

# Branches Of Power Icivics Answer Key

## Teacher's Guide



### For the President, All in a Day's Work

**Time Needed:** One Class Period

**Materials Needed:**  
Student worksheets

**Copy Instructions:**  
Student packet (4 pages double-sided;  
class set)

**Learning Objectives.** Students will be able to:

- Analyze the difficult decisions the President must make by ranking a list of presidential responsibilities from most difficult to easiest.
- Identify the powers of the Executive Branch by reading a selection from the U.S. Constitution.
- Match presidential responsibilities with the specific Executive Branch powers listed in the Constitution.
- Identify the federal agencies that handle a list of specific issues by matching the agencies with the issues.

### STEP BY STEP

- 1) ANTICIPATE** by asking students to think of one thing they think the President does in his job as President. Give students a moment to think, then randomly call on students to share what they thought of.
- 2) DISTRIBUTE** one "All in a Day's Work" packet to each student.
- 3) READ** the directions on the first page, "All in a Day's Work," with the class.
- 4) ASK** students to complete Groups A, B, and C on the "All in a Day's Work" page. When they have finished, discuss each group of three tasks with the class. (Tasks are grouped in threes to make the ranking and discussion more manageable.)
- 5) READ** "Play by the Rules," with the class. Explain that this is the actual text of the Constitution. The President's powers are underlined to make them easier to spot. Discuss them as you read.
- 6) READ** the directions for "I've Got the Power" with the class. This matching exercise will help them link the tasks they ranked on the first page with the powers they read about in the Constitution excerpt on the second page.
- 7) ASK** students to complete the "I've Got the Power" matching activity.
- 8) REVIEW** the answers to the matching activity.
- 9) READ** the introduction to "So Many Laws, So Little Time!" with the class.
- 10) ASK** students to complete the "So Many Laws, So Little Time!" word bank activity.
- 11) REVIEW** the answers to the word bank activity.
- 12) COLLECT** the packets.
- 13) CLOSE** by asking students to silently recall one power the President has. Call on students until all 10 powers discussed in the lesson have been named.

This lesson plan is part of the Executive Branch series by iCivics, Inc., a nonprofit organization dedicated to advancing civic education. For more teaching resources, please visit [www.icivics.org/teachers](http://www.icivics.org/teachers), where you can access the state standards aligned to this lesson plan.  
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Step by Step

**Branches of Power iCivics Answer Key** is an essential resource for students and educators navigating the complex landscape of the United States government. Understanding the three branches of government—legislative, executive, and judicial—is fundamental for grasping how American democracy functions. iCivics, an interactive educational platform, provides games and resources that teach civics in a fun and engaging way. This article will explore the branches of power, the roles and responsibilities of each branch, and how iCivics can help students learn about these crucial aspects of governance.

## Understanding the Three Branches of Government

The U.S. government is based on the principle of separation of powers, which divides authority among

three distinct branches. Each branch has its own functions, powers, and limitations, ensuring that no single entity can gain too much control. This system is designed to promote a balance of power and protect the rights of citizens.

## 1. Legislative Branch

The legislative branch is primarily responsible for making laws. It consists of two chambers:

- The House of Representatives: Members serve two-year terms and are elected based on the population of each state. The House initiates revenue bills and has the authority to impeach federal officials.
- The Senate: Senators serve six-year terms, with each state having two representatives. The Senate confirms presidential appointments and ratifies treaties.

The legislative branch operates under several key functions:

- Law-making: Proposing and debating bills that can become laws.
- Budgeting: Appropriating funds for government operations and programs.
- Oversight: Monitoring the executive branch and ensuring laws are implemented correctly.

The iCivics platform offers games that simulate the legislative process, allowing students to engage with how laws are created and the importance of compromise.

## 2. Executive Branch

The executive branch is responsible for enforcing laws and is headed by the President of the United States. The President has several key roles, including:

- Chief Executive: Enforces federal laws and issues executive orders.
- Commander-in-Chief: Oversees the armed forces and makes military decisions.
- Diplomat: Conducts foreign relations and negotiates treaties, which must be ratified by the Senate.

The executive branch also includes the Vice President and the Cabinet, which consists of heads of federal agencies. Together, they assist the President in executing laws and managing the government.

Key responsibilities of the executive branch include:

- Implementing laws: Ensuring legislation is carried out effectively.
- Policy-making: Proposing new laws and initiatives.
- Administration: Overseeing federal agencies and programs.

iCivics offers resources that explain how the executive branch functions and the checks and balances that limit presidential power.

### 3. Judicial Branch

The judicial branch interprets laws and administers justice. It is made up of a system of courts, with the Supreme Court being the highest court in the land. The judicial branch has several important functions:

- Interpreting laws: Determining the meaning of laws and their constitutionality.
- Judicial review: The power to declare laws or executive actions unconstitutional.
- Dispute resolution: Settling legal disputes between individuals, organizations, and government entities.

The Supreme Court consists of nine justices who serve lifetime appointments. Their decisions can have a profound impact on American law and society, as they set precedents that lower courts must follow.

iCivics provides simulations and materials that help students understand landmark Supreme Court cases and the role of the judiciary in protecting rights and liberties.

## Checks and Balances

One of the most critical concepts in American governance is the system of checks and balances. This system ensures that no branch of government becomes too powerful and that each branch can limit the powers of the others. Here are some examples:

- Legislative checks on the executive:
  - Can override presidential vetoes with a two-thirds majority in both houses.
  - Confirms presidential appointments and ratifies treaties.
- Executive checks on the legislative:
  - Can veto bills passed by Congress.
  - Calls special sessions of Congress.
- Judicial checks on both legislative and executive:
  - Can declare laws passed by Congress unconstitutional.
  - Can rule executive actions unconstitutional.

Understanding checks and balances is vital for students, as it illustrates the dynamic nature of government and the ongoing protection of individual rights.

# iCivics and Civic Education

iCivics is an invaluable resource for teaching civics and helping students comprehend the complexities of government. Founded by former Supreme Court Justice Sandra Day O'Connor, the platform seeks to promote civic engagement among younger generations. Here are some key features of iCivics:

- **Interactive Games:** Games like "Branches of Power" allow students to step into the roles of lawmakers, executives, and judges, providing a hands-on learning experience.
- **Lesson Plans:** iCivics offers comprehensive lesson plans tailored to various educational standards, making it easier for educators to integrate civics into their curricula.
- **Assessments and Quizzes:** The platform includes quizzes and assessments that help reinforce learning and ensure that students grasp key concepts.
- **Resources for Teachers:** iCivics provides a wealth of resources, including articles, videos, and teaching guides to support educators in delivering effective civics education.

By utilizing iCivics, educators can create a rich learning environment where students can explore the branches of government, understand their functions, and appreciate the importance of civic engagement.

## Conclusion

In conclusion, understanding the branches of power is crucial for every citizen. The legislative, executive, and judicial branches each play a vital role in maintaining a balanced government that serves the people. iCivics offers innovative and interactive tools that make learning about these branches engaging and effective. Through games, lesson plans, and assessments, students can gain a deeper understanding of how government operates and the importance of their role as informed citizens. As they explore the principles of democracy and the responsibilities of governance, they are better equipped to participate in the democratic process and advocate for their rights and the rights of others.

## Frequently Asked Questions

**What are the three branches of power in the U.S. government according to iCivics?**

The three branches of power are the Legislative, Executive, and Judicial branches.

## **How does the Legislative branch check the power of the Executive branch?**

The Legislative branch can check the power of the Executive branch by overriding vetoes, approving budgets, and confirming appointments.

## **What role does the Judicial branch play in the system of checks and balances?**

The Judicial branch interprets laws and can declare laws or executive actions unconstitutional, thereby checking the powers of the Legislative and Executive branches.

## **What is the main function of the Executive branch?**

The main function of the Executive branch is to enforce and implement laws, as well as to administer the government.

## **What is the significance of the separation of powers in the U.S. Constitution?**

The separation of powers prevents any one branch from becoming too powerful and ensures a system of checks and balances.

## **How does iCivics' educational approach help students understand the branches of power?**

iCivics uses interactive games and simulations to engage students in the workings of government, making the concepts of branches of power more relatable and understandable.

## **What is an example of a power reserved for the states under the U.S. Constitution?**

An example of a power reserved for the states is the authority to regulate education and conduct elections.

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