

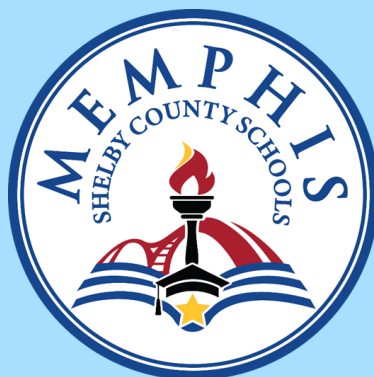


SOCIAL STUDIES



2ND GRADE

INCLEMENT WEATHER PACKET



Voting and the Law

by Susan LaBella



Phil Roder (CC BY 2.0)

When people vote, they make a choice. For example, people voting for the U.S. Congress pick the men and women who pass laws that govern the country.

People who run for office are called candidates. During the weeks before an election is held, candidates describe what they plan to do if they are elected. The candidates make speeches about their ideas. They have discussions with other candidates. They may promise to work on changing laws they do not like or passing new ones.

Voters listen to these promises. Then they decide which candidates they think are the best. On Election Day, voters go to a public building, such as a school or a firehouse. They vote by filling out a paper form or, in some places, by using a computer.

Long ago, only a small number of people in the United States could vote. Some men were allowed to vote, but women, black people, poor people, and young people could not. Over the years, laws were changed. Now many more people can vote. All voters must be U.S. citizens and at least eighteen years old. They all must have registered, or signed up, to vote.

At the end of every Election Day, votes are counted. The winning candidates are announced. Soon, the winners will get their chance to do the things they promised to do.

Name: _____ Date: _____

1. What do people do when they vote?

- A. They make a choice.
- B. They run for office.
- C. They have discussions with candidates.

2. What does this article describe?

- A. what people who are too young to vote do on Election Day
- B. the reasons that poor people were once not allowed to vote in the United States
- C. what candidates do before an election

3. Read this paragraph from the article.

"At the end of every Election Day, votes are counted. The winning candidates are announced. Soon, the winners will get their chance to do the things they promised to do."

What can be concluded from this paragraph about the winning candidates?

- A. The winning candidates are the candidates who made the most promises to voters.
- B. The winning candidates are the candidates who get the most votes.
- C. The winning candidates do not do the things they promised to do.

4. Based on the information in the article, what effect might a candidate's promises have on voters?

- A. If voters listen to the promises that a candidate makes, they will probably be disappointed after Election Day.
- B. If voters like the promises that a candidate makes, they will vote for him or her.
- C. If voters do not like the promises that a candidate makes, they will not vote on Election Day.

5. What is the main idea of this article?

- A. Once women, black people, and poor people were not allowed to vote in the United States.
- B. Voting takes place by filling out a form or using a computer in a public building.
- C. People vote to choose the men and women who pass laws that govern the United States.

6. Read this paragraph from the article

"When people vote, they make a choice. For example, people voting for the U.S. Congress pick the men and women who pass laws that govern the country."

Why might the author provide an example in the second sentence of the article?

- A. to help readers decide which candidate to vote for
- B. to show readers that voting can mean two different things
- C. to help explain what the first sentence means

7. Choose the answer that best completes this sentence.

Once only a small number of people in the United States could vote, _____ now more people can vote.

- A. so
- B. because
- C. but

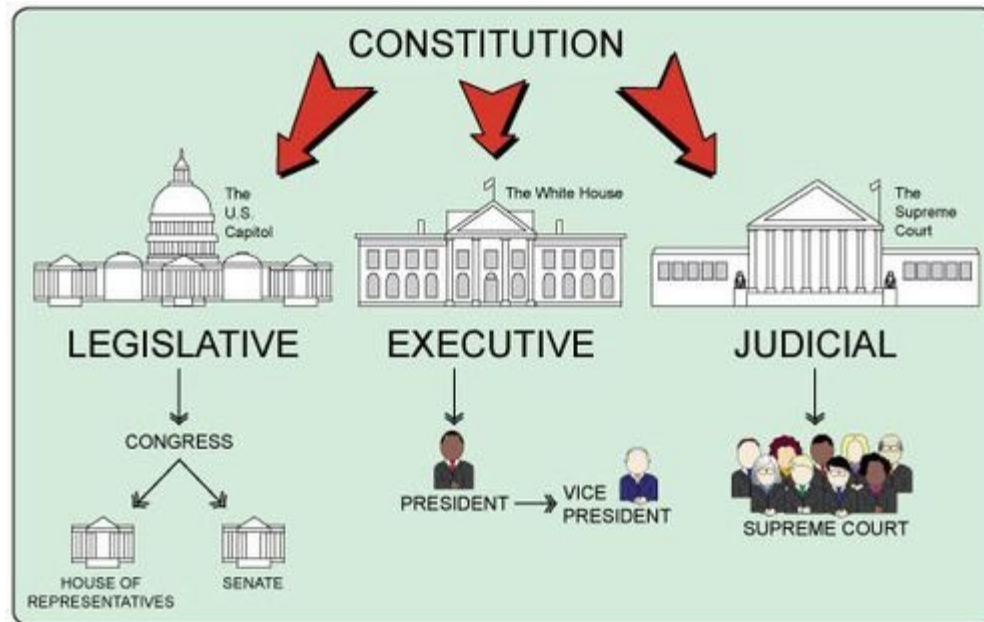
8. What are people who run for office called?

