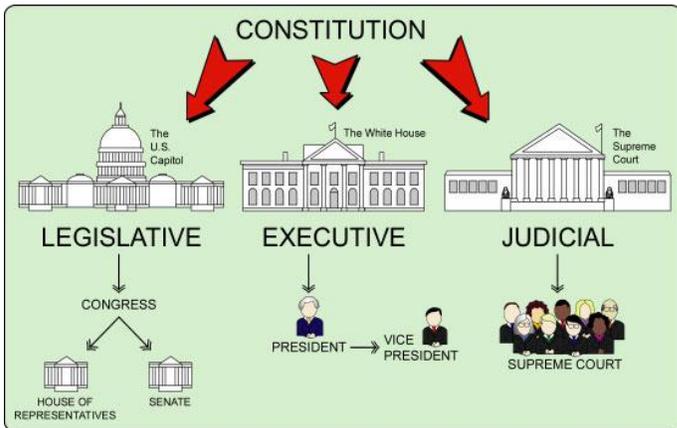


Civics and Economics

CE.6 Study Guide



STANDARD CE.6A

-- NATIONAL GOVERNMENT STRUCTURE

The structure and powers of the national government.

The **Constitution** of the United States defines the **structure and powers** of the national government.

The powers held by government are divided between the **national government** in Washington, D.C., and the governments of the **50 states**.

*What is the **structure of the national government** as set out in the United States Constitution?*

*What are the **powers of the national government**?*

Legislative, executive, and judicial powers of the national government are distributed among **three** distinct and independent **branches of government**.

The **legislative branch**

- Consists of the **Congress**, a **bicameral legislature** consisting of the **House of Representatives** (435 members, based upon populations of the states) and the **Senate** (100 members—two per state)
- **Makes the laws** of the nation
- **Approves the annual budget**
- **Confirms presidential appointments**
- **Raises revenue** through taxes and other levies
- **Regulates interstate and foreign trade**
- **Declares war**

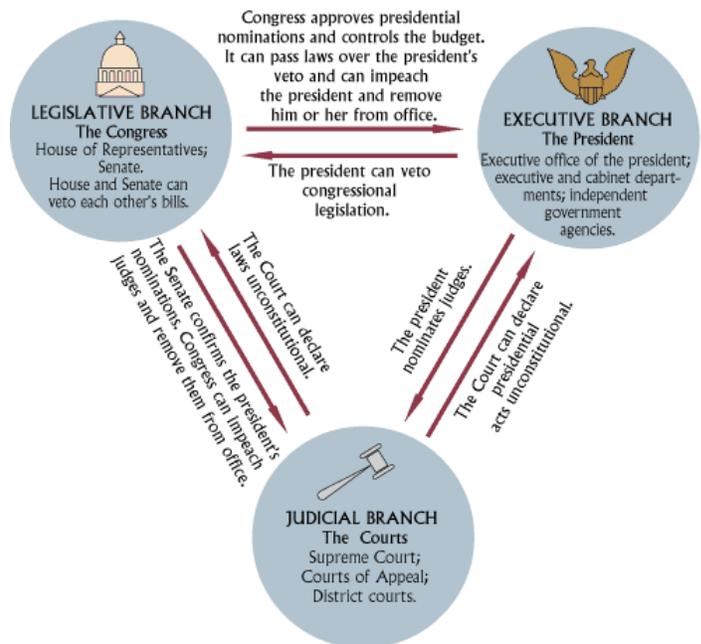
The **executive branch**

- Headed by the **president** of the United States, the chief executive officer of the nation
- **Executes the laws** of the land

- Prepares the **annual budget** for congressional action
- **Appoints** cabinet officers, ambassadors, and federal judges
- Administers the **federal bureaucracy**

The **judicial branch**

- Consists of the **federal courts**, including the **Supreme Court**, the highest court in the land
- The **Supreme Court** exercises the power of **judicial review**.
- The **federal courts** try cases involving **federal law** and questions involving **interpretation of the Constitution** of the United States.



STANDARD CE.6B

-- SEPARATION OF POWERS

The principle of separation of powers and the operation of checks and balances.

The **powers** of the national government are **separated** among **three branches** of the government in ways that **limit** any one branch from **abusing its power**.

*How do the **separation of powers** and the system of **checks and balances** protect against an abuse of power by any one branch of the national government?*

Separation of powers

The Constitution of the United States in **Articles I, II, and III** defines the powers of the **legislative, executive, and judicial** branches of the national government.

Checks and balances

Each of the three branches of the national government **limits** the exercise of **power** by the other two branches.

The **legislative branch**

- The **Congress checks the president** when legislators
 - **override** presidential **veto**s
 - **impeach** and convict a president.
- The **Congress checks the courts** when legislators
 - **confirm** or refuse to confirm federal judges/justices
 - **impeach** and convict judges/justices.

The **executive** branch

- The **president checks Congress** when the president
 - **proposes** legislation
 - prepares an annual **budget** for Congress to approve
 - call **special sessions** of Congress
 - **veto**s legislation Congress has passed.
- The **president checks the courts** when the president **appoints** judges/justices.

The **judicial** branch

- The **courts check Congress** when judges/justices declare acts of Congress to be **unconstitutional**.
- The **courts check the president** when judges/justices declare executive actions to be **unconstitutional**.

STANDARD CE.6C -- LAWMAKING PROCESS

The lawmaking process (national level).



Officials who are elected to serve in the national legislature make laws.

All citizens can learn the importance of the individual's participation in the policymaking process through direct participation and

simulations.

Which branch of the national government has the power to pass laws?

National **laws** are made by **Congress**.

Legislative powers

- **Expressed:** Specifically **listed** in the **Constitution** of the United States
- **Implied:** Used to carry out expressed powers

How does Congress make laws?

The lawmaking process in Congress

- **Introducing a bill** by a Senator or Representative
- Working in **committees**
- **Debating** the bill on the floor of each house
- **Voting** on the bill in each house
- Sending the bill to the **president to sign** into law

Elected officials in Congress write laws and take action in **response to problems or issues**.

Individuals and **interest groups** help shape legislation.

The formal **powers of Congress** are **limited** by the Constitution of the United States.

How can citizens learn the importance of the individual's participation in the policymaking process?

Citizens (including students) learn the importance of the legislative process through direct involvement and/or simulations.

STANDARD CE.6D -- EXECUTIVE BRANCH

The roles and powers of the executive branch (national level)

The **executive branch** plays a key role in the policymaking process.

Presidential power is **broad** in both domestic and foreign affairs, but there are **limits** on what the president can and cannot do.



What are the roles and powers of the executive branch of the national government?

Ways the **executive branch** influences

policymaking

- **Proposing legislation** in an annual speech to Congress (**State of the Union Address**)
- Appealing directly **to the people**
- **Approving** or **vetoing** legislation
- **Appointing** officials who carry out the laws

Cabinet departments, agencies, and regulatory groups interpret and execute the laws.

What are the roles and powers of the president?

The president exercises power as

- **chief of state: Ceremonial head** of the government
- **chief executive:** Head of the executive branch of government
- **chief legislator:** Proposer of the legislative agenda
- **commander-in-chief:** Head of the nation's armed forces
- **chief diplomat:** Architect of American foreign policy
- **chief of party:** Leader of the political party that controls the executive branch
- **chief citizen:** Representative of all of the people.

Presidential power has grown in the years since the Constitution was ratified.