

**2**

## Research

Use online or text sources to find out more about the local government job. On the lines, write some sources you can think of.

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### INTERACTIVITY

Complete the interactivity to learn more about local government jobs.

**3**

## Look for *Quest* Connections

Begin looking for Quest Connections that will help you learn about government jobs.

**4**

## *Quest* Findings

### Present a Local Government Job

Use the Quest Findings page at the end of the chapter to help you tell about a local job.

# The American Government

**INTERACTIVITY**

Participate in a class discussion to preview the content of this lesson.

**Unlock  
The BIG  
Question**

I will know how the federal government is organized.

**Vocabulary**

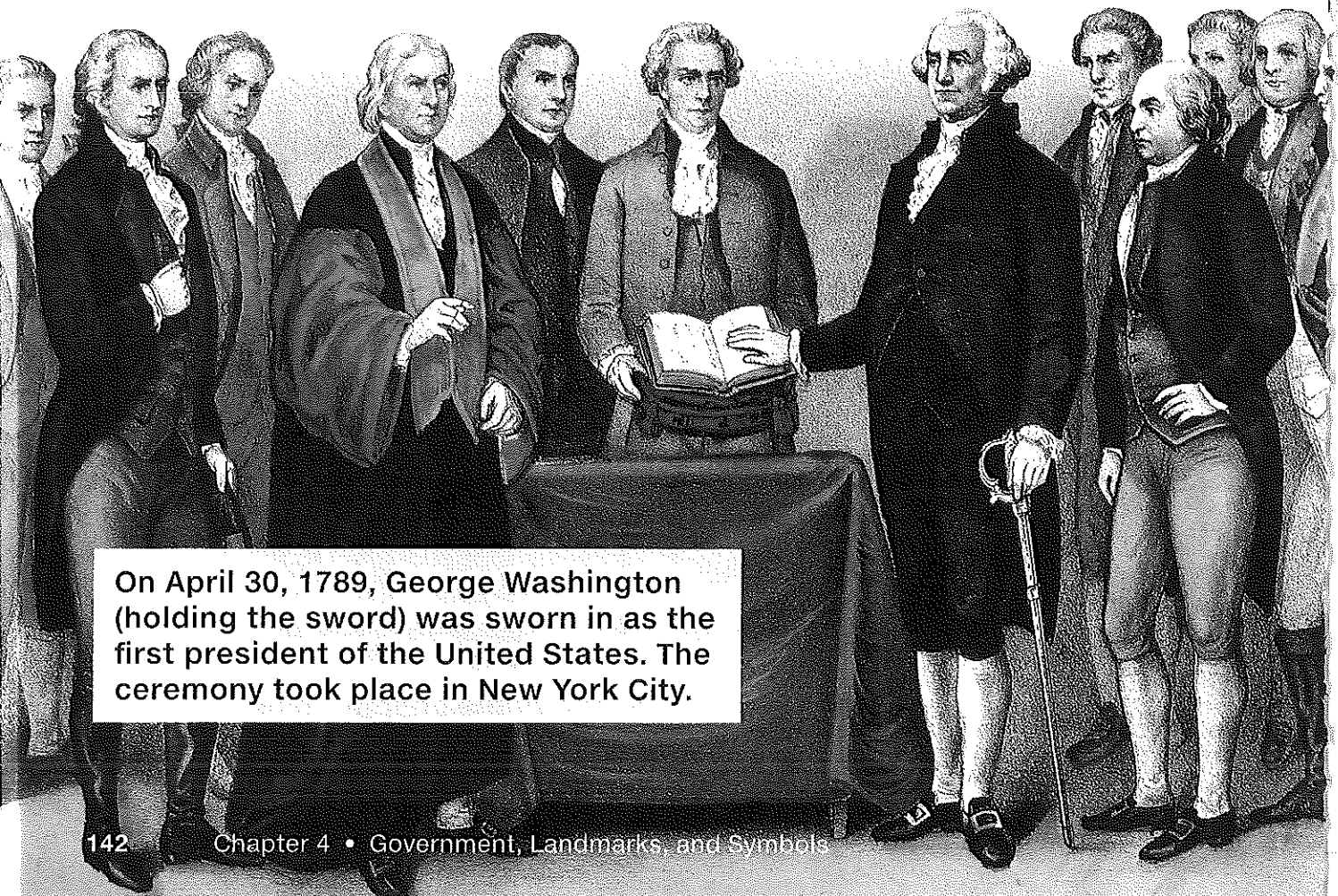
federal  
legislative  
Congress  
executive  
judicial

