

Presidential Gallery

Grades 4 through 6



OBJECTIVES

Students will identify the three branches of the federal government and their role in our government. Students will identify important events and accomplishments in the life of one president of the United States. Students will identify the major national issues and events faced by the president and evaluate an event in the president's administration that showed the system of checks and balances at work.



CLASS TIME

Three 45- to 60-minute sessions



NATIONAL STANDARDS

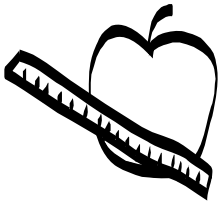
This lesson plan reflects some of the national standards of learning as defined by the National Council for the Social Studies (NCSS), the National Council for Teachers of English (NCTE), and the International Society for Technology in Education (ISTE). These standards are listed below:

- Social Studies: Civic Life, Politics and Government
- Social Studies: Foundations of the American Political System
- Social Studies: Principles of American Democracy
- Language Arts: Students use a variety of technological and information resources to gather and synthesize information and to create and communicate knowledge.
- Technology: Students use technology to locate, evaluate, and collect information from a variety of sources.



MATERIALS

- Copies of the worksheets attached to this lesson plan (see "Preparations")
- An image of a presidential \$1 obverse from the Presidential \$1 Coin Lesson Plan Resource Center at [www.usmint.gov/kids/pres\\$1coin/LP/resources](http://www.usmint.gov/kids/pres$1coin/LP/resources) (see "Preparations").
- 1 overhead projector
- 1 overhead transparency of the selected coin
- 1 copy of an age-appropriate text that provides basic historical information about the branches of the government. For example:
 - *Branches of the Government (Government in Action)* by John Hamilton
 - *The Story of the Constitution* by Marilyn Prolman



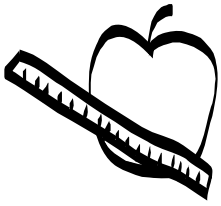
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- *The President and the Executive Branch* by Tracie Egan
- *Shh! We're Writing the Constitution* by Jean Fritz
- Copies of texts that provide basic historical information about the nation's presidents. For example:
 - *First Facts About the Presidents* by Elaine Pascoe
 - *Mr. President: A Book of U.S. Presidents* by George Sullivan
 - *New Big Book of U.S. Presidents—A Young Reader's Guide to the Presidency* by Todd Davis
- Computers with Internet access and word processing
- Card stock (8½ X 11)
- Scissors
- Glue
- Highlighters
- Chart paper
- Markers
- Electronic or hard copy blanks for making trading cards, if used



PREPARATIONS

- Make copies of the following:
 - “Presidential Information” worksheet (1 per student)
 - “Branches of US Government” worksheet (1 per student)
 - “Presidential Poster Rubric” sheet (1 per student)
- Make an overhead transparency of one coin obverse from the Presidential \$1 Coin Lesson Plan Resource Center. If you choose to have the whole class research one president, this image should be of that president. If the class will research multiple presidents, choose one to model or use a president not in the selected group.
- Decide which president or presidents to use for the lesson. If the whole class researches the same president, you might not want to make the posters at the end of the lesson. The focus for the early presidents (Washington through Monroe) may be the establishment of the new government and the defining of the roles of the different branches. The focus for the presidential terms occurring during the expansion of the country (John Q. Adams through Theodore Roosevelt) would be any changes in the role of the executive branch and the use of presidential powers. The selection of more modern presidents (William H. Taft through Barak Obama) may focus more on international concerns.



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- Locate an age-appropriate text that provides basic historical information about the branches of our government (see examples under “Materials”).
- Locate age-appropriate texts that provide basic information about the nation’s presidents (see examples under “Materials”).
- Arrange to use the school computer lab for two consecutive days.
- Bookmark Internet sites that contain biographical information about the presidents selected.



GROUPINGS

- Whole group
- Pairs
- Independent work



TERMS AND CONCEPTS

- Obverse (front)
- Checks and balances
- Executive Branch
- Legislative Branch
- Judicial Branch
- Ambassador
- Separation of powers
- Term
- Commander-in-Chief
- Treaty
- Veto
- Cabinet



BACKGROUND KNOWLEDGE

Students should have a basic knowledge of:

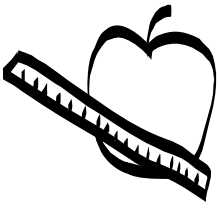
- President of the United States
- Government
- Constitution
- Duties and responsibilities



STEPS

Session 1

1. Display the transparency of any presidential \$1 coin obverse.
2. Ask the students to examine it and tell you what they know about this picture. The students should be able to identify this as the obverse of a coin and that it depicts the particular president. Tell the students that the Presidential \$1 Coin Program began in 2007 to commemorate each of our nation’s presidents. The program calls for four new



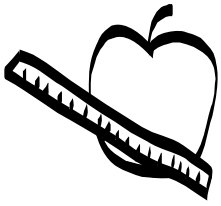
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coin designs to be released per year in the order the presidents served the country. Point out to the students that each obverse in the series depicts a different president and shows the years the president served in office and the number of that presidency.

