

# REPRESENTATIVE DEMOCRACY IN THE 3 BRANCHES

6-8 week inquiry unit

Cover this core content **with confidence**  
without getting lost in the weeds!

- ✓ 26 varied student activities plus a 45-slide instructional slide deck
- ✓ Unit overview and pacing guide
- ✓ Overarching unit and daily lesson inquiry questions to drive the content
- ✓ Step-by-step daily lesson plans with accommodation ideas, lesson takeaways, and detailed answer keys
- ✓ Standards-aligned student "I can..." unit review, and unit note-taking sheets
- ✓ DBQ-style culminating essay assessment and authentic PBL project

**PRINT & DIGITAL OPTIONS INCLUDED**



# CIVICS & GOVERNMENT TOPICS *covered*

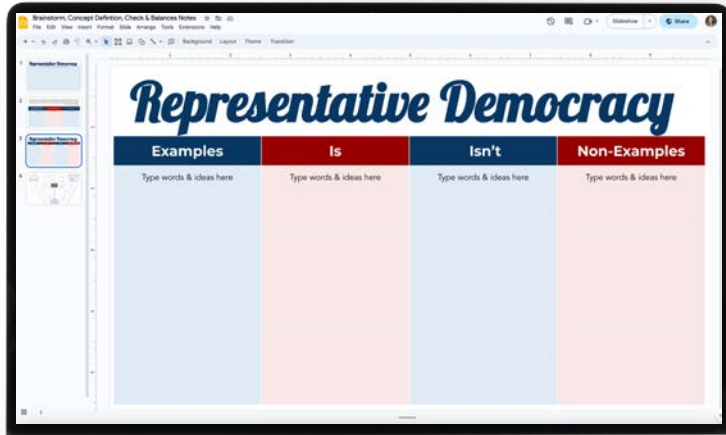
- ✓ **Federal Government Broadly:** representative democracy, checks & balances, how to reach out to elected officials, current members of each branch's leadership
- ✓ **Legislative Branch:** Article I; requirements, powers, set up of Congress; how a bill becomes a law; Congress's demographic makeup
- ✓ **Executive Branch:** Article II; requirements, powers, set up of the President; the role of the Cabinet; Presidential job approval ratings; the electoral college
- ✓ **Judicial Branch:** Article III; Supreme Court & federal courts system; current Supreme Court docket

“ I ABSOLUTELY loved this! It's very well thought out and requires students to *truly engaged with the content* .- Katlynn C.

The unit *connected government to everyday life*. It was a great project with LOTS of good resources and information! – Kelsey F.

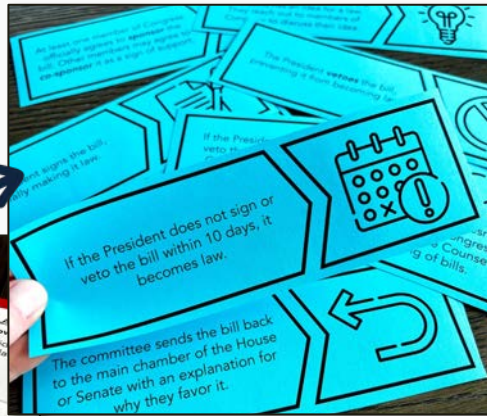


# VARIETY OF ACTIVITIES *included*



Examples	Is	Isn't	Non-Examples
Type words & ideas here	Type words & ideas here	Type words & ideas here	Type words & ideas here

**Collaborative sort game** for how a bill becomes a law



**Play Race to 270** to teach the Electoral College (just add dice!)



**Closely read & analyze** Articles 1, 2, 3

**Explore** checks & balances, including the people's power to check government

**Research** the current members of Congress, Cabinet, & Supreme Court

**Analyze** demographic data of current federal officers, comparing to the US's broader data

**Analyze** current presidential job approvals & Supreme Court docket

**Simulate** the electoral college vote

“ This unit is **expertly done and updated**. There are not enough adjectives to describe the depth and usefulness of these units. Thank you!! - **Kara G.** ”

# FEDERAL OFFICER

## one-pagers

Throughout the unit, research and create one-pagers of all the White House Cabinet members, leaders in Congress, and Supreme Court Justices.