**Academic  
Vocabulary**

consequence  
violate

**Jumpstart Activity**

Name three things you and a partner know about the United States government. Then walk around the room with your partner and talk with other pairs. Describe four things you and others know about the nation's government.



On April 30, 1789, George Washington (holding the sword) was sworn in as the first president of the United States. The ceremony took place in New York City.

In the 1700s, Americans wanted to break away from British rule. This led to the American Revolution. The Americans won this struggle. After the revolution, the United States needed a plan for government.

## Forming Our Government

During the revolution, American leaders wrote the Declaration of Independence. One idea from it is that government gets its power from “the consent of the governed.” This means that the people take part in government. But how? A plan was needed.

In 1787, leaders wrote the United States Constitution. A constitution is a plan for how a country will work. The U.S. Constitution lists goals of the government. It also tells how the government is set up. The states approved the Constitution and must approve any new changes to it today. Also, state laws cannot go against national laws. All Americans depend on the Constitution. It helps to make our country’s government work for the people.

1. ☒ **Reading Check** Summarize List key information about the United States Constitution.

What Is a Constitution?	Why Is the U.S. Constitution Important?



## Three Branches of the Federal Government

The U.S. Constitution splits the **federal**, or national, government into three parts, or branches. Each branch has some power. No branch has all the power. All three branches meet in the same city. They work in our nation's capital, Washington, D.C.

Donald Trump was elected president of the United States in 2016. He took office in 2017.

The **legislative** branch makes the laws. **Congress** is the legislative group. Congress is made up of the Senate and the House of Representatives. People in the states elect legislators—the people who represent them in Congress. Legislators must listen to the people who elect them. They also must do what they believe is best for all the people in the country.

The president of the United States leads the **executive** branch. This branch carries out the laws that the legislative branch makes. The president can sign into law what Congress passes or send it back for changes. The executive branch is also in charge of the departments that make the government work. Some of the departments print money, take care of our national parks, keep our food safe, and protect us.



The **judicial** branch makes certain the laws follow what is in the U.S. Constitution. The judicial branch is made up of federal courts, with the Supreme Court above all other courts. It is important for people to obey the rules and laws. There are **consequences** if people **violate**, or do not follow, laws. It is also important that laws are used in ways that are fair for all.

It takes all three branches to make our national government work. It also takes everyone in the country doing their part by telling legislators what is important, voting, and following the rules and laws.

### **Academic Vocabulary**

**consequence** • *n.*, the result or effect of an action

**violate** • *v.*, to break or fail to follow a rule

2. ☒ **Reading Check** Discuss and list some duties of each branch of government.

What Does Each Branch of Government Do?		
Legislative (Congress)	Judicial (Supreme Court)	Executive (President)

## Word Wise

**Root words** The word *legislate* means “to make laws.” Knowing this word helps you understand other words. *Legislators* are people who make laws.

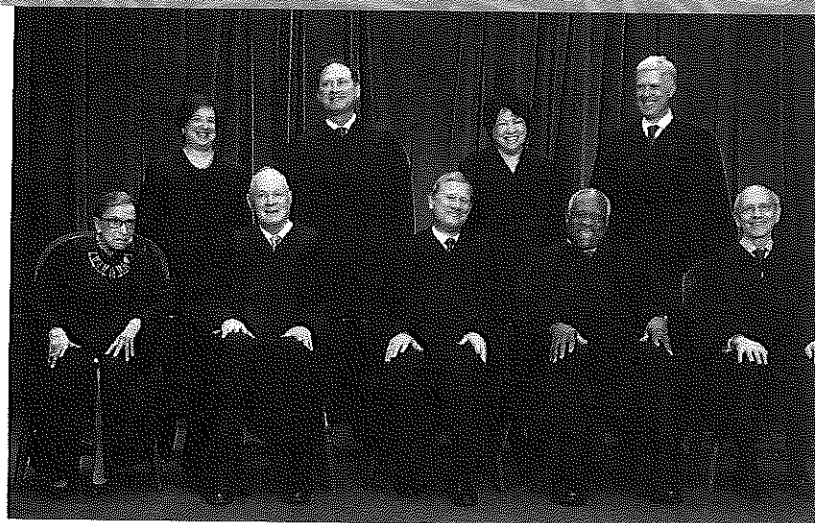
Members of the U.S. Congress represent the people.

