



Name _____

Separation of Powers: Simulation Activity

What's for Lunch

A Three Branches Simulation Activity

Our government has three separate branches: a legislative branch, an executive branch, and a judicial branch. But how do these three branches work together? This activity will show you! As a group, you will play the role of Lead Chefs, Menu Writers, and Nutrition Inspectors to create a fictional healthy lunch menu for your school's cafeteria.



Round 1: Suggest Food Categories

Responsibility: **LEAD CHEFS**

Lead Chef Group Members: (Write names here)

Round 1 Directions: As Lead Chefs, it is your job to suggest food categories for the new healthy lunch menu. As a group, **choose 5 categories of healthy food** to be served each day at your school.

_____ hot beverages	_____ salads	_____ sandwiches	_____ desserts
_____ cold beverages	_____ vegetables	_____ meat/fish	_____ rice/grains
_____ cheese/dairy	_____ fruits	_____ pizza	_____ fried food
_____ candy	_____ chips	_____ pasta	_____ eggs
_____ bread	_____ beans	_____ potatoes	_____ Your Pick



Now, your suggestions must go to the Menu Writers. They will use your categories to decide exactly what the menu will offer. When your teacher tells you, pass **THIS** paper to another group.



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Round 2: Write the Menu

Responsibility: **MENU WRITERS**

Menu Writer Group Members: (Write names here)

Round 2 Directions: As Menu Writers, now your job is to **create the exact menu for one day's lunch**. First, look at the five categories the Lead Chefs chose. (These may NOT be the same categories that your group chose when you were Lead Chefs!). Write them on the left side of the table. Then, as a group, **decide on two specific menu offerings for each category**.

Lead Chefs' Suggested Categories	The menu will offer...
	1. 2.
	1. 2.
	1. 2.
	1. 2.
	1. 2.



Now, your menu must be approved by the Lead Chefs.

When your teacher tells you, pass THIS paper back to the same Lead Chefs who created your categories.



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Round 3: Approve the Menu

Responsibility: **LEAD CHEFS**

Round 3 Directions: As Lead Chefs, you must now decide whether the menu that the Menu Writers created fits with your concept of a healthy lunch.



Menu approved!



Menu not approved!

(Mark the disapproved items on the menu for the Menu Writers.)



If you approved the menu, the Nutrition Inspectors must now decide whether the menu is actually healthy. SKIP Round 4 and pass THIS paper to a third group who will act as Nutrition Inspectors. If you did not approve the menu, pass THIS paper back to the Menu Writers and go to Round 4.



Round 4: Write the Menu

Responsibility: **MENU WRITERS**

Round 4 Directions: Uh-oh... The Lead Chefs didn't approve your menu! Now you have two choices: You can revise the parts they didn't approve of, or you can override their decision and keep the menu as-is.

To Override: Take a vote in your Menu Writers group. You need a 2/3 of your group to vote in favor of keeping the menu in order to override the Lead Chefs' decision. That means

- If you have 3 people in your group, you need 2 votes.
- If you have 4 people in your group, you need 3 votes.
- If you have 5 people in your group, you need 4 votes.

To Revise: Go back to your original menu. Look at the disapproved items that the Lead Chefs marked. Make changes that you think the Lead Chefs will approve and give the menu back to the Lead Chefs for approval.

VOTE RESULTS

___ keep menu

___ revise

Enough votes to
override Lead Chefs?



Yes



No



If you overrode the Lead Chefs' decision, the Nutrition Inspectors must now decide if the menu is actually healthy. Pass THIS paper to a third group who will act as Nutrition Inspectors and move on to Round 5. If you did not override the decision, revise the menu, pass THIS paper back to the Lead Chefs, and GO BACK to Round 3.



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Round 5: Evaluate the Menu

Responsibility: **NUTRITION INSPECTORS**

Nutrition Inspector Group Members: (Write names here)

Round 5 Directions: The Lead Chefs and the Menu Writers had one rule: The menu had to be healthy. As Nutrition Inspectors, you must ***decide whether the menu is actually healthy***. As a group, you will do two things: 1) decide what “healthy” means, and 2) decide whether the menu meets your definition.

DEFINITION OF “HEALTHY”

(Develop 3 criteria)

A school lunch is “healthy” if:

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

VOTE RESULTS

___ Menu meets all 3 criteria

___ Menu does not meet all criteria

Does a majority believe the menu meets the criteria for a healthy lunch?

☐ Yes ☐ No



If a majority of Nutrition Inspectors voted that the menu is healthy, mark MENU MAY BE SERVED!

If a majority voted that the menu does not meet the criteria, mark MENU MAY NOT BE SERVED.

- ☐ **MENU MAY BE SERVED!**
- ☐ **MENU MAY NOT BE SERVED.**



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Separation of Powers

A. Who's Who? Draw lines to match the roles in the simulation with the roles they represent in real life:

Lead Chef	Supreme Court
Nutrition Inspectors	Congress
Menu Writers	President

B. Unscramble It! Use what you learned in the simulation activity to put these real-life steps in order. Number them from 1 to 5.

1	____ Supreme Court decides whether the law is unconstitutional.
2	____ Congress makes changes to the bill or overrides the President's veto.
3	____ President sets the agenda for laws that are important.
4	____ Congress writes bills that may become law.
5	____ President vetoes the bill or signs it into law.

