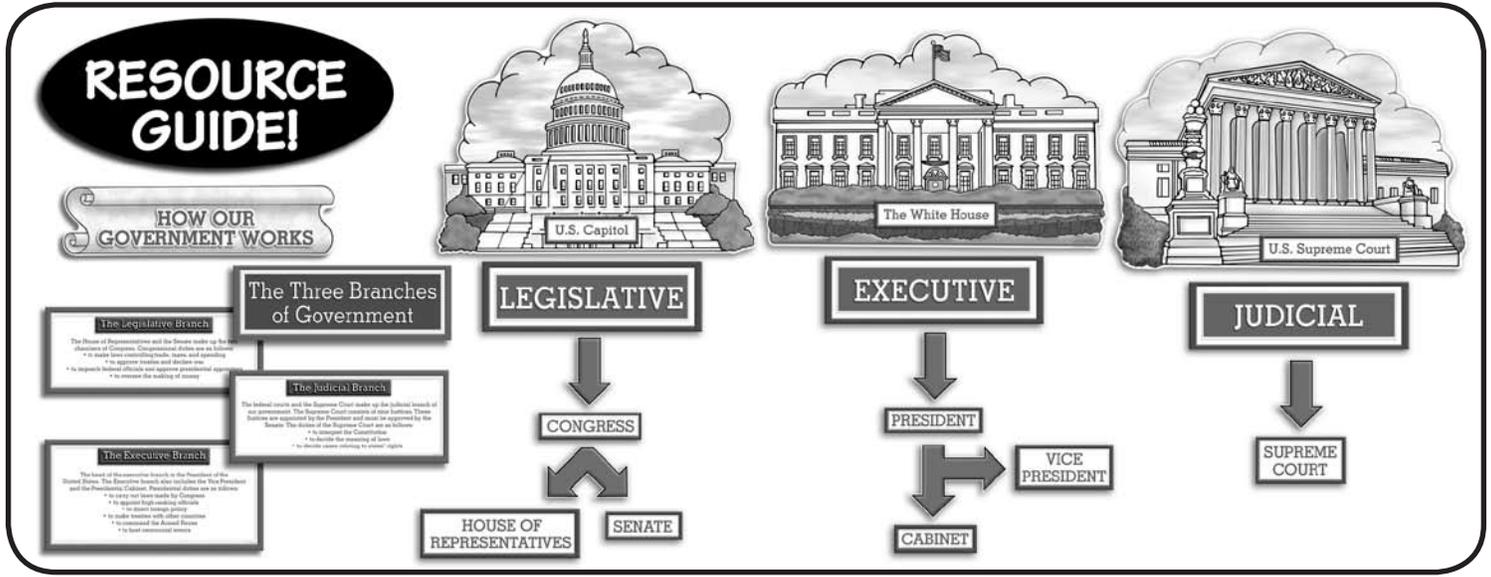


Our Government at Work!

A Teaching
and Learning
Bulletin Board!

teacher's
friend



Displaying and Using Your Bulletin Board Set: Choose an eye-level bulletin board on which to display your “Our Government at Work!” bulletin board set. Use the display, individual bulletin board pieces, and the reproducible patterns in this resource guide to do the suggested activities.

Social Studies

Three-in-One Government

Use the “Our Government at Work!” display to explain to students how the U.S. government works. First, tell them our government is organized so that no one person (or group) has too much authority or control. Each of the three branches of government has its separate responsibilities, but all the branches must also work together to make sure the country runs smoothly and the rights of U.S. citizens are protected. Starting at the top of the flow chart display, discuss each branch of the government, its responsibilities, and the people who serve in each branch. If students raise questions about something not covered by the flow chart, write their questions on chart paper, then work with them later to find the answers. After reviewing the flow chart, have students complete a copy of the flow chart on page 3. Challenge them to try to fill in as many blanks as possible without referring to the display. On the line next to the last bullet under each branch of government, they should write a duty not already listed. When finished, invite students to compare their flow charts to the display and to fill in any spaces they left blank.

Organize It!

To give students additional practice in understanding how our government is organized, photograph the “Our Government At Work!” display. Place the photo in an envelope. Then remove the display pieces and put them in a center along with the envelope. Make sure the center has a large enough work area so that children can recreate the flow chart with the bulletin board pieces. Then invite individuals, pairs, or small groups to arrange the pieces to show how our government is organized. When finished, have them remove the photo from the envelope to check their work. If you want to use fewer pieces for the activity, you might remove the buildings and/or the three pieces that explain the

duties of each branch of government. You might also have the whole class do this activity. Simply give each student a bulletin board piece. Then have students work collaboratively to arrange the pieces on the bulletin board. Invite them to compare their completed flow chart with the photo in the envelope.

