

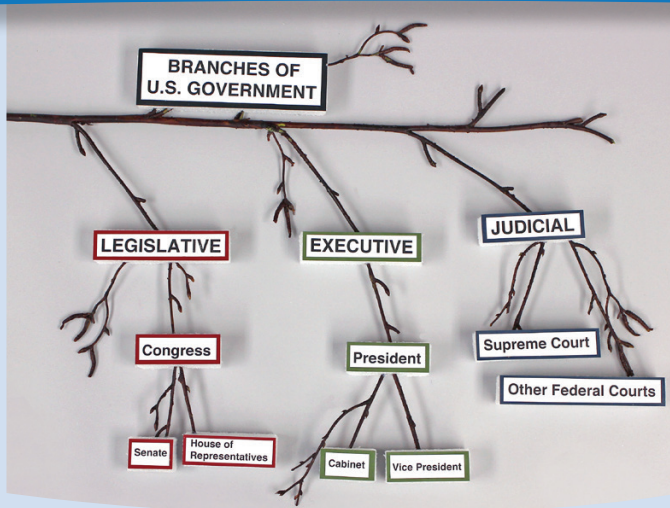
Branches of Government

MATERIALS

FOR STUDENT:

(one per group of students unless otherwise noted)

- FloraCraft® Make It: Fun® Foam, three 1" x 11 15/16" x 15/16" thick strips and one 2" x 6" x 15/16" thick strip for the title (see FOR TEACHER)
- Cardstock, one 1" x 12" strip of each color: Burgundy, navy and deep green plus one 2" x 6" strip of black, (or any choice of 4 colors) (see FOR TEACHER)
- Main branch with three branches coming down from the bottom, real or artificial, along with additional assorted twigs
- Glue stick
- Plastic knife
- Ruler
- Pencils, three
- Scissors
- Plastic bags, three



FOR TEACHER:

- FloraCraft® Make It: Fun® Foam Block, 15/16" x 11 15/16" x 17 15/16" (can get enough strips for four groups of students per block)
- FloraCraft® Design It:® Wire Cutter
- Cardstock, 12" x 12" size in chosen colors (can get twelve 1" strips from each color sheet and twelve 2" x 6" title strips from each black sheet, which is enough for twelve groups)
- Serrated knife
- Cutting mat or stack of newspapers
- Paper cutter
- Glue stick
- Ruler
- Pencil
- Glue gun (for teacher only)
- Paper towels
- White board or chalk board

TEACHER PREPARATION

Note: Read through all the instructions first and check out the TIPS! If possible, ask adult helpers to assist when students are assembling their branches. Have a glue gun plugged in and ready to use (ideally for each helper and set on low temperature) but out of student reach. This can give you immediate adhesion when you're in a hurry to help students. Be sure that the glue has cooled before returning the projects to students (takes a minute or so.) It is also recommended that you make a sample first, before preparing the materials for any others, since knowing how the parts fit, might affect how you prepare the rest of them.

[1] Horizontally place the foam block on a cutting mat or stack of newspapers. Use a ruler and pencil to measure and make small marks as ruler guides for two 2" and thirteen 1" strips (that are x 11 15/16" long). (Pencil will show on foam if you go over the mark a couple of times. However it's not necessary to draw the entire line – just measure and mark in a few places as a guide for placing the ruler.) Then, use a serrated knife against the edge of a ruler to cut the foam block, with several passes of the knife for each cut. (Be very exact in your measurements so that the cardstock will exactly fit. Cut extras in case of student errors.)

Put three 1" wide and one 2" wide foam strips into a plastic bag per group.

[2] Refer to the finished project photo to type and print one set of captions. (Note that the title's font is upper case and double layered to fit on a 1 3/4" x 5 3/4" piece of paper when trimmed. Observe details in other

words as well, making sure that they will fit on a 3/4" wide strip of paper.) (Make your model before printing the captions for all students in case font adjustments are needed.)

Use a paper cutter to cut them apart and put them into a plastic bag for each group. Be sure that the width is exactly 3/4" so that they fit on the mounting paper correctly. Also cut a 3/4" wide blank white strip for students to write their names. Put captions into a separate plastic bag for each group.

[3] Use a paper cutter to cut one 1" x 12" length of each of three cardstock colors, per group. Also cut one 2" x 6" length black strip for the title, per group and put into a separate plastic bag.

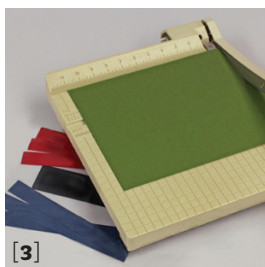
[4] Put three plastic bags and pencils, a ruler, plastic knife, scissors and a glue stick in each group of students' work area. (Wait to distribute branches.)



[1]



[2]



[3]



[4]

SOCIAL STUDIES

GRADE LEVEL
SECOND – THIRD

COMPLETION TIME

• 45 minutes



OBJECTIVES

Students:

- Understand why the people who set up the U.S. government created three separate branches
- Know the three branches
- Know the general hierarchy within the branches

STANDARDS

- The student understands and applies knowledge of government, law, politics, and the nation's fundamental documents to make decisions about local, national, and international issues and to demonstrate thoughtful, participatory citizenship
- Understands the purposes, organization, and function of governments, laws, and political systems

LESSON INTRODUCTION

- Discuss that the reason the United States Constitution required that there be three branches of government is that they wanted a separation and balance of power so that no one group took control. List and explain each of the branches and show the hierarchy within each of them. Explain that students can work in groups of three, choosing their branch of government, and working with the other two to create one balanced government.



