



CIVICS CLASSROOM CURRICULUM

CITIZENS CLEAN ELECTIONS COMMISSION ★ YOUTH VOTER EDUCATION AND OUTREACH

7th - 8th
GRADE LEVELS

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.azcleelections.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 _____ branch of the U.S. government and also the _____ of the Armed Forces. The President can sign a bill into law or _____ it to prevent it from becoming a law (although the veto can be overridden by a _____ vote of the Congress. Once a law is passed, it is the President's job to _____ and _____ the law. The President can issue _____, which have the force of law. The President also has the power of _____, e.g., judges. 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 _____.

Each state gets _____ U.S. Senators, elected to _____-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 _____, and can override a presidential veto of a bill. The Senate has sole power of any _____ 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 _____ members, elected every ____ years in districts. Arizona presently has ____ Congressional districts. Both the House and Senate have oversight of the federal budget, but all _____-_____ bills must originate in the House. The House has power of _____ but defers 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 _____. A Supreme Court justice is a non-elected post appointed by the President and holds the position for _____.

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.

2.

3.

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?

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

B. The City or Town Council is an elected, local policy- and law-making body with the power to pass_____. At regular meetings, which are open to the public, the Council hears requests and grievances of _____, as well as _____ 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?

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.
- B.** Acts as the Chief Election Officer, certifying state election results and keeping records of state campaign finances and financial disclosures.
- C.** Manages Arizona's investment portfolio and is required to authorize and balance the state's accounts; also directs the state's banking services.
- D.** Works with the State Board of Education to develop and implement standards for Arizona public schools; oversees teacher certification and information about districts.
- 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.
- 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.
- 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.
- 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.

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

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

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

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

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.

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.

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.

- 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?