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1. RIGHTS & RESPONSIBILITIES



citizen:

a member of a community, recognized by law, with rights and responsibilities

resident:

someone who lives in a city, town, etc.

Residents have rights and responsibilities, too.

right:

something that a person is or should be permitted to have, get, or do

For example, we have the right to equality (or equal = the same) under the law.





responsibility:

a duty or task that you are expected to do
For example, homework is your responsibility.

Constitution: the document that says how the U.S. government works

■ **amendment:** an addition (+) to the Constitution

■ **Bill of Rights:** the first ten amendments to the Constitution.
They protect the rights of people in the U.S.



First Amendment: protects five freedoms:

← assembly

the right to
petition the
government

religion

speech

press



For more on rights and responsibilities, see the game
[**Do I Have a Right?**](#) and the [**Amendment Guide**](#).

2. THREE BRANCHES

There are three branches of government that work together.



checks and balances:

The Constitution has “checks and balances” so that each branch can “check” on the other and the power is balanced.



separation of powers: The three branches all have different jobs so that no one branch has all the power.

The three branches:



Executive



Legislative



Judicial



Executive Branch: carries out laws

President:
the person elected to lead the country



Vice President:
the official just below the president



Commander in Chief of military:

the President, who leads the country's armed forces



cabinet:

a group of people who give advice to the leader of a government



Legislative Branch: makes laws

Congress: the legislative (or law-making) branch, made up of two chambers

■ **bicameral:** has two chambers. The U.S. Congress is bicameral.

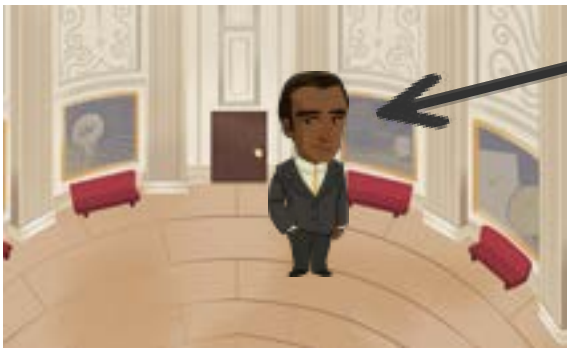


Senate:

the smaller part of Congress (100 members)

House of Representatives:

the larger part of Congress (435 members)



Speaker of the House:

the leader of the House of Representatives

senator:

a lawmaker and member of the Senate

legislator:

a lawmaker, someone who makes laws

representative:

a lawmaker and member of the House



Judicial Branch: interprets laws



Supreme Court:

the highest court in the country, which makes final decisions. There are nine Supreme Court

Chief Justice:

the most important judge on the Supreme Court

Justice:

(a judge) a person who oversees a trial to make sure rules are followed; he or she often makes the decision

3. FROM BILL TO LAW



bill: a written description of a suggested new law



to challenge: to say that something may not be true, correct, or legal
For example, someone might “challenge a law.”



to deliberate: to talk about something before making a decision



law: a rule made by the government



to hear a case: to listen and make a decision about a court case
For example: “The judge will hear the case.”



hearing: a meeting where evidence and thoughts are presented to a group who decides what action should be taken



to sign: to write your name to show that you approve of something

Steps to Become a Law

1.



A new idea is introduced.

2.



A legislator introduces a bill. Congress holds hearings about the issue.

3.



Congress deliberates the bill. It must pass both chambers of Congress to go to the President.

4.



The President reviews the bill and decides whether or not to sign it into a law.

5.



If the law is challenged, the Supreme Court will hear the case and make a decision.

For more information, see the game [Branches of Power](#).

4. COURTS

court: building where legal cases are heard



judge:

the person who oversees a trial and often makes the decision

trial:

a review of evidence in court by a judge or jury



jury:

a group of people who listen to a court case and help decide the outcome of a trial

juror:

a person in a jury



lawyer:

a person who guides others in matters related to the law

client:

a person who turns to a lawyer for services



witness:

a person who saw something happen and talks about it in court

evidence:

proof of something

For more on courts, see the [Court Quest Court Guide](#) and the [Argument Wars SCOTUS Path Guide](#).

5. ELECTIONS

PRIMARY ELECTION BALLOT
MICHIGAN SECRETARY OF STATE
JANIS I. WEINSTEIN

INSTRUCTIONS TO VOTER

1. You will receive a ballot in your home or at a voting location. It is your responsibility to return it to the election official.

2. To vote by mail, you must be at least 18 years old and a resident of Michigan.

3. You may only vote for one candidate for each office.

Mayor/State Representative	City Council/State Representative
☐ April Johnson	☐ Kari Smith
☐ Daniel Johnson	☐ Andrea Smith
☐ Jack Johnson	☐ Lisa Smith
☐ Kelly Johnson	☐ Margaret Johnson
☐ Chris Johnson	☐ Janet Johnson
☐ Robert Johnson	☐ Carol Johnson

ballot:

a ticket or piece of paper used to vote in an election

absentee ballot:

a vote that is sent by mail before an election by a voter who is not able to be there



candidate:

a person trying to be elected to a position in government

campaign:

the organization, and set of activities, that works to get a person elected

convention:

the meeting where a political party chooses its presidential candidate



debate:

a public discussion of important questions

Electoral College:

a group of people chosen from each state to elect the President and Vice President based on people's votes in each state



**funding:**

money for a campaign

**issues:**

problems in a country or community that need solutions such as health care, the environment, or schools

to vote (verb):

to make a choice during an election

to vote (noun):

a choice during an election

**to elect (verb):**

to select someone for a public office by voting

election (noun):

the process of selecting someone for a public office by voting

**media:**

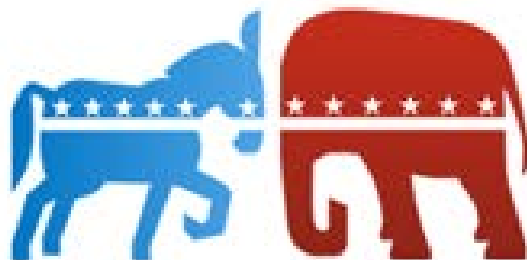
news organizations that deliver information through television, radio, newspaper, or the Internet

**polling:**

asking members of the public their opinions about certain issues and/or candidates

political parties:

groups of people with similar beliefs about government



For more on elections, see the game [Win the White House](#) and the Elections Glossary in [English](#) and [Spanish](#).

6. LOCAL GOVERNMENT



community:

a group of people who share a location, government, or social space

county:

a small unit of government



district:

an area or section of a state or city



mayor:

an elected leader of a city or town



department:

one of the major parts of government (such as Parks Department, Health, etc.)

**service:**

the act of supplying a product or addressing a need (for example: public transportation)

**town hall:**

an event where public officials or candidates talk to an audience

**tax:**

money paid to the government

**sales tax:**

amount of money added to the cost of something and paid to the government

**property tax:**

money that people or businesses pay on land or buildings they own

**budget:**

amount of money for spending

**rural:**

relating to the countryside and people who live there

**urban:**

relating to the city and people who live there

For more on local government, see the game [Counties Work](#) and the [Department Guide](#).