Post-Simulation Activity

Separation of Powers

A. Who's Who? Draw lines to match the roles in the simulation with the roles they represent in real life:

Lead Chef	Supreme Court
Nutrition Inspectors	Congress
Menu Writers	President

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Post-Simulation Activity



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Separation of Powers: Real-Life Crossover

Suggestion: Protect Military Medals

Sometimes laws are introduced by everyday people! When a handful of concerned Colorado residents learned that some people were wearing fake military medals they'd never earned, they decided to do something about it. They went to their Congressional representative and made a suggestion. In this case, they wanted him to introduce a bill in Congress making it illegal to lie about military medals. After learning more about the problem, the representative agreed that this concern from the people in his district was important enough to bring to Congress.



Writing the Bill



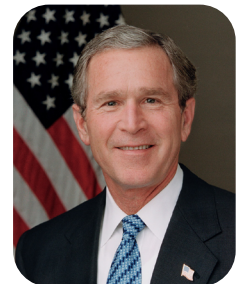
Representative John Salazar

Representative John Salazar of Colorado drafted a bill called the Stolen Valor Act that would penalize people who falsely claim to be decorated military veterans. The bill stated that lies about military medals "damage the reputation and meaning of these medals." Under the bill, anyone who lied about receiving one of these medals could be fined, imprisoned for under six months, or both. Representative Salazar introduced the Stolen Valor Act to the House of Representatives in July 2005.

A few months later, a similar bill was introduced in the Senate by Senator Kent Conrad of North Dakota. Senator Conrad's bill passed the Senate in September 2006. It was sent to the House of Representatives, which passed the bill in December.

Approved!

The bill was then sent to the president for approval. President George W. Bush signed the Stolen Valor Act into law on December 20, 2006.



President George W. Bush

New Law Fails Inspection

Two years later, California resident Xavier Alvarez told everyone at a public meeting, "I am a retired marine of 25 years. I retired in the year 2001. Back in 1987, I was awarded the Congressional Medal of Honor. I got wounded many times by the same guy." These were all lies. Alvarez was charged with a crime under the Stolen Valor Act. In court, Alvarez argued that his lies were protected by the First Amendment right to free speech. His case eventually went all the way to the United States Supreme Court.

The Supreme Court agreed with Alvarez, saying "one of the costs of the First Amendment is that it protects the speech we detest as well as the speech we embrace." The Court said that unless these lies are used to commit fraud or for financial gain, they are protected by the First Amendment.

Back to the Bill Writers

In response, a new version of the Act was drafted. On January 15, 2013, Representative Joe Heck of Nevada introduced a bill making it a crime to receive any **tangible benefit** (like money or property) from lying about receiving a military medal. The revised Stolen Valor Act passed both the House of Representatives and the Senate in May 2013. Finally, on June 2, 2013, President Barack Obama signed the new bill into law.



President Barack Obama



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Separation of Powers: Real-Life Crossover

C. Ideas for Laws. The president sets the agenda for laws that are important. But the president is not the only person who can think of ideas for laws. Who else can suggest ideas for laws?

✓ Check ALL that you think are correct.

CIRCLE the group that suggested the Stolen Valor Act.

- | | |
|--|---|
| ☐ Lawmakers | ☐ The president |
| ☐ Supreme Court justices | ☐ Comic book superheroes |
| ☐ Dogs | ☐ Residents |
| ☐ Organizations interested in a cause | |



D. Menu Writers. In real life, there are two groups of "Menu Writers." Who are they?

The _____

and the _____

E. Final Say. The "Menu Writers" had to re-write the Stolen Valor Act even though the "Lead Chef" approved it. Who has the final say about whether a law can stand? (circle one)

- A. The President, who can veto a bill or sign it into law.
- B. The Supreme Court, who can decide whether a law is constitutional.
- C. Congress, who can override the president's veto.

F. Inspection Time. In the simulation, the "Nutrition Inspectors" reviewed the menu but the Supreme Court doesn't automatically "inspect" all bills that are signed into law? So, what has to happen first? Check ALL the things you think could lead the Court to look at whether a law is constitutional:

Someone...

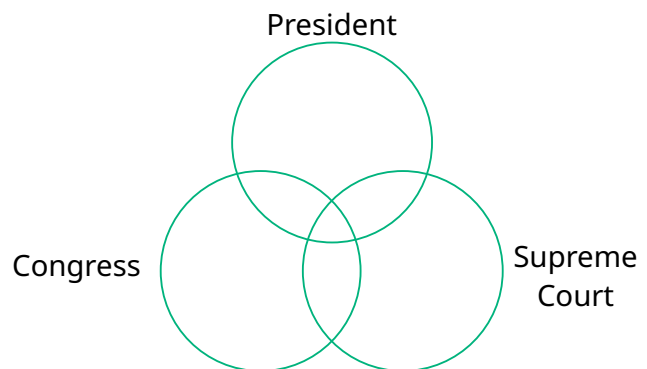
- ☐ Is punished under the law
- ☐ Loses money because of the law
- ☐ Doesn't like the law
- ☐ Loses property because of the law
- ☐ Is harmed in some way because of the law
- ☐ Has a friend who was harmed by the law

Even if something inappropriate happens, the Court still won't look at the law unless the person... (circle one)

- A. Asks the Court, "Pretty please."
- B. Writes a letter to the Court explaining how the law caused them harm.
- C. Brings a case in a trial court and works their way up the court system.
- D. Sends chocolate to the justices.

G. Separation of Powers. Write the letter of each power in the space where it belongs on the diagram. Overlapping parts of the diagram are where shared powers go.

- A. Signs bills into law
- B. Writes laws
- C. Vetoes bills and returns them to Congress
- D. Hears disputes about laws
- E. Is part of the United States government
- F. Decides whether laws are constitutional
- G. Can override a veto with a large vote



Explain how "separation of powers" stops one branch from becoming too powerful:
