

STANDARD CE.7B

-- FEDERALISM

Civics and Economics

CE.7 Study Guide

STANDARD CE.7A

-- STATE GOVERNMENT

The structure and powers of the state government.

The form of government of the **Commonwealth of Virginia** is established by the **Virginia Constitution**.

Legislative, executive, and judicial **powers are separated** at the **state level** of government.

What is the structure of Virginia's state government?

What are some of the powers of the three branches of state government?

The Virginia Constitution distributes power among the **legislative, executive, and judicial branches** of the state government.

The legislative branch is the **General Assembly**, a **bicameral legislature**—the **House of Delegates** and the **Virginia Senate**—that meets annually for a fixed number of days.

The executive power is exercised by the **governor**, who is elected for a **four-year term** of office. The governor appoints members of the cabinet, who oversee specific functions of government.

The **lieutenant governor** and the **attorney general** are executive branch officers who are elected for a four-year term of office.

The judicial power is exercised by a **court system** that consists of **four levels** of courts:

- **Supreme Court**
- **Court of appeals**
- **Circuit courts**
- **District courts** (including small claims courts and juvenile and domestic relations courts)

The relationship of state governments to the national government in the federal system.

The Constitution of the United States of America establishes the principle of **federalism**, which is the **division of power** between the **states** and the **national government**.

The **expansion** of the **national government's powers** into areas traditionally **reserved to the states** has altered the relationship of states to the national government.

*How does the Constitution of the United States of America outline the **division and sharing of powers** between the national and state governments?*

The Constitution of the United States of America establishes a **federal form of government** in which the **national government is supreme**.

The **powers not given** to the national government by the Constitution of the United States of America **are reserved to the states**.

The Constitution of the United States of America **denies certain powers to both** the national and state governments.

Primary **responsibilities** of each level of government

- **National:** Conducts **foreign policy**, regulates **commerce**, and provides for the common **defense**
- **State:** Promotes **public health, safety, and welfare**

Tensions exist when federal **mandates** require state actions without adequate **funding**.



STANDARD CE.7C -- STATE LAWMAKING PROCESS



The state lawmaking process.

Members of the **Virginia General Assembly** are elected to make state 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 Virginia state government has the power to pass laws?

How does the Virginia General Assembly make laws?

The lawmaking process in the **Virginia General Assembly**

- **Introducing a bill**
- Working in **committees**
- **Debating** the bill on the **floor** of each house
- **Voting** on the bill in each house
- Sending the bill to the **governor** to sign into law



Elected officials in the Virginia General Assembly write laws and take action **in response to problems or issues**.

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

The **primary issues** in the legislative process at the **state** level

- **Education:** To promote an informed and engaged citizenry (i.e., establish minimum standards for local schools)
- **Public health:** To promote and protect the health of its citizens (i.e., fund health benefits)
- **Environment:** To protect natural resources (i.e., improve water quality in the Chesapeake Bay)
- **State budget:** To approve a **biennial** (two year) budget prepared by the governor
- **Revenue:** To levy and collect **taxes**

STANDARD CE.7D -- STATE EXECUTIVE BRANCH

The roles and powers of the state executive branch and regulatory boards.



**Governor Bob
McDonnell**

The **executive branch** of the **Virginia** state government **enforces the laws** and plays a key role in the policymaking process.

*What are the roles and powers of the **executive branch** at the state level?*

The **governor** of Virginia exercises the formal powers granted by the Virginia Constitution.

In carrying out both the formal and informal powers of the office, the **governor** fills **several roles**, including

- chief of state
- chief legislator
- chief administrator
- party chief
- commander-in-chief.

Cabinet secretaries and departments, agencies, commissions, and regulatory boards

- administer laws
- enforce laws
- regulate aspects of business and the economy
- provide services.