

Tennessee Secretary of State

Blue Book Lesson Plans

Branches of the State and National Government

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Grade Level: 2nd, 3rd, or 4th grade

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For additional lesson plans, click [here](#).



There are a limited number of hard copies of the Blue Book available. To order a set for your classroom, please contact the Secretary of State's office at (615) 741-2819 or one of your local legislators. The online version of the Blue Book is also available [here](#).

Introduction:

The *Tennessee Blue Book* can be used as a main resource to teach students about the structure of Tennessee government. Although the text is complex, young students, with teacher support, can access information via charts and graphs provided. This lesson is created for second grade students, but can be easily adapted to teach third or fourth grade students.

Guiding Questions:

- How is the structure of Tennessee's government similar/different to the structure of our national government?
- What roles do each branch of government serve?

Learning Objectives: In the course of the lesson, students will...

- Recognize the three branches of our national and state governments.
- Understand the main roles/purposes of each branch.
- Know the "head" of each branch.
- Demonstrate knowledge of the Tennessee branches of government by creating a graphic organizer.
- Write a compare/contrast essay explaining similarities and differences between the structure of the national and state governments.

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Curriculum Standards:

2.23 (Social Studies) Compare the branches of Tennessee’s government to the national government.

2.25 (Social Studies) Create a graphic organizer to explain the three branches of government and the basic role of each.

3.28 (Social Studies) Discuss the structure and purpose of government. (P)

4.41 (Social Studies) Describe the principles embedded in the Constitution, including: (P)

- purposes of government listed in the Preamble
- separation of powers
- branches of government
- checks and balances
- the amendment process
- principle of judicial review
- recognition of and protection of individual rights in the 1st Amendment

Materials Needed:

- 1) *Tennessee Blue Book* (PDF provided)
 - [pgs. viii-ix, graphic organizer of state government](#)
- 2) Projector (optional)
- 3) Map of the United States
- 4) Copies of graphic organizer worksheet (attached)
- 5) Paper and pencil

Background:

Second grade students will have a limited understanding of state and local government. In kindergarten, students are asked to recognize and name the current president of the United States (K.18), describe the role of the president (K.19), identify roles of authority figures (K.20), and explain the purpose of rules and laws (K.21). In first grade students identify their current mayor, governor and president and explain their roles in government (1.25), give examples of rules/laws (1.28), and recognize that communities in Tennessee have local governments. They will also compare/contrast local government to state/national government (1.32).

The following books may be useful for this lesson. All are grade/Lexile level appropriate for 2nd grade students.

- *Know Your Government: Governor*
Author: Jacqueline Laks Gorman
ISBN: 9781433901195
- *Know Your Government: President*
Author: Jacqueline Laks Gorman
ISBN: 9781433901232
- *Portraits of the States: Tennessee*
Author: Patricia Lantier
ISBN: 9780836846539
- *Tennessee Past and Present*
Author: Diane Bailey
ISBN: 978435884946



Tennessee Blue Book, pg. viii.

Lesson Activities:

- 1) On chart paper or Activeboard, have students share what they know about government. Do not limit ideas to state or national. You may wish to ask guiding questions if students are having difficulty such as, “Who is the leader of our country?” or “What is the purpose of the government?” Explain to students that they will be learning about how the government is organized in our state and our country.
- 2) Ask students to locate Tennessee on a United States map. Discuss the terms: national and federal. (Federal is not used in 2nd grade, but appears in 4th grade standards.)
- 3) Discuss the purpose of government. Have students give examples of why government is needed.
- 4) Explain to students that Tennessee and the United States have separate governments (state and national). These governments have similarities and differences.

**Further understanding:* It may be helpful to explain that a group often gives different jobs and responsibilities to different people. For example: How many of you have jobs/chores in your family? Are they different jobs than your siblings? Your parent(s)? Who cooks meals in your house? Who makes your bed? What about at school? What are different responsibilities at school? What would happen if everyone had the same jobs?

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- 5) Introduce the national branches of the government using “3 Branches of Government” chart attached to this lesson plan (It can also be downloaded, printed, or ordered as a poster free of charge by clicking [here](#)). Discuss and review the chart with students.
- 6) If time allows, have the students watch “[Branches of Government](#)” Brainpop video (4:19).