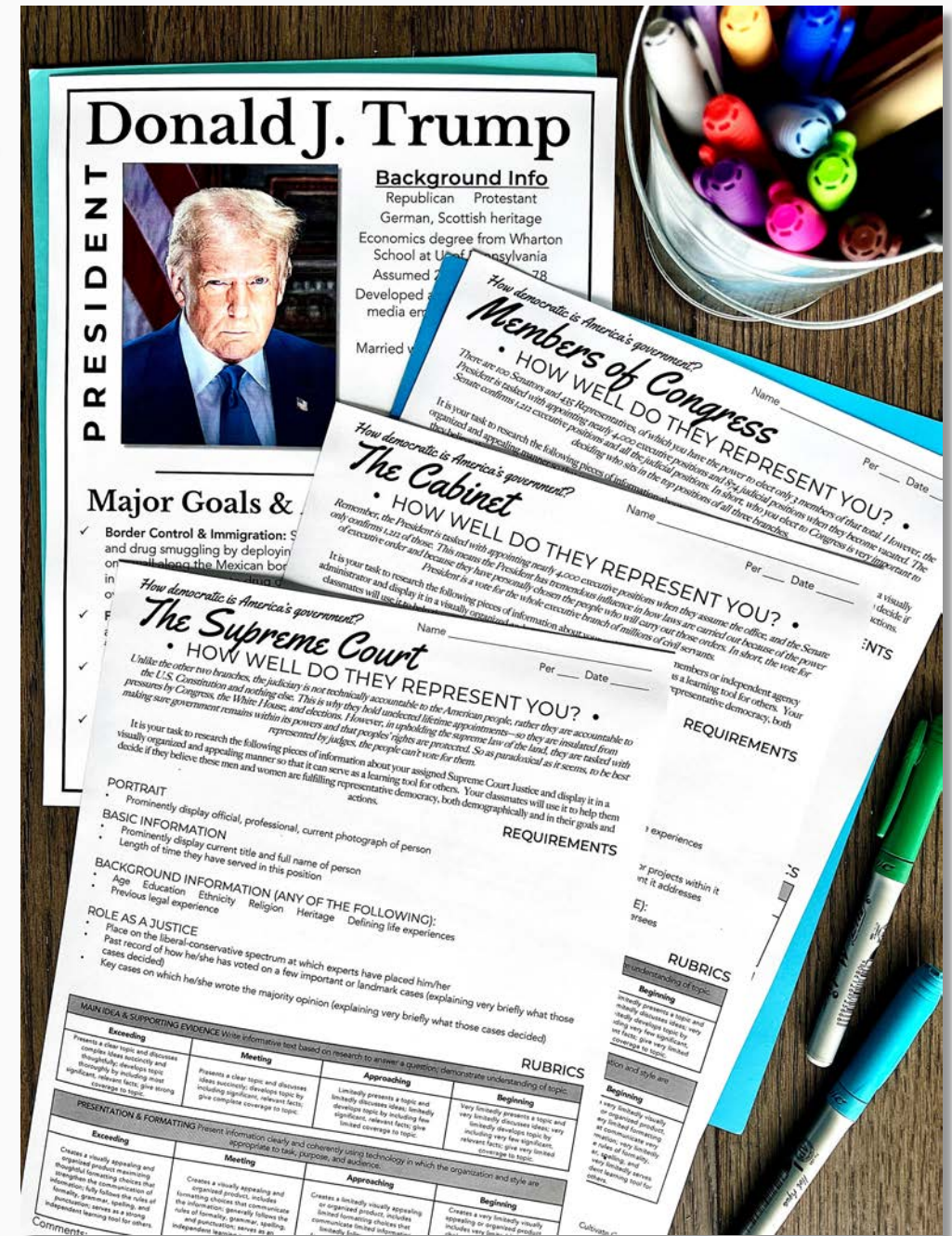
**Assign** each student one person to research