## National Leaders

Congress, the legislative branch, is made up of senators and representatives from each state. They are elected by the people of each state. Every state elects two senators. The number of representatives differs by state. States with more people elect more representatives. California has the greatest population of any state. It has 53 representatives in the House of Representatives. Seven states (Alaska, Delaware, Montana, North Dakota, South Dakota, Vermont, and Wyoming) have only one representative. How many representatives does your state have?



The president and the vice president of the United States lead the executive branch. They are elected by the whole country, rather than just by one state. They need to represent all of the people. What happens when people do not agree on what the country needs to do? This often happens. It is a hard job to be the president and try to do what is best for the whole country.



The justices of the U.S. Supreme Court decide important legal cases. Their decisions apply to everyone in the nation.

The Supreme Court is the highest court of the judicial branch. Members of the Supreme Court are judges, or justices. They are not elected. The president suggests a justice to be on the Supreme Court. The members of the Senate then vote on the president's choice. The head of the Supreme Court is called the chief justice.

3. ☒ **Reading Check** The three branches of government have different leaders. **Identify** and **list** the leaders of each branch.

Who Leads Each Branch?	
Legislative	_____
Executive	_____
Judicial	_____

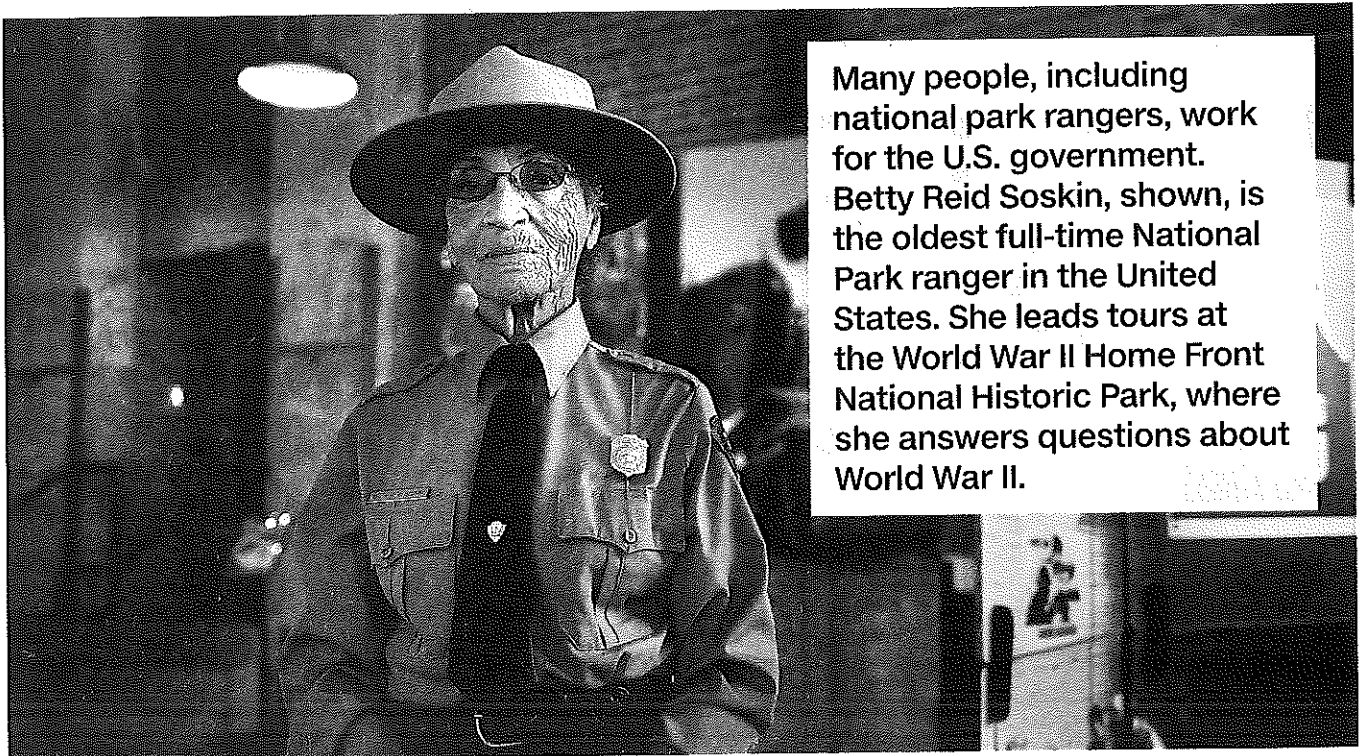
## States and the Nation

The federal government makes laws that people in all states must follow. For example, a federal law tells how old you must be to vote anywhere in the country. There are many national laws. Some tell what you can carry on an airplane, what wild animals are protected, how food is kept safe, or that everyone can apply for jobs.