Legislative Look-Up

What are the eligibility requirements for serving as a representative or senator? Are the requirements the same in every state? How are the numbers of representatives and senators for each state determined? How many representatives and senators represent your state? Have students search the Internet and other sources to find the answers to these questions. Encourage them to also find and write the names of your state’s representatives and senators. Afterward, invite students to share their findings. To extend, divide students into small groups and have them research the number of representatives and senators that represent neighboring states. Have the groups compare and discuss what they learn.

Government Building Mobiles

Invite students to make mobiles to share facts about the buildings that house the three branches of government. To begin, have them research using books, encyclopedias, the Internet, and other sources to learn facts about the Capitol, the White House, or the Supreme Court building. Ask students to write a different fact about their building choice on each of 5 or 6 index cards. Then, to make a mobile, have them color and cut out the corresponding building on page 4 and glue it onto a half sheet of tagboard. Finally, help them tape or staple each fact card to the building with a length of yarn. After students share their mobiles with the class, hang their mobiles near your bulletin board display.

Math

Checks and Balances

Explain to students that the branches of our government work together to check and balance the powers of one another. A similar checking system can be used for some math operations. For example, addition can be used to check subtraction, and multiplication can be used to check division. To help students understand how this works, divide the class into groups of three. Ask one student in each group to choose one of the three branches of government to represent: legislative, executive, and judicial. Then give each student representing the legislative branch an index card labeled with a subtraction problem. Have the student write and solve the problem on a sheet of paper. When finished, ask the student to show the problem to the executive branch. That student will write an addition problem to check the answer. Then the executive branch shows his or her problem to the judicial branch, who writes a subtraction problem to check the executive branch's addition. Finally, the judicial branch shows his or her problem to the legislative branch to see if it agrees with the original solution. If the subtraction problems differ, the three branches work together to identify the differences and make them agree. Students can use this process to check multiplication and division problems as well.

Language Arts

Presidential Poetry

Tell students that to be President, a person must be at least 35 years old, a natural-born U.S. citizen, and a resident of the country for 14 or more years. Explain that these are the basic

requirements for the office. Then work with students to generate a list of other qualifications that they think a President should have. They might include work experience, such as military service, or personal qualities, such as honesty and determination. After reviewing and discussing the list, have students each write and illustrate a poem about what it takes to be President. Invite them to share their presidential poetry and pictures with the class.

Servants of the People

In what branch of the government might students like to serve? What position would they like to have and why? Invite students to imagine they are the President, a senator or representative, the Chief Justice, or another government official. Ask them to write about their responsibilities and experiences in that position. When finished, have them draw a picture of themselves in that role. Encourage students to share their work with the class. Then display their writings and illustrations around the edges of your "Our Government At Work!" bulletin board.

Classroom Management

Grouping Students

Use your "Our Government At Work!" display when you need to divide your class into three groups. First, assemble the students into their groups. Invite each group to select a government building on the display to represent it. Then have the children in each group write their names on sticky notes and attach them to the group's building. The buildings can be used as a quick reference whenever you need to know which group a child belongs to. Also, you might post the assignment requirements or reminders and responsibilities near each group's building.

Using Related "Teacher's Friend!" Coordinating Products

Try these ideas and the suggested coordinating products to extend students' learning across the curriculum. Use a wipe-off pen to write on the products that have laminated write-on surfaces. When you want to erase the writing, simply wipe it off with a paper towel.

Borders with Corners

- Puzzle-cut several "Red, White, and Blue!" border pieces. Store the pieces for each border in a separate resealable plastic bag. To use, have children fit the pieces together to assemble the border.
- To make ready-to-use yardsticks, use a permanent marker to draw inch marks along a back edge of each of the 3-foot-long border pieces. Number the inch marks from 1 to 36. Then invite children to use the yardsticks to measure the length of objects, such as tables, bookshelves, and walls.

Printer Paper

- Write (or print out) certificates on "Red, White, and Blue!" printer paper to recognize children for good work and other accomplishments.
- Cut out the center of several sheets of "Red, White, and Blue!" printer paper. Use the borders to frame student work.

Note Pads

- Write a different state on each of 50 "U.S. Flag!" notes (or use fewer notes and states, if desired). Tape the notes to the floor to create a beanbag toss game board. Then invite children to take turns tossing a beanbag onto a note. Ask them to read the state name on the note and then tell its capital. As a variation, play the game in reverse. Simply write the capital of each state on a note and have children name its corresponding state.
- Invite children to staple together several "U.S. Flag!" notes to create mini-books. Ask them to title and decorate the top note to use as the mini-book cover. Then have them write a government-related story on the inside pages.

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Bulletin Board and Resource Guide
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The _____ Branches of Government

Branch

- makes laws about trade
- declares war
- _____

Branch

- carries out laws
- directs foreign policy
- _____

Branch

- reviews laws
- decides states' rights cases
- _____