**Model** with included sample one-pager

**Support** with detailed requirements and a student-friendly rubric

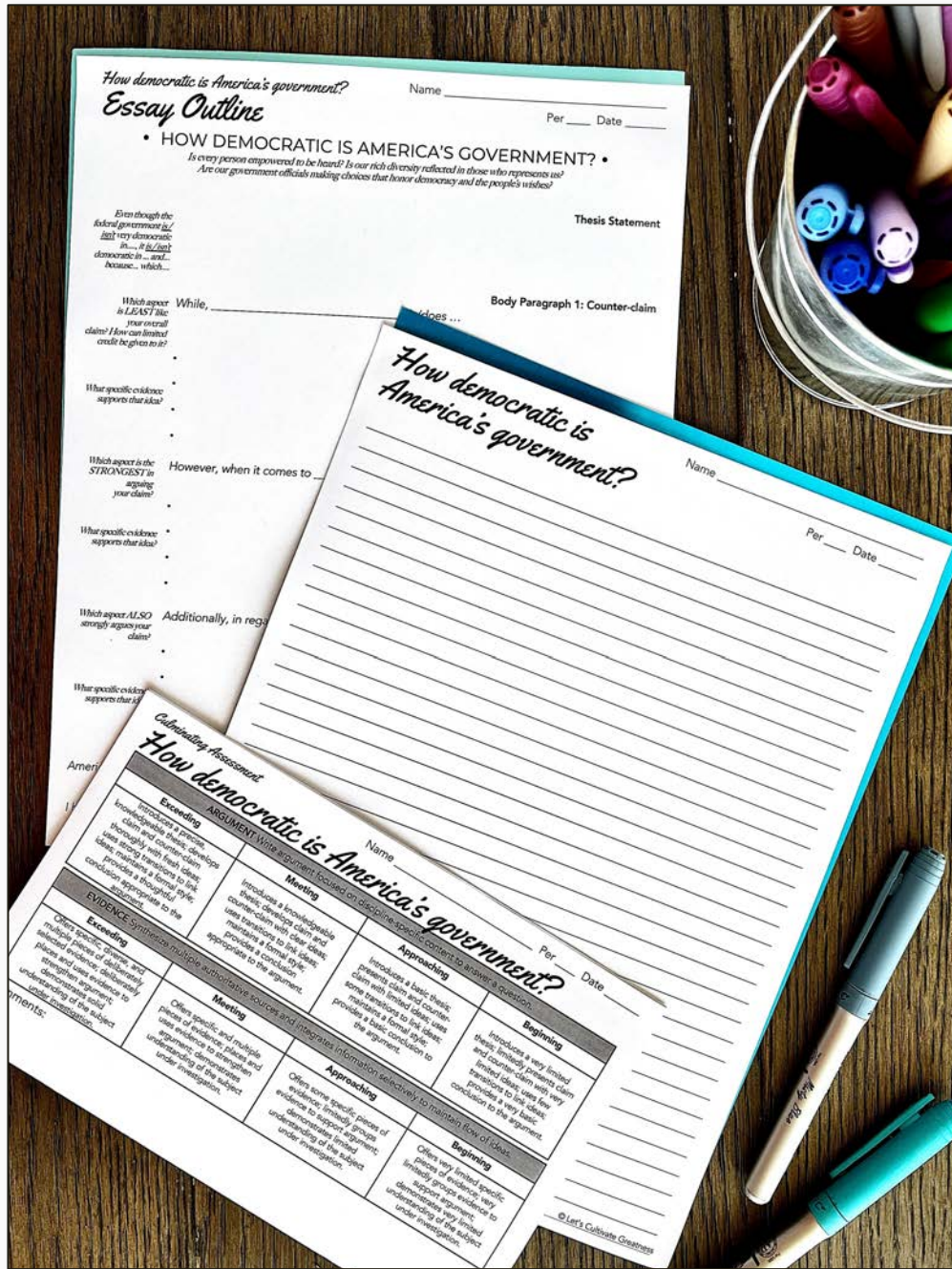
**Examine** in gallery walk activity

# MAKES THE PERFECT STUDENT-MADE BULLETIN BOARD!



# Culminating DBQ ESSAY

- ✓ Unit-long inquiry question with note-taking for deepening understanding
- ✓ Lesson-specific inquiry questions to build toward overarching unit inquiry
- ✓ Collaborative end-of-unit brainstorming exercise
- ✓ Detailed outline template form
- ✓ Step-by-step instructional slides to guide outlining process
- ✓ Thesis & topic sentence templates
- ✓ Essay writing skill how-to handouts
- ✓ Student-friendly rubrics

