

# Constitutional Government

## Summary

Students will study the branches of government and identify government offices and officials in the local, state, and national government.

## Time Frame

3 class periods of 45 minutes each

## Materials

Objects associated with games (hoppy taw, checkers, tennis ball, etc.) and objects not usually associated with games (ruler, board eraser, etc.) to be furnished by the school or teacher

Worksheet: ["Government Organization"](#) (pdf)

Worksheet: ["Who's in Charge?"](#) (pdf)

Worksheet: ["Elected Officials Scavenger Hunt"](#) (pdf)

## Background for Teachers

### Enduring Understanding

The United States of America follows a constitutional government. All local, state, and national governments are based on the constitutional government model.

### Essential Questions

Why do we need rules and laws?

What are the three branches of a constitutional government?

### Objectives

Students will understand the need for rules and laws and participate in a discussion after a classroom simulation.

Students will study the various mayoral forms of government used in Utah and learn which form is used by their community.

Students will know the three branches of government and list the titles of present elected officials in national, state, and local governments.

## Instructional Procedures

### Setting the Stage

Before students arrive, prepare a variety of objects that students associate with games. Objects might include a hoppy taw (without the hopscotch), checkers with no game board, a tennis ball, etc. Also provide objects not usually associated with games such as a ruler, board eraser, etc.

Divide students into groups and distribute an object or two to each group.

Tell students that they may begin playing their games. When they ask what games they are supposed to be playing, or if they ask what the rules might be, explain that they can do anything that they want; there are no rules. Students may act confused or actually begin making up rules for a game. Collect the materials after a few minutes.

### Activity: Why Are Rules and Laws Important?

Ask students about their game. Was it successful? What worked and didn't work? In what ways would "rules of the game" have helped the activity?

Review the rules of the school and classroom.

Compare the game experience to the need for school and classroom rules. Ask students what rules are expected of students in their school. Discuss how understanding rules allows the school to function.

### Activity: Understanding Government

Write the word "constitution" on the board. Define the word as a class. Explain that a constitution is a list of laws that govern a specific group of people. The founding fathers of the United States wrote the U.S. Constitution after reviewing successful documents, governments, and philosophies from other countries. The United States is governed using the laws of the Constitution.

Ask students if there is ever a need to make changes to the rules in the school? Just like rules are occasionally added to the school, amendments are changes that can be made to constitutions.

Distribute "[Government Organization" worksheet](#) (pdf). Together read the worksheet. Discuss the three branches of government. Ask students to select the correct title for the officials at the national, state, and local levels of government.

### Activity: "Who's in Charge?"

Explain that municipalities may change aspects of their governments to meet the specific needs of the community. Read about the forms of mayoral governments used by Utah municipalities.

Ask students to create simple cartoon sketches that represent each type of government form. Share the drawings.

Review the concept of laws and government.

Ask students to research their own community to discover how the mayor and other local officials function.

### Activity: "Elected Officials Scavenger Hunt"

Distribute "[Elected Officials Scavenger Hunt](#)" (pdf) as a school or homework assignment.

### Bibliography

This lesson plan is part of the Utah League of Cities and Towns [This Must be Utah! A Teacher's Guide to Utah Cities and Towns](#)

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