3. Ask the students to identify what the president of the United States does and what type of jobs and responsibilities the president has. Ask the students to recall the three branches of the government and which branch encompasses the office of the president. List the student responses on chart paper or the board.
4. Distribute a “Branches of the US Government” worksheet. Tell the students to take notes during the reading on these worksheets, but only in the chart section. The essay section will be used on another day.
5. Tell the students that the class will read a text about the branches of the federal government. Ask the students to listen for:
 - the name of each branch
 - the head of each branch
 - the duties and responsibilities of each branch
 - other important information
6. Introduce the students to the selected text about the branches of the government. As a group, preview the text. Read the text aloud to the students. Attend to unfamiliar vocabulary and concepts.
7. During the reading, give the students time to make notes on their worksheets.
8. After concluding the selected text, review the worksheet information and the following terms:
 - Ambassador—person who represents the U.S. in dealings with another country
 - Commander-in-chief—official head of the U.S. Military
 - Veto—to disapprove or reject a law
 - Treaty—formal agreement between countries
 - Cabinet—a group of persons who have been appointed by the president to head the executive departments of the government; they act as his official advisers
 - Checks and balances—the interaction of the branches of the federal government to ensure the balance of power between them.
 - Term—the period during which the person is in office.
9. Collect the worksheets.

Session 2

1. Review with the students the three branches of the federal government and the duties and responsibilities of each branch. Focus especially on the Executive Branch and the fact that



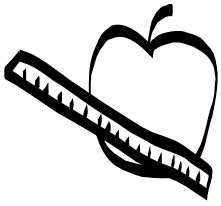
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the president is the head of this branch.

2. Display the transparency of the coin obverse. Review the name of the president pictured on the coin. Ask the students to recall any other information they may know about this president. List their responses on chart paper
3. Tell the students whether they will be researching this particular president or different presidents. Distribute the “Presidential Information” worksheet.
4. Tell the students that they are to fill in the information on the sheet from available texts or bookmarked Internet resources. In their research, the students should look for ways the president carried out the responsibilities of the Executive Branch and interacted with the other branches.
5. Review with the students the meaning of the word “term.” Depending on the president(s) chosen, lead the students to look for activities that relate to the particular time period.
6. Allow the students time to do their research.
7. When they have finished their research, have the students work in pairs who researched the same president and share the information they found in their research. Have them decide which pieces of information are the most important. Have them choose one important event or accomplishment from the president’s childhood, three from during his presidency, and at least one that entails the duties and responsibilities of the presidency or the relationship between the Executive Branch and the other branches. Have them write their choices on their worksheet.
8. Have the students highlight the items on the sheet that they think are the most important.
9. Collect the sheets.

Session 3

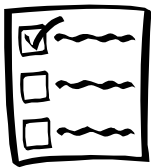
1. Distribute the “Presidential Information” and “Branches of the US Government” worksheets from the previous two sessions.
2. Discuss the items that the students selected as most important on their worksheets. List the presidents on chart paper and write the students’ responses in the chart.
3. Discuss which events show the president(s) carrying out the duties or responsibilities of the office. Emphasize any events that involved the relationships between the different branches, the separation of powers, or the use of checks and balances. These could include any important vetoes, impeachment proceedings, or appointments that affected any other branch. Circle these events or accomplishments on the chart.
4. If necessary, allow students time to add any events on their “Presidential Information” sheets.
5. Have the students write an essay on their “Branches of the US Government” worksheet. The essay should use an example from the administration of the president they researched



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and discussed in class to illustrate the system of checks and balances as shown by the interaction of the branches.

6. If the class researched one president and they won't be making the posters, collect the worksheets. Otherwise, continue with the next step.
7. Explain to the students that they will be making a poster with the information from their worksheets on the president they researched.
8. Distribute the "Presidential Poster Rubric."
9. If using computers, take the students to the computer lab. Allow the students time to complete their posters and print them on card stock. For extra credit, students who finish their posters early can make an additional poster for one branch of the government.
10. Have the students complete the rubric.
11. Collect the worksheets. Display the posters in a "Presidential Gallery" in your classroom. Invite other classes to tour the gallery having students serve as guides.



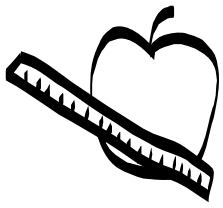
ASSESSMENT

- Use the "Presidential Poster Rubric" and the essay on the "Branches of the US Government" worksheet to evaluate whether the students have met the lesson objectives.
- Use the "Presidential Information" sheet to evaluate the accuracy of the students' research.