9. What do people voting for the U.S. Congress pick?

10. Is it important for people in the United States to vote? Support your answer with evidence from the article.

The Three Branches of Government

by ReadWorks



The United States Constitution was written over two hundred years ago. It explains how the United States government should work. The people who wrote the Constitution did not want one person or group to have too much power. That was why they divided the government into three parts, known as branches.

The branches are the legislative, the executive, and the judicial. Each branch has its own responsibilities. The branches work together, but they also check each other to make sure no branch has too much power.

The legislative branch includes the United States Congress. Congress is made up of the House of Representatives and the Senate. Voters in each state elect their representation in the House and their senators. Those men and women go to Washington, D.C., to make laws.

The executive branch has the power to carry out the laws. It includes the

president, the vice president, and their group of advisers called the Cabinet. Every four years, Americans vote to elect a president and a vice president.

The judicial branch decides on the meanings of the laws and whether laws break the rules of the Constitution. This branch includes the United States Supreme Court. Nine justices serve on the Supreme Court. The president appoints the justices, and the Senate approves them. The justices' job is to decide if the country's laws go against the Constitution.

Name: _____ Date: _____

1. What are the three branches of the U.S. government?

- A. Congress, the Supreme Court, and the Senate
- B. the president, the House of Representatives, and the Senate
- C. legislative, executive, and judicial

2. This article describes the three branches of government and their responsibilities. Which branch does it describe first?

- A. the executive branch
- B. the judicial branch
- C. the legislative branch

3. Read these sentences from the text.

"The people who wrote the Constitution did not want one person or group to have too much power. That was why they divided the government into three parts, known as branches."

What can you conclude based on this evidence?

- A. The three branches of the government do not have the same amount of power.
- B. The people who wrote the Constitution wanted every American to help make laws.
- C. The people who wrote the Constitution did not want to have just one branch of government.

4. Which is an example of how one branch of government can be affected by the other branches?

- A. The executive branch includes the president, the vice president, and the Cabinet.
- B. Justices on the Supreme Court are appointed by the president and approved by the Senate.
- C. Voters in each state elect their representation in the House and their senators to go to Congress.

5. What is the main idea of this article?

- A. The U.S. Constitution is the law of the land, and it lays out rules for the government and rights for the American people.
- B. The judicial branch decides on the meanings of the laws and whether laws break the rules of the U.S. Constitution.
- C. The U.S. Constitution says that the country must have a Congress, a Supreme Court, and a president.

6. Read these sentences from the text.

"The United States Constitution was written over two hundred years ago. It explains how the United States government should work. The people who wrote the Constitution did not want one person or group to have too much power. That was why they divided the government into three parts, known as branches."

Why does the author begin this article by talking about the U.S. Constitution?

- A. to give the reader background information about why there are three branches of government
- B. to explain to the reader why the U.S. Constitution is the most important piece of writing in history
- C. to help the reader learn more about the history of the United States

7. Choose the answer that best completes this sentence.

The legislative branch of government has the power to make laws, _____ the executive branch carries those laws out.

- A. so
- B. because
- C. but

8. Why did the people who wrote the Constitution divide the government into three branches?

9. How do Supreme Court justices get their jobs?

10. Do the three branches of government have to work together for the government to be successful? Why or why not? Use evidence from the text to support your answer.

An American Leader

The Story of Martin Luther King Jr.

King was a leader who dreamed of a better world.

Martin Luther King Jr. was born on January 15, 1929, in Atlanta, Georgia. Each January, Americans honor him with a holiday. Martin Luther King Jr. Day is celebrated on the third Monday in January.

Unfair Laws



King gives "I Have a Dream" speech to a large crowd in Washington, D.C.
AP Images

When King was growing up, the laws in some places were unfair. Those laws treated African American people differently from white people. African Americans were not allowed to go to the same schools as white students. Many were also forced to sit in the back of buses.

King Had a Dream

In the 1950s and 1960s, King worked to change unfair laws. He led peaceful marches and gave many speeches. In 1963, King gave his famous "I Have a Dream" speech. He said, "I have a dream that my four little children will one day live in a nation where they will not be judged by the color of their skin but by the content of their character."



King's birth home is in Atlanta, Georgia. Here he is at age 6.

*House: James Randklev/Corbis;
Young Martin Luther King: Martin Luther King Family*

Equal Rights

As a result of King's hard work, equal rights laws were passed. Those laws make sure that all Americans are treated fairly and equally.