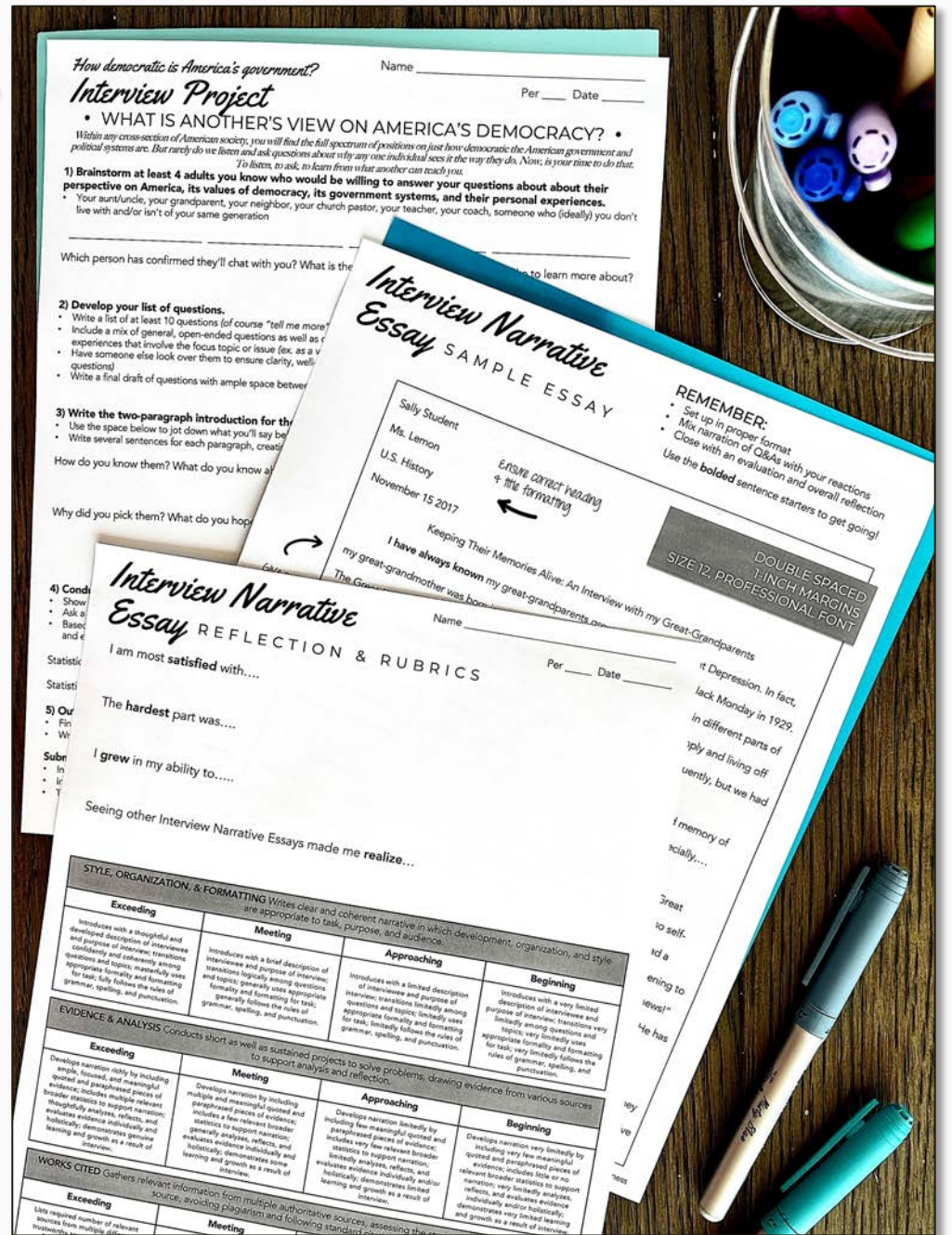


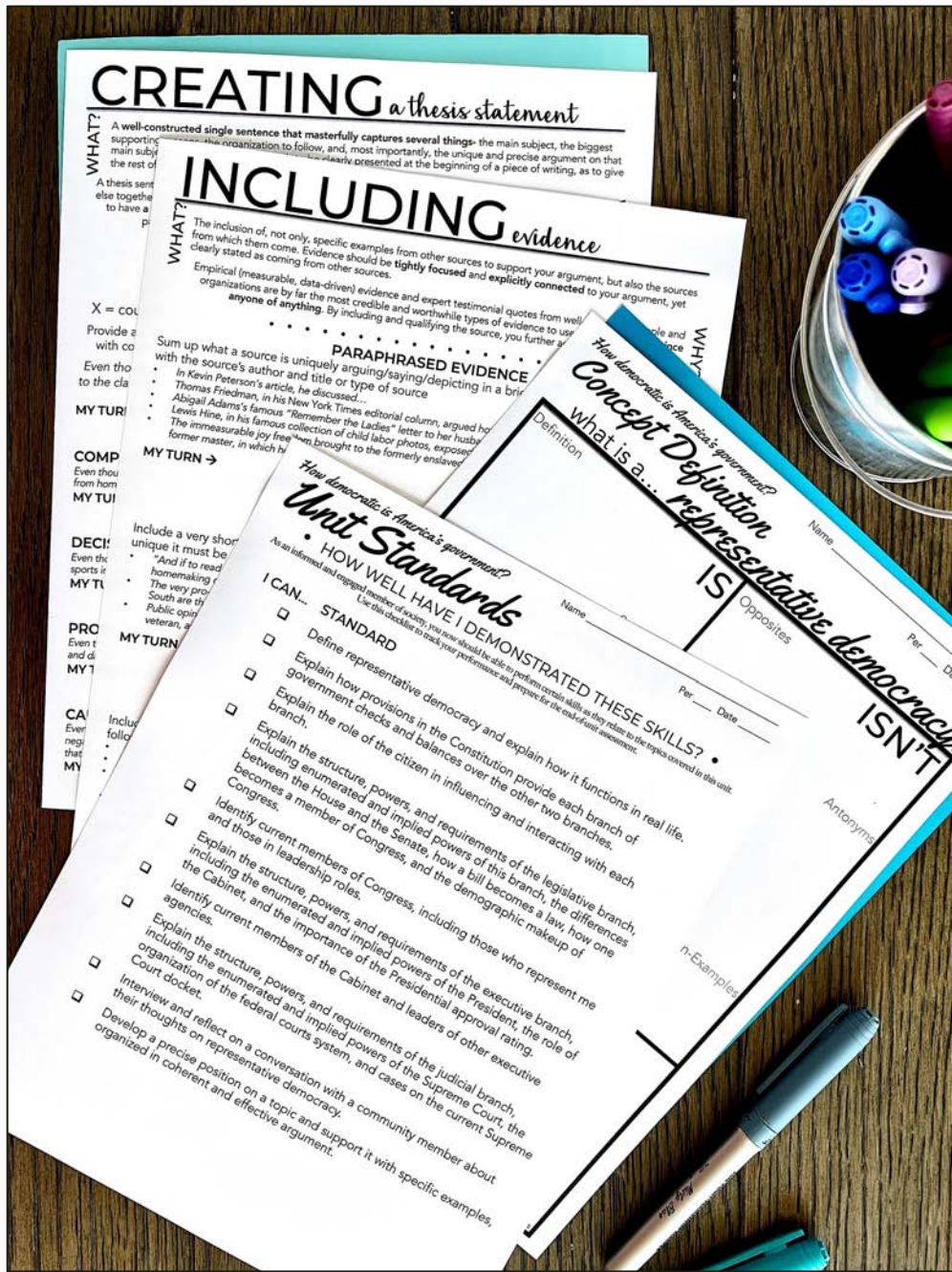
# INTERVIEW ESSAY project

Connect students' developing ideas on the unit's guiding inquiry by challenging them to ask a community member in a memorable conversation.

- ✓ Project overview to break down tasks—develop pick interviewee, write questions, and write essay
- ✓ Writing samples of essay and thank you note & sample questions
- ✓ Rubrics, project overview, edit handouts for each step

## PROMOTE ACTIVE LISTENING & COMMUNITY-BUILDING





# SUPPORTS & ASSESSMENTS *included*

- ✓ Pacing guide with standards checklist
- ✓ Daily driving questions, bell ringers, & closures
- ✓ Step-by-step lesson plans
- ✓ Lesson background & takeaways
- ✓ Answer keys & rubrics
- ✓ Graphic note taking sheets
- ✓ Skill how-to handouts
- ✓ Instructional slide deck
- ✓ Print & digital options

# TAKE A PEEK *inside*

# *every* LESSON

**THREE BRANCHES** OVERVIEW

General Notes continued

**THREE BRANCHES**  
An inquiry unit exploring the basics of American government.

**Course**  
9th - 12th Government & Civics

**Time**  
6-8 weeks

**Topics Addressed**  
Conceptual understanding of representative democracy  
Constitutional provisions and procedures of each branch of government  
The role citizens play as a branch of government  
Current office holders of each branch

**Enduring Understanding & Outcomes**  
**Driving Question:** How democratic is America's government?  
**Greatness** is being an engaged and contributing member of our democracy.