How do people make a difference in the federal government? You know that people vote for the leaders in Congress and vote for president and vice president. People across the country also pay taxes to the national government. These taxes help pay for the military that protects us, highways we travel on, and many other things. Some people may choose to become part of the federal government by becoming a ranger in a national park, joining the military, or even running for Congress. A person can even run for president!



People vote to elect their leaders in government.



Many people, including national park rangers, work for the U.S. government. Betty Reid Soskin, shown, is the oldest full-time National Park ranger in the United States. She leads tours at the World War II Home Front National Historic Park, where she answers questions about World War II.



People also make a difference by following the rules and laws. One of the most important ways that we all can participate is to let our leaders know what we think. Leaders need to know what issues people think are important and what problems need to be solved. People of all ages have a responsibility to speak up and make suggestions. You can make a difference.

4. ☒ **Reading Check** **Underline** details that show how people take part in the federal government.

### ☒ Lesson 1 Check



#### INTERACTIVITY

Check your understanding of the key ideas of this lesson.

5. **Sequence Select** and circle the one that comes first.

A person is elected president of the United States.

Voters in every state vote.

6. **Summarize** why our government needs the U.S. Constitution.

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7. **Explain** why it is important to have three branches of government and not just one branch.

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# Branches of Government

**INTERACTIVITY**

Participate in a class discussion to preview the content of this lesson.

**Unlock  
The BIG  
Question**

I will know what each branch of government does.