Name: _____ Date: _____

1. During which month do Americans celebrate Martin Luther King Jr. Day?
 - A. January
 - B. February
 - C. March

2. Martin Luther King Jr.'s work to change unfair laws was caused by a desire for people to be treated fairly. What was an effect of King's work?
 - A. Martin Luther King Jr. led marches and gave speeches.
 - B. Equal rights laws were passed, so Americans are treated fairly.
 - C. African Americans and whites went to separate schools.

3. African Americans were treated unfairly. What evidence from the passage best supports this conclusion?
 - A. African Americans were forced to sit in the back of buses.
 - B. Martin Luther King Jr. led marches and gave speeches.
 - C. Americans honor Martin Luther King Jr. with a holiday.

4. Read the following sentence from King's speech: "I have a dream that my four little children will one day live in a nation where they will not be judged by the color of their skin but by the content of their character."

How did Martin Luther King Jr. feel about the future of America?

- A. scared
 - B. angry
 - C. hopeful
-
5. What is this passage mostly about?
 - A. Martin Luther King Jr.'s "I Have a Dream" speech
 - B. why African Americans were treated differently than white people
 - C. how Martin Luther King Jr. helped change unfair laws.

6. Read the following sentences: "Each January, Americans honor him with a holiday. Martin Luther King Jr. Day is celebrated on the third Monday in January."

Why does the author begin the passage this way?

- A. to tell the reader about Martin Luther King Jr.'s life
- B. to tell the reader why we honor Martin Luther King Jr.
- C. to tell the reader about Martin Luther King Jr. Day

7. Choose the answer that best completes the sentence below.

_____ laws in some parts of the United States were unfair, African Americans had to sit in the back of buses.

- A. So
- B. Because
- C. But

8. What kind of marches did Martin Luther King Jr. lead?

9. How were African Americans treated differently from white people?

10. Why do Americans celebrate Martin Luther King Jr. Day?

How Countries Solve Problems

by Susan LaBella



Jamal and his mom were watching TV. The news came on. The reporter described a problem between two countries. The countries' leaders disagreed about who could have fishing boats in one part of the ocean.

"How will they figure this out, Mom?" Jamal asked. "Are they going to have a war?"

"I hope not," Jamal's mom responded. "There are peaceful ways countries can work out problems. One way is if a third country that both countries trust helps them come to a fair solution."

"That is like what happens at school," said Jamal. "Sometimes when kids argue, a teacher steps in. She tries to help them work it out."

"That is right," Jamal's mom replied. "Another way would be if the countries

take their argument to the United Nations. The U.N. The UN was created to help solve these kinds of problems. Countries can present their case. The U.N. hears both sides and decides how to settle the dispute."

"That sounds like a trial!" said Jamal.

"Yes, it is like that," his mom answered. "What is important is that both countries talk instead of fight. While it does not always work, talking is a much better way to solve problems!"

Name: _____ Date: _____

1. Jamal and his mom were watching the news. What did the news reporter describe?

- A. a problem between two countries
- B. the job of the United Nations
- C. a new way to go fishing in the ocean

2. Jamal's mom gives two examples of peaceful ways for countries to do what?

- A. work out their problems
- B. get ready to go to war
- C. borrow money from each other

3. "There are peaceful ways countries can work out problems. One way is to have a third country that both countries trust help them come to a fair solution."

What conclusion can you draw from this evidence?

- A. The only way to help two fighting countries come to a fair solution is to bring in a third country to help work out their problems.
- B. It is probably important for the two fighting countries to trust the third country that helps them come to a solution.
- C. Most fighting countries are able to come to a fair solution easily, without needing outside help.

4. Based on the information in the text, what are two things that the United Nations most likely works toward?

- A. money and fighting
- B. power and prizes
- C. peace and fairness

5. What is the theme of this story?

- A. Fighting is always the easiest way to end an argument.
- B. Talking and fighting are both good ways to solve problems.
- C. Talking is a better way to settle arguments than fighting.

6. Read these sentences from the text.

"Another way is to have the countries take their argument to the United Nations. The U.N. was created to help solve these kinds of problems. Countries can present their case. The U.N. hears both sides and decides how to settle the dispute."

What does "present their case" most nearly mean here?

- A. show off their riches
- B. give their gifts
- C. tell their side of the story

7. Read these sentences from the text.

"There are peaceful ways countries can work out problems. One way is to have a third country that both countries trust help them come to a fair solution."

Which of these has the same meaning as the second sentence from the text?

- A. For example, a third country that both countries trust can help them come to a fair solution.
- B. One way is to have a third country that neither countries trust help them come to a fair solution.
- C. The best way is to have a third country that both countries trust help them come to a fair solution.

8. When two countries are having an argument, what can a third country that both countries trust help them to do?

9. How does the United Nations help two countries settle an argument?

10. Jamal's mom gives two examples of ways that countries can work out their problems peacefully. Both of these examples involve someone else coming in to help find a solution. Why might this be a good way to settle an argument? Use evidence from the text to support your answer.