**By the end of this unit...**  
Students will know:  
• the concept of representative democracy  
• the Constitutional powers, requirements, and provisions of each branch of government  
• the real-life practices and procedures of each branch of government  
• the role citizens play as a branch of government

Students will demonstrate they can:  
• articulate their position on American government  
• develop and strengthen annotating, sourcing, writing, and research skills  
• analyze a variety of media resources  
• use and evaluate sources to gather information to answer real-world questions

Unit Overviews give you a bird's eye view of everything at once!

**THREE BRANCHES** OVERVIEW

**Pacing Guide**  
Since classes can range anywhere from 45 to 90 minutes, period length approximates are made for each set of activities. The estimates below amount for most work completed in class. As you examine each activity, you may find portions of the lessons you can assign as homework or cut out if you choose. Lastly, current political events tend to generate great unplanned and genuine questions from students, so allow some flexibility in time to accommodate.

**Classes**  
This unit aligns with standards from several states organized here for your planning purposes.

**Activities**

**Standards Addressed**

**Unit Overview, Hook, & Notes**

**Legislative Activities**

**Executive Activities**

**Judicial Activities**

**Unit Project, Essay & Skill Sheets**

Pacing guide & standards

**THREE BRANCHES** OVERVIEW

**DIGITAL LINKS**

**How democratic is America's government?**

**Unit Overview, Hook, & Notes**

**Legislative Activities**

**Executive Activities**

**Judicial Activities**

**Unit Project, Essay & Skill Sheets**

**Digital versions are fully editable!**

Quick link to Google files

**EXECUTIVE BRANCH** LESSON PLANS

Suggested Lessons continued

Article II: Executive Branch (Varies)

These two websites offer fantastic commentary and annotations on the Constitution for your own background information and learning:  
US Congress: <https://constitution.congress.gov/browse/>

**EXECUTIVE BRANCH** LESSON PLANS

**Time**  
2 weeks

**Materials**  
Podcast: The Executive Branch sheet  
Article II: Executive Branch packer  
Podcast: The Cabinet sheet  
The Cabinet poster project & notes sheet  
Job Approval Rating sheet  
Political Cartoon & News Source sheets

**Lesson Takeaway**  
This activity is best as a whole class, which assigning as homework or in small groups, independent, or at home. You also have some flexibility in the order in which you can assign the activities. For example, students could either analyze the Constitution's text or listen to the podcast overview episode first. Included are sheets of icon images and individual steps for how a bill becomes a law to give you options for conducting the interactive activity. Some ideas are listed in the lesson plans.

**Google version:** [Podcast Notes: The Executive Branch](#) [Article II: Notes](#) [The Cabinet Poster & Notes](#) [Podcast Notes: The Cabinet](#) [Job Approval Rating](#) [Political Cartoon & News Analysis](#)

**Planning & Preparation**  
Decide how you want students to complete each activity, as there is flexibility with each: whole class, gigare, small groups, independent, or at home. You also have some flexibility in the order in which you can assign the activities. For example, students could either analyze the Constitution's text or listen to the podcast overview episode first. Included are sheets of icon images and individual steps for how a bill becomes a law to give you options for conducting the interactive activity. Some ideas are listed in the lesson plans.

**Suggested Lessons**  
Prior to Each Activity (10-15 minutes each)  
Ideally, this is completed the following class after an activity is finished, not as an exit ticket on the same day, because this creates deeper memory for students having a refresh on what they learned 24+ hours later.

**Topics Addressed**  
Constitutional provisions and real-life processes  
Historical and current practices and issues  
Current executive office holders  
Presidential approval rating  
Checks and balances among the three branches

**Skills Addressed**  
Explain the structure, functions, powers, and requirements of the executive branch created by Article II  
Analyze and evaluate current issues  
Cite specific textual evidence to support analysis of sources  
Work collaboratively to investigate and address a question

Lesson Takeaway

Info at a glance

Lesson Plans come with step-by-step directions

Helpful planning tips & Links to Google files

Wide range of ways to complete activities!

