



CIVICS CLASSROOM CURRICULUM

CITIZENS CLEAN ELECTIONS COMMISSION ★ YOUTH VOTER EDUCATION AND OUTREACH

7th - 8th
GRADE LEVELS

ANSWER KEY
STUDENT RESEARCH PACKET

Student Research Packet

Roles and Responsibilities of Government

Students: To complete the packet, please go to the Citizens Clean Elections Commission website that you previously explored (www.azcleanelections.gov). You will also need to conduct some Internet research on your own. Please refer to the Searching and Evaluating Web Resources Tip Sheet to help guide your search and selection of online sources.

I. THE THREE BRANCHES OF THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT AND THEIR RESPONSIBILITIES...

A. The President is the head of the executive branch of the U.S. government and also the commander in chief of the Armed Forces. The President can sign a bill into law or veto it to prevent it from becoming a law (although the veto can be overridden by a 2/3 vote of the Congress). Once a law is passed, it is the President's job to execute and enforce the law. The President can issue executive orders, which have the force of law. The President also has the power of appointment, e.g., judges, members of his cabinet. The President is limited to two 4-year terms of office.

Real Life Discussion Question: Do you think the President should be limited to two terms? Why or why not? Representatives in the House of Representatives and Senators have no term limits. Should they? Why does the President and not others, do you think?

B. The U.S. Senate and the U.S. House of Representatives make up the legislative branch of government because they are primarily responsible for making laws.

Each state gets two U.S. Senators, elected to six-year terms. The Senate has the power to originate legislation, draft or amend bills, consider the budget, and filibuster (delay legislation). The Senate has oversight of the Executive Branch, approving or rejecting presidential appointments, and can override a presidential veto of a bill. The Senate has sole power of any impeachment trial of executive and judicial officials, that is to try them for “high crimes and misdemeanors.”

Real Life: Search the Internet to find out who are the two U.S. Senators from Arizona. What can you determine about what they stand for?

The U.S. House of Representatives has 435 members, elected every two years from districts in their states. Arizona presently has nine Congressional districts. Both the House and Senate have oversight of the federal budget, but all revenue-related bills must originate in the House. The House has power of impeachment but sends the charges to the Senate for any trial or conviction.

Real Life: Using your address and zip code, find out what Congressional District you live in (of the nine in AZ). Then determine who your elected representative is in the U.S. House of Representatives. What can you find out about what they stand for?

C. As head of the judicial branch of government, the U.S. Supreme Court is the highest court in the nation and has nine judges. It has the final say in any appeal from a lower court ruling. The Supreme Court has the duty to protect civil rights and liberties by striking down laws that violate the U.S. Constitution. This is called judicial review. A Supreme Court justice is a non-elected post appointed by the President and holds the position for life.

Real Life Discussion/Research Question: An important part of our government that the Founding Fathers established is a system of “checks and balances” among the President, Congress, and the Supreme Court. Based on what you just discovered in the information above, what is one example? That is, how does one branch check another? Now look up “checks and balances” to find other examples.

II. OUR STATE ELECTED OFFICIALS

A. Likewise, the state has three branches of government that provide a set of checks and balances. What are they and what are their duties?

1. **Executive:** Sign into law or veto a bill. Power in the budgeting process.

Appointment of state department directors and the Arizona Supreme Court.

Establishes a legislative agenda. Can issue executive orders for immediate action.

Can call the legislature into Special Session. Can grant reprieves and pardons. Is the commander in chief of the National Guard.

2. **Legislative:** Senate – Draft, introduce, and vote on legislation (laws). Approves the state's budget (along with the House), that is taxing and spending. Can confirm or reject any gubernatorial appointee for the Executive Branch offices. Proposes amendments to the state constitution to be referred to voters. Has powers of trial and conviction to remove elected officials impeached by the House.

House - Can draft, introduce and vote on legislation. Along with the Senate, the House approves the state's annual budget. The House can enact bills that are referred to voters for approval, and can place constitutional amendments on the ballot. Holds the sole power for impeachment of elected state officials, but defers to the Senate for any trial or conviction.

3. **Judicial:** The Arizona State Supreme Court is the highest court in Arizona and reviews appeals from lower state courts. Much like the U.S. Supreme Court, the Arizona Supreme Court chooses which cases to review and can overturn a decision from a lower court. Can disbar or suspend attorneys who have been charged with misconduct. Oversees the administration of all Arizona courts. The main job of the judicial branch is to determine the constitutionality of laws passed by the legislature.

Real Life: Use your address and zip code on the CCEC website to find out what legislative district you live in and who your elected representatives are in the State House of Representatives and in the Senate. List them below with any information you can find about their politics.

III. IT IS SAID THAT “ALL POLITICS IS LOCAL.” YOUR CITY/TOWN GOVERNMENT IS IMPORTANT TO YOU AND YOUR FAMILY.

A. How is the Mayor’s role similar to that of the Governor?

The Mayor is the Chief Executive Officer of a city and often acts in a ceremonial role for the city and as the city’s spokesperson. The Mayor oversees the city’s administration and operations, although in some cases the appointed City Manager handles daily operations and staff. The Mayor runs City Council meetings, working with the Council to set policy. Unless stated otherwise on a city’s charter, a Mayor does not have the power to veto ordinances passed by the Council. The Mayor, however, does have the power to declare a state of emergency

How is it different (in terms of veto power)?