**Vocabulary**

representative  
bill  
veto  
Cabinet  
checks and balances

**Academic  
Vocabulary**

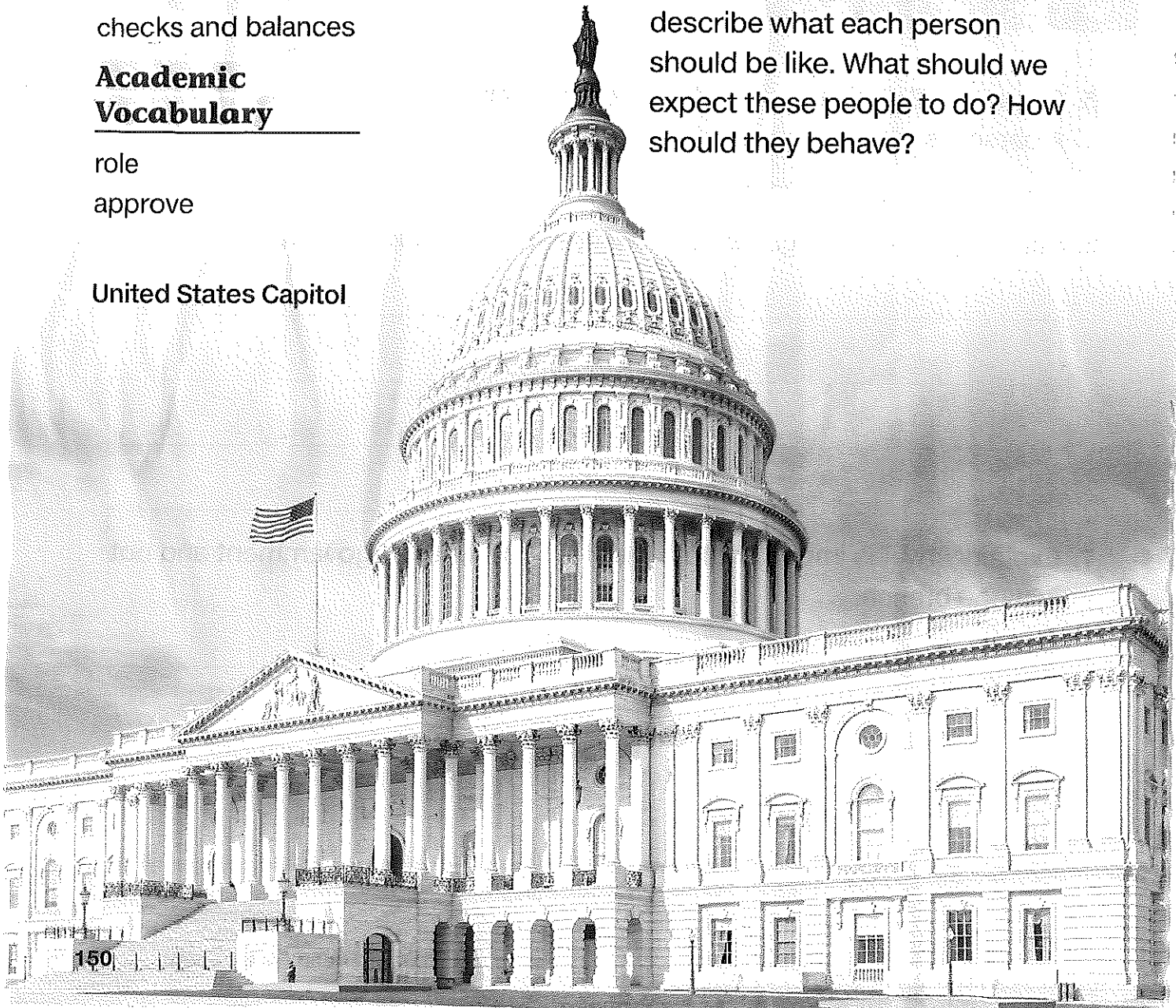
role  
approve

**Jumpstart Activity**

Move around the room to charts your teacher has put up with the names of government leaders. Write words on each chart to

describe what each person should be like. What should we expect these people to do? How should they behave?