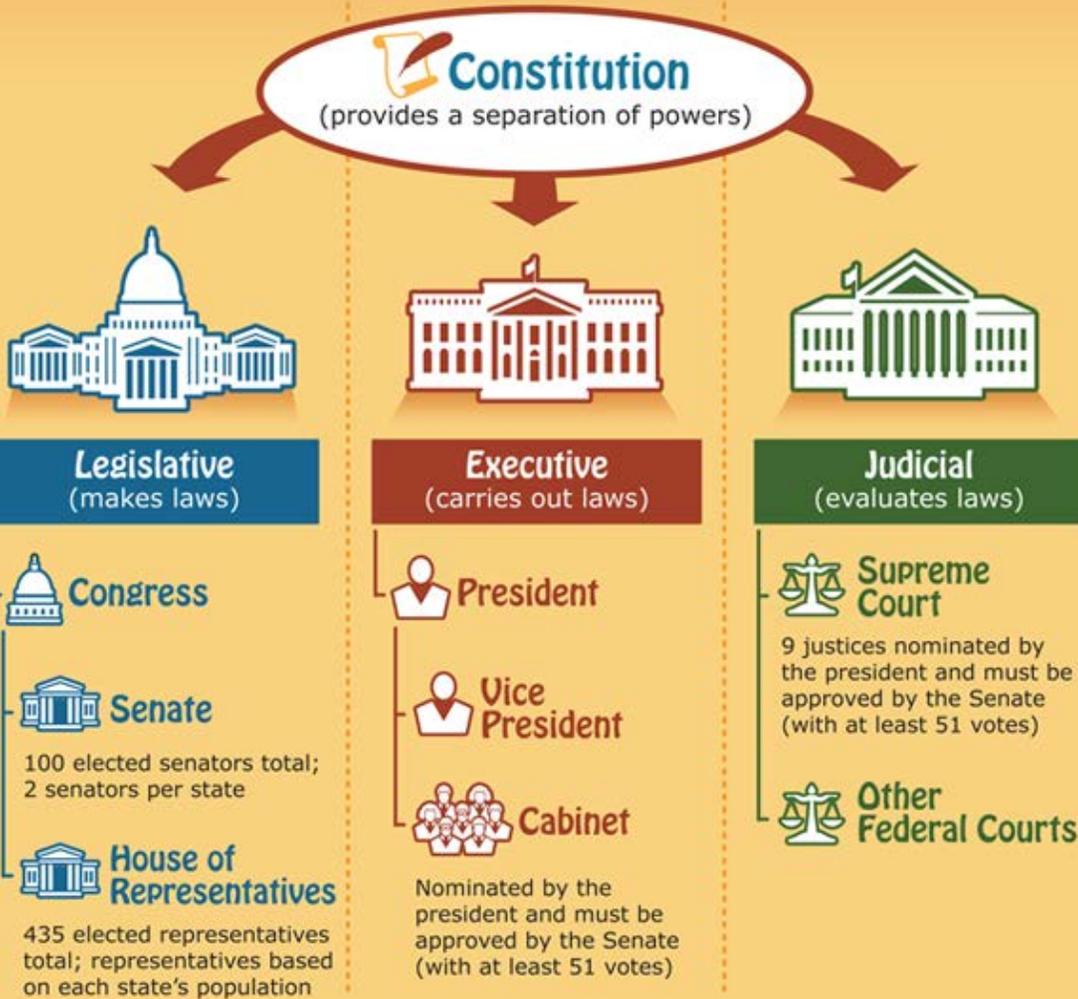
*This is a free Brainpop video and does not require a subscription. Brainpop Jr. also has a primary grade Branches of Government video, but it requires a site subscription. Quizzes, games, and activities are available for free with this video.
- 7) Explain that Tennessee’s government is set up similarly to our national government, but there are some differences. Project the *Tennessee Blue Book* graphic organizer (pgs. viii-ix).
 - a. Highlight the differences between the federal and Tennessee branches. (General Assembly vs. Congress, Governor vs. President, State vs. National Supreme Court)
 - b. Review the roles of each branch:
 - i. Legislative: makes laws
 - ii. Executive: carries out laws
 - iii. Judicial: evaluates laws
- 8) Give each student a copy of the graphic organizer included in this lesson. Allow students to work with a partner or, if more support is needed, complete as a whole class activity.

Assessment:

Students will write an essay comparing and contrasting Tennessee and national government structure. Encourage them to use the graphic organizers provided in this lesson. If more support is needed, create a Venn diagram as a whole class activity before students begin to write.

Option for extension: Invite state legislators or local elected officials to come speak to the classroom about their role in government.

3 BRANCHES of GOVERNMENT



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