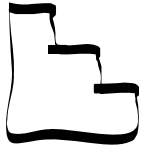


ENRICHMENT/EXTENSIONS

- Have students create a multimedia presentation on their president using the information they researched.
- Have students visit the home, museum, or library of their president. They can do this virtually or in person if it is accessible to the students.
- Compare this coin with other coins that feature this president, if any. Make a timeline showing when these coins were first introduced. Research the backgrounds of these different coins at www.usmint.gov/kids and search on the name of the president.
- Allow students to play the "Branches of Power" game in the Games area of www.usmint.gov/kids.
- Use the South Dakota lesson plan from the 2006 50 State Quarters lesson plans at www.usmint.gov/kids/index.cfm?fileContents=teachers/lessonPlans/lesson_select.cfm&grade=3, one of its goals being to understand the accomplishments of various US presidents in history.

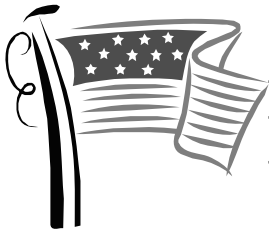


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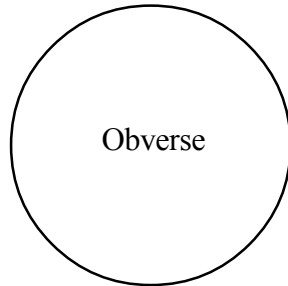
DIFFERENTIATED LEARNING OPTIONS

- Have poster templates made up with illustrations or graphics already done.
- Allow students to write instead of using computer
- Allow students to work in pairs.
- Choose texts or Internet sites at different levels.
- Provide a word bank (vocabulary list) on a wall chart so students can select words to fill in their “Branches of the US Government” chart.

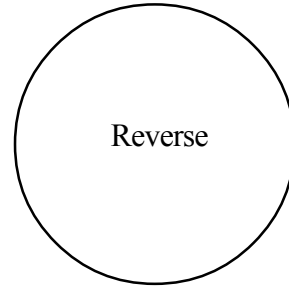


Name _____

Presidential Information



Obverse



Reverse

Directions: Fill in the information on President _____
(Name)

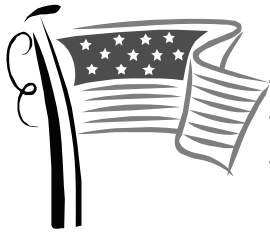
1. Date and place born: _____

2. Number of presidency and years in office (look on the coin):

3. Life events before becoming president: _____

4. Events and accomplishments while president: _____

5. Examples of performing presidential duties (vetoes, appointments, treaties, using the military, etc.), with explanations:



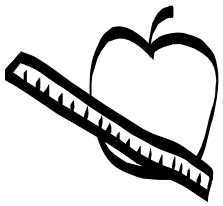
Name _____

Branches of US Government

BRANCH	HEAD OF BRANCH	DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

ESSAY

Describe events in which the president you researched interacted with the other branches of the government. Explain how each of these events exemplify the system of checks and balances.



Branches of US Government

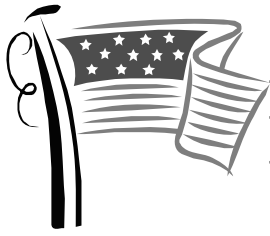
Key

BRANCH	HEAD OF BRANCH	DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES
Executive	President	Enforce laws Make sure laws are obeyed Commander-in-Chief Sign treaties Veto bills Appoint Ambassadors
Legislative	Congress (Two parts: Senate and House of Representatives)	Make Laws Declare war
Judicial	Supreme Court	Make sure laws are Constitutional Explain the meaning of laws Oversee national court system

ESSAY

Describe events in which the president you researched interacted with the other branches of the government. Explain how each of these events exemplify the system of checks and balances.

Responses will vary. _____



Name _____

Presidential Poster Rubric

TEACHER'S NAME: _____

CATEGORY	4	3	2	1	SELF	TEACHER
SPELLING	Two or fewer errors.	Three or fewer errors.	Four or five errors.	Many errors.		
NEATNESS AND EFFORT	Very neat. Excellent effort in planning and execution.	Neat. Good effort in planning and execution.	Uneven in quality. Looks as if student ran out of time.	Not neat. Hard to read. Little planning is evident.		
ACCURACY	All information can be verified.	Most information can be verified.	Some information is hard to verify.	Much information is incorrect.		
INFORMATION SHEET	Information is very relevant and accurate.	Information is mostly relevant and accurate.	Information is somewhat relevant and accurate.	Information is seldom relevant or accurate.		
IMPORTANCE	Information is very important.	Information is mostly important.	Information is somewhat important.	Information is unimportant or unrelated.		
TOTALS						

TEACHER COMMENTS