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INSTRUCTIONS

[1] Refer to the finished project photo. On a white board/chalkboard draw a horizontal tree branch with three branches growing down. On each of those, sketch rectangles and write the branches of government and discuss. Then, continue with the rest of the diagram, pointing out the hierarchical order.

Have each group divide themselves into one of the branches and select the mounting paper color they want for their branch as well as find the captions appropriate for that branch.

Demonstrate and have students set the longest caption on their cardstock strip and mark with a pencil where to cut it, reminding them to leave a little mounting border on both ends. Similarly, place and mark each of the rest of their captions. Have them use scissors to cut apart the strip and use a glue stick to mount their captions on the cardstock. Also mount their title caption on black.



[2] Explain that the foam strips are exactly 1" wide on two sides and almost 1" wide on the other two sides. Have students set their 1" wide cardstock strips on the foam to find the right side. One at a time, set their cardstock strip on the foam and cut with the plastic knife.

Demonstrate how to apply glue stick to the foam and press the strip in place. Repeat with all strips.



[3] Distribute branches. Have students refer to the board to see how the structure should be for the title and the three main branches. If working with wired branches, bend according to the drawing. If working with natural branches, explain that students may need to be creative in finding a way to make them work. Ask students to avoid it, if possible, but if they must, ask them to let you help them if any branches

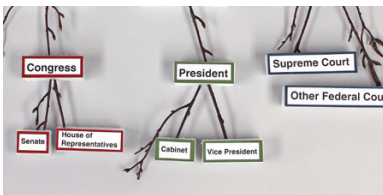
need to be broken off or hot glued on.

Explain that they should look for small pieces that extend out, onto which the foam can be pressed into place to attach the 2" wide title piece. If not they may need to glue it to the edge of the branch.

Have them determine where to put the three branches of government next, on the same level since they are equal in power. Explain that they may press the foam against the branch and push it enough to indent it on the back. Then, with the caption side down, they can use their pencil to impress a channel into which the branch will fit. Encourage students to make the captions as straight as possible and to work together to accomplish that.



[4] For the second level down, students may ask you to use the wire cutter to cut that branch at the point where the foam caption should go. Insert the branch end into the top of the foam, being aware of where the other second level captions are on their branches. Remind students that this is when they need to work together, as the real branches of government should do. 😊



[5] For the next level, this is where having extra twigs can be helpful. Explain to students that they can insert the twigs into the bottom of the foam caption above, and add the last level.

[6] Have students adjust and then you can hot glue any areas that are needed. Ask them to write their names on the extra paper and glue it to the back of the title foam.

MODIFICATIONS

To simplify project:

- Draw a branch on corrugated cardboard from a large box. Cut out extra smaller branches with pointed ends to hold the foam. Assemble with a glue gun.
- Print the information in the correct rows on one sheet of paper per branch of government. Mount on a large piece of foam and attach as one unit to the tree branches.

To expand project:

- Have students research and write additional information on small paper about each foam caption. Glue papers to toothpicks and insert into the edges of the appropriate captions.
- Similarly, research the names of people currently in the news, write on paper, attach toothpicks and insert into the edges of the appropriate captions.

For multiple ages:

- Younger and older students can work side-by-side with the older students helping direct where and how the pieces are attached.
- Younger students can work on the top level layers and attach those, while older students work on the lower level layers.

ADDITIONAL IDEAS

- If branches are too unruly to hang without the captions being in the wrong positions, use T-pins to attach them to a cork bulletin board. (Insert T-pins at an angle so that the T of the pin holds the branches in place.)
- Have students compare other forms of government, such as that of Great Britain and draw a diagram of it for comparison with the United State's model.
- As a class, create one large branch on a bulletin board, with branches and twigs extending down to further layers below those used in this project.



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TIPS

- In selecting branches, decide if you have a good source of natural branches or if you should purchase them from the floral dept. of a craft store. The advantage of the former is that they are free, but it's a bit tricky finding ones with three branches in a row, growing out of the bottom. However, branches can be trimmed (and even hot glued if needed). The advantage to purchasing them is that they are wired and can be bent in the direction desired or removed with a wire cutter.
- When cutting foam, keep the serrated knife blade perpendicular to the table so that the foam edges are straight. Score lightly first and then press more firmly to cut deeper with several passes of the knife.
- To standardize a small cutting width such as the 3/4" caption width and 1" cardstock width, use masking tape on the paper cutter, attached at the right distance from the blade.
- Encourage students to saw back and forth when using the plastic knife on foam – don't just press down or it mashes more than cuts.
- The reason for applying the glue stick to the foam is that a generous application will fill in the foam pores a little and create a stronger bond with the cardstock, than if the glue were applied to the cardstock and set onto the foam.

REFERENCES

How The U.S. Government Works by Syl Sobel
A More Perfect Union: The Story Of Our Constitution by Betsy Maestro
Shh! We're Writing The Constitution by Jean Fritz
U.S. Government (Quick Study: Academic) by Inc. BarCharts