Unless stated otherwise on a city’s charter, a Mayor does not have the power to veto ordinances passed by the Council

B. The City or Town Council is an elected, local policy- and law-making body with the power to pass city/town laws and ordinances. At regular meetings, which are open to the public, the Council hears requests and grievances of local citizens and receives updates from city staff on projects and initiatives.

Tucson, for instance, has a mayor and 6 city council members from six wards elected in partisan elections. Phoenix has a mayor and 8 city council members from 8 districts. They are elected in non-partisan elections. What is a “non-partisan” election?

Non-partisan means not affiliated with a political party. Council member / candidates do not run for election as a Democrat, Republican, Libertarian, Green or any other party.

Real Life: Using your city or town website and your address, find out what district or ward you are in, your city council representative, and your mayor. See if you can discover a local issue that your representatives are currently confronting. What are your thoughts on the issue?



IV. USING THE CCEC WEBSITE, PLEASE MATCH THE FOLLOWING DUTIES WITH THE STATE OFFICE (LISTED BELOW) THAT PROVIDES THEM. *NOTE: THEY MAY BE USED TWICE.

A. Regulates the public service utilities corporations, specifically over the quality of service they provide and the rates charged to customers.

Corporation Commissioner

B. Acts as the Chief Election Officer, certifying state election results and keeping records of state campaign finances and financial disclosures.

Secretary of State

C. Manages Arizona's investment portfolio and is required to authorize and balance the state's accounts; also directs the state's banking services.

Treasurer

D. Works with the State Board of Education to develop and implement standards for Arizona public schools; oversees teacher certification and information about districts.

Superintendent of Public Instruction

E. Enforces consumer protection and civil rights laws, and prosecutes criminals charged with white-collar crimes, public corruption, environmental law infractions and crimes committed in more than one county.

Attorney General

F. Is in charge of inspecting the safety and conditions of mines in the state to ensure the safety of the mine workers and the general public.


Mine Inspector

G. Acts in the Governor's place in case of emergency or when out of state, and is next in line in succession should the Governor leave office due to death, resignation or impeachment.

Secretary of State

H. Approves all filings for corporations in the state, collects financial information annually from each corporation, and responds to public questions about Arizona businesses and corporations.

Corporation Commissioner

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- I. Prepares formal legal opinions on specific legal issues when requested by state officials, legislators or county attorneys.

Attorney General

- J. Directs the state's banking services and is in charge of protecting taxpayer money.

Treasurer

- Governor
- Secretary of State
- Superintendent
- Mine Inspector
- Treasurer
- Corporation Commissioner
- Attorney General
- State Senators & Representatives
- Justices & Judges

Real Life: Provide a current event/issue that is connected to 2 of the above state offices of your choice. How does it impact you and your family? What are your thoughts on each issue?

V. USING THE CCEC WEBSITE, PLEASE MATCH THE FOLLOWING DUTIES WITH THE COUNTY OFFICE (LISTED BELOW) THAT PROVIDES THEM. *NOTE: THEY MAY BE USED TWICE.

A. Prosecutes all felonies in the county and represents the county in legal matters; also provides legal counsel to other county officials.

County Attorney

B. Appropriates money to school districts and oversees services to ensure special education students have the resources they need for their education; also keeps track of student achievement.

School Superintendent

C. Keeps public records so the public can access public records and government information as needed for personal and/or business purposes.

County Recorder

D. Sets the county tax rate and approves the county budget; oversees municipal services such as health, road, parks, libraries and law enforcement; has authority to decide other issues, as well, such as zoning changes, resolutions and ordinances.

Board of Supervisors

E. Locates all taxable property in the county and determines how much the property will be taxed; does not determine how property is taxed, only enforces the rules.

Assessor

F. Formed for the purposes of contracting with the United States for the delivery of CAP water, repayment of CAP costs and operation and maintenance of the CAP aqueduct.

Central Arizona Water Conservation District

G. Primary duty is to manage deputies to enforce the law in unincorporated areas of the county; also oversees the operation of the county jail, including custody and care of inmates.

County Sheriff

H. Is in charge of processing and maintaining voter registration records. Additionally, administers early voting, including mailing out early ballots and providing on-site early voting locations; also verifies voter signatures on early ballot affidavits and petitions (when required by law).

County Recorder

I. Coordinates search and rescue operations, collects delinquent taxes and, when necessary, evicts delinquent taxpayers.

County Sheriff

J. Acts as the court of appeals for municipal and justice courts. In addition to appeals from lower courts, generally rules on matters including but not limited to property crimes, wills, naturalizations and divorces.

Superior Court

K. Essentially is the county's tax collector, receiving all revenues and fees due to the state and county related to private property, school districts and special assessments; disburses funds from the treasury, invests the surplus of funds and takes action against those who have not paid their taxes to the county.

Treasurer

L. Helps the public maneuver through the court system in terms of documents and dockets. It also processes U.S. Passport applications and issues and records marriage licenses.

Clerk of the Court

- Board of Supervisors
- Sheriff
- County Recorder
- Treasurer
- Assessor
- Attorney
- Clerk of the Court
- School Superintendent
- Superior Court Judge
- Central Arizona Water Conservation District
- County Clerk

Real Life: Provide a current event/issue that is connected to 2 of the above state offices of your choice. How does it impact you and your family? What are your thoughts on each issue?