United States Capitol

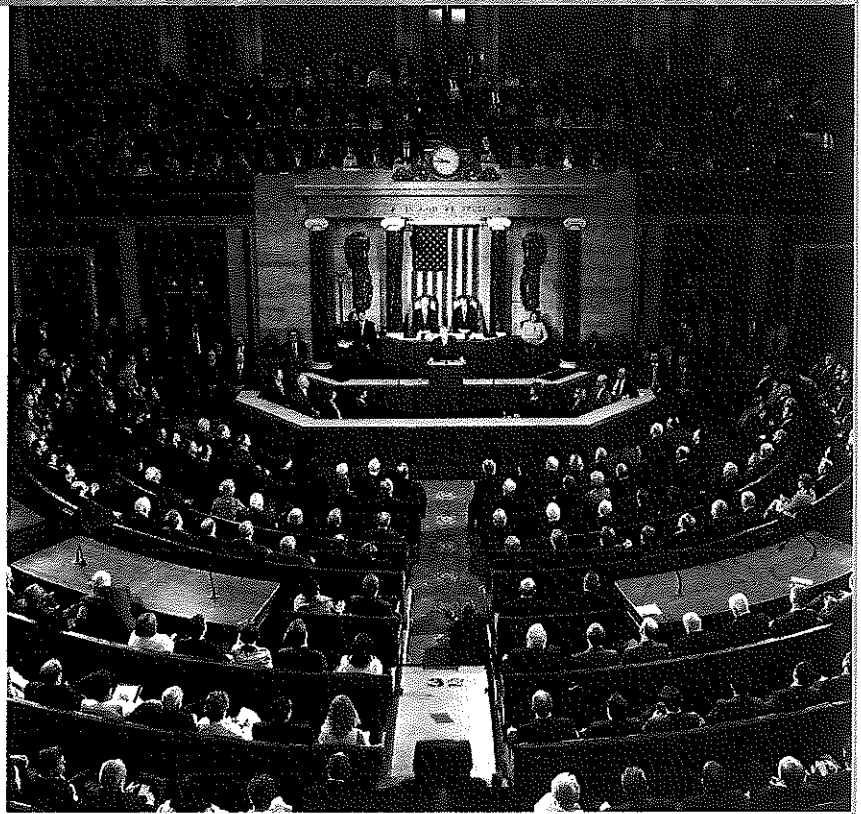


## The Legislative Branch

As you learned, Congress has two parts: the Senate and the House of Representatives.

Remember, the Senate is made up of two representatives from each state. A

**representative** is a person chosen to speak for others. Citizens vote to choose these representatives. There are 100 senators. Senators are elected every six years, and they can be elected many times.



Congress meets in the U.S. Capitol.

There are 435 representatives in the House of Representatives. Remember, the number of representatives in the House depends on the number of people living in each state. The more people who live in a state, the more representatives the state has. Like senators, representatives speak for the people who vote for them.

The representatives in Congress raise and collect taxes. The money from taxes is used to fund, or pay for, the government. Congress also makes laws for the country. Some laws deal with safety, while other laws make sure that all people are treated fairly. All laws begin as ideas. Once an idea is written down for the government to decide on, it is called a **bill**. Before a bill can become a law, both parts of Congress must vote on it and approve it. The bill is then sent to the president to sign.

## The Executive Branch

The president of the United States serves a term of four years and can only be elected for two terms. The president lives and works in the White House in Washington, D.C.

### Academic Vocabulary

**role** • *n.*, job or duty

**approve** • *v.*, to agree to, to accept

The president has more than one **role** in our government. One responsibility is to sign bills, which are ideas for laws. However, if the president does not agree with a bill, the president may **veto**, or reject, it. If a bill is vetoed, the only way it can become a law is if most of the members of Congress vote again to **approve** it.

The president is in charge of the United States military. This means the president is the commander in chief of members of the Army, the Navy, the Marines, and the Air Force. The president also represents our country to the rest of the world. The president meets with leaders from other countries to solve problems.

The president is commander in chief of all American armed forces personnel.







The president also works with the Cabinet. The **Cabinet** is a group of advisors, or people who tell a leader what they think about a subject. Each advisor leads one of the 15 different departments, or groups, in the executive branch. These advisors help provide the president with information about important issues in the country. These issues may be about education, health care, or security. The president selects these advisors. However, the Senate must approve the president's choices.

The president lives and works in the White House.

1. ☒ **Reading Check** Summarize Write a summary that **describes** the president's responsibilities.