**Article II: Executive Branch**

**Podcast: Executive Branch**

**FORMAL CONSTITUTIONAL POWERS**

**IMPLIED & INFORMAL POWERS**

**Job Approval Rating**

**WHAT DO ALL THESE NUMBERS MEAN?**

**PRESIDENT'S JOB APPROVAL EVENTS & SENTIMENTS**

**BY COMPARISON**

**EXAMINE real-world info & stats**

Daily Inquiry, Directions & Background context

Closing formative assessment with each activity

# UNIT *overview*

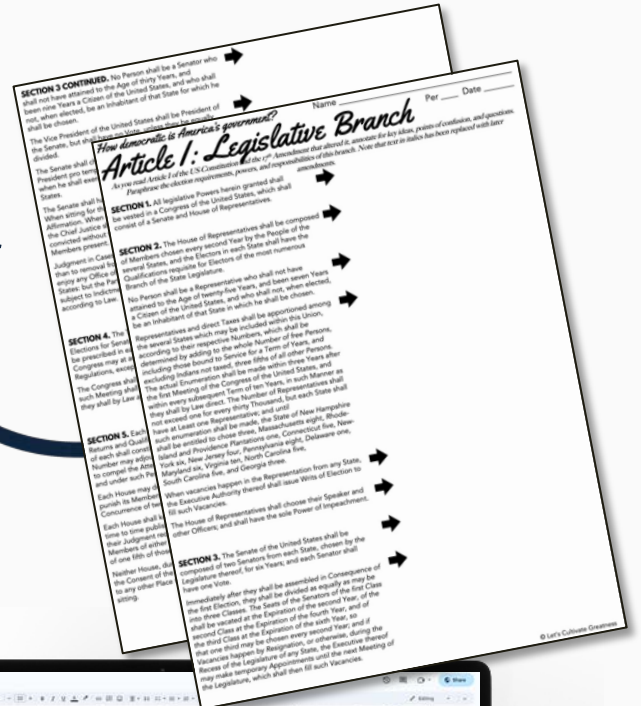


# TAKE A PEEK *inside* **each** ACTIVITY



Real-life photos of leaders of each branch

Print PDF & editable Google file options for all student materials to tailor to your classroom needs



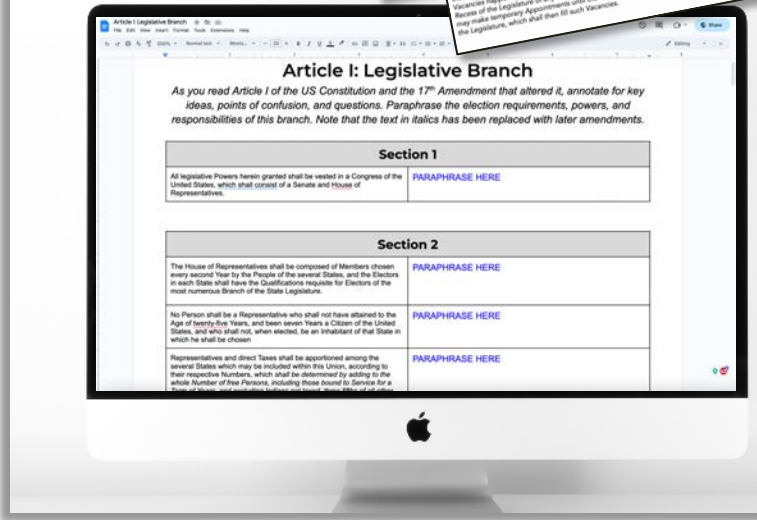
OVERALL, what word best translates your letter grade?  
 Overwhelmingly Mostly  
 Clearly Sufficiently  
 Consistently Occasionally

What **OVERALL LETTER GRADE** do you give our government for being a representative democracy?

After reviewing everything  
 How **ARE** and **AREN'T** the 3 branches fulfilling **REPRESENTATIVE DEMOCRACY?**  
 Capture **OVERALL**, then provide **EXAMPLES.**  
 UNIT BRAINSTORM

**B** – solidly, 80-89%  
**D** – inadequate, 60-69%  
**F** – poor, 0-59%  
 Outline Sheet  
 #1: ESSAY CLAIM

Step-by-step essay support



# *Instructional* SLIDE DECK