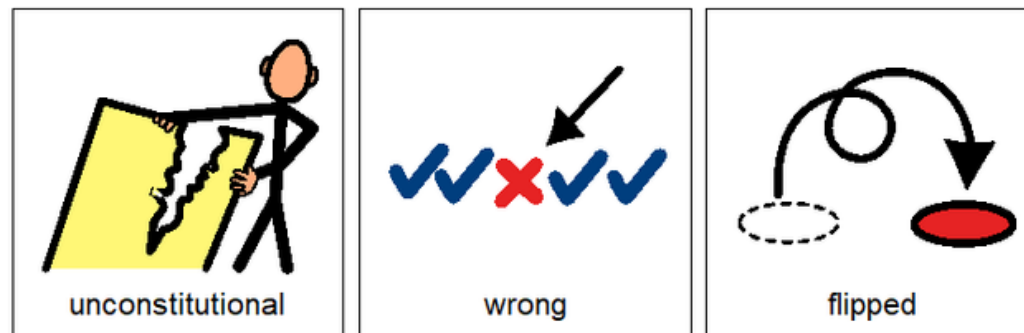


Print onto cardstock or mount on index cards. Cut pictures apart and show student answer choices for each question.

Q 7



Q 6



With this version, you cut out the answer choices and glue them on index cards. Ask the student the question, and they point to the correct answer.

Also in black and white

1. All three branches of government have powers that are:
  - A. equal
  - B. unequal
  - C. tied together
2. Which branch can declare war?
  - A. executive
  - B. legislative
  - C. judicial
3. The Commander in Chief, in charge of the military, is also the:
  - A. Press Secretary
  - B. Speaker of the House
  - C. President
4. The legislative process is how a bill becomes a:
  - A. song
  - B. law
  - C. letter
5. In order for an idea to become a bill, someone in Congress needs to:
  - A. forget it
  - B. sign it
  - C. sponsor it
6. This is made up of 15 department heads who help the President:
  - A. Senate
  - B. class
  - C. Cabinet

*This is your traditional multiple choice version. It can also be used as a recording sheet if your students are using the version with index cards.*



Watch the movie  
on the Branches  
of Government

Finally, the Vice President actually serves as the President of the Senate. He is normally not very involved in the Senate, unless there is a tie vote, and then the Vice President will break the tie.



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*There are digital versions for most of the activities in this unit. Both books come in movie files you can show in google classroom or in a google slide.*

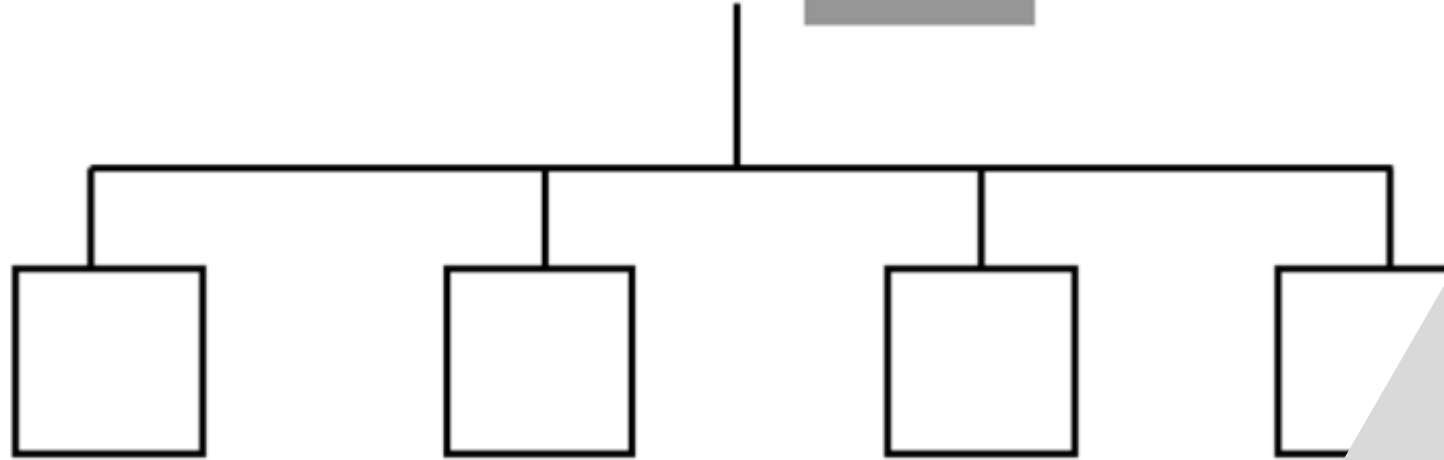
Watch the  
video How a  
Bill Becomes a  
Law

So, if the bill deals with the environment, then it will go to a committee of people who know a lot about the environment and feel strongly about protecting it.

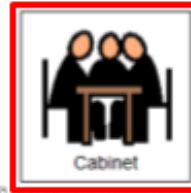


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Executive Branch









Place each picture in the empty boxes to show how the executive branch is set up.



There are 2 sets of digital activities. All the activities in both sets are click and drag; there is no typing done by the student.

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 Press Secretary	
 Congress	
 EOP	
 Cabinet	
 Commander in Chief	
 federal judge	

Match the correct branch of government with each job or responsibility listed.

 executive branch	 executive branch	 executive branch
 legislative branch		
 Judicial branch		

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The second set of slides is differentiated with color to add more support to students who are still learning the information. These make great independent work centers.

Make great independent work centers



I realize there will be some students out there unable to do cutting activities. I have a blog post with ways to complete all of these activities without a pair of scissors!!

**[Click Here to read more!!](#)**