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## The Judicial Branch

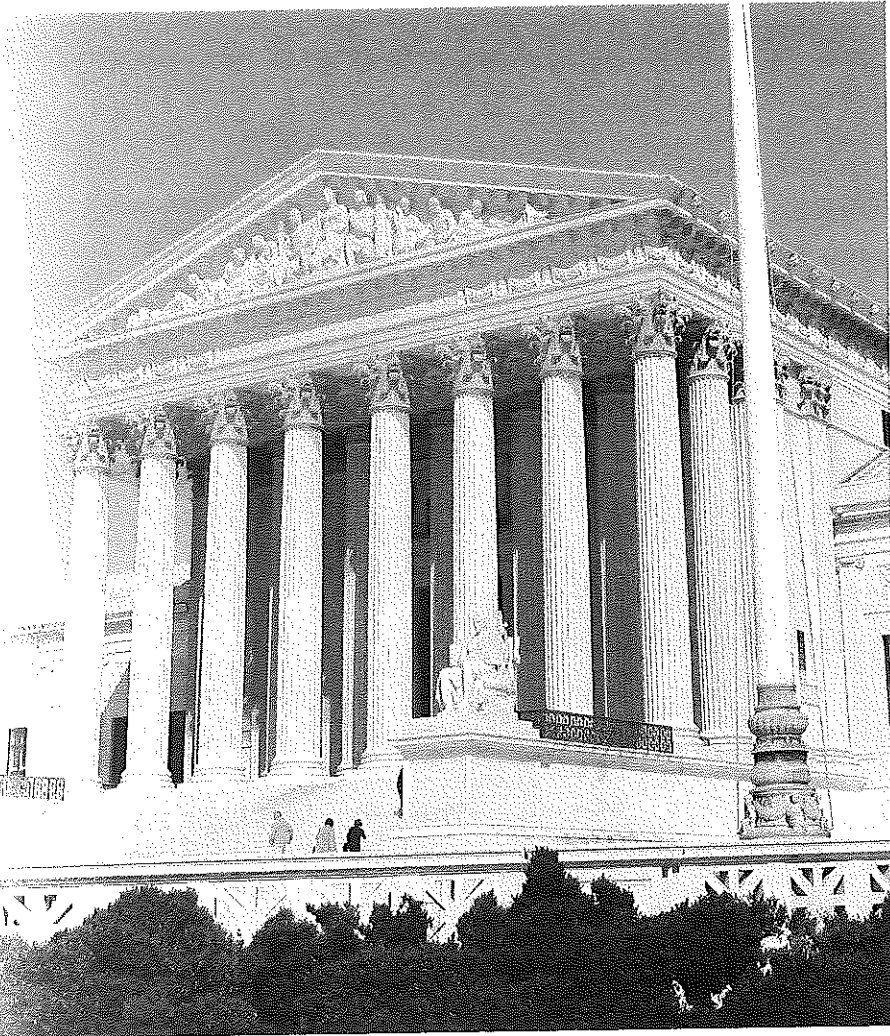
The judicial branch of the government is made up of the Supreme Court and smaller courts. Judges in the courts make sure that laws are fair. They also decide the consequences for people who break laws.

The Supreme Court has nine judges. Judges in the Supreme Court are called justices. The Supreme Court justices make sure the laws passed by Congress follow the U.S. Constitution. Most cases that the Supreme Court hears are appeals from lower courts. An

appeal is a request to review an earlier court decision.

The president nominates, or chooses, the justices for the Supreme Court. However, the Senate must approve each choice. Supreme Court justices do not have a term limit. Once a person becomes a justice, he or she can serve for life.

The U.S. Constitution includes ways to make sure that the three branches of government work together. This system is called **checks and balances**. This means that each branch can check the actions of another. This helps make sure that the three branches share the power to rule. One branch does not have more power than the other branches.



The United States Supreme Court building, completed in 1935, is in Washington, D.C.

2. **✓ Reading Check** **Describe** the roles of the justices who serve on the U.S. Supreme Court.

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#### INTERACTIVITY

### **✓ Lesson 2 Check**

Check your understanding of the key ideas of this lesson.

3. **Main Idea and Details Explain** why the total number of senators and representatives for each state is not the same.

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4. **Describe** why we have three branches of government.

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5. Use the Internet and other reference materials to **identify** the people who represent you in the national government, and **explain** how they were chosen to represent you.

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Name: \_\_\_\_\_





Directions: Cut out the words and pictures below. Sort them each under the correct branch of government. Then, glue each piece to the table.

	Executive Branch	Legislative Branch	Judicial Branch
What is my job?			
Who makes up my branch?			
Where do I make decisions?			

Cut along the dotted line

Cut out each piece and then sort the words on the chart above.

The Capitol Building 	Makes the laws.	Makes sure the laws are obeyed.
The President	The White House 	Congress: The Senate and The House of Representatives
Decides if the laws are fair.	The Supreme Court Justices	The Supreme Court Building 