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	Name Your Government Officials	back cover

In the months after the Declaration of Independence was signed, Congress wanted to continue to unite the former colonies. The first attempt at a national or federal government came in the form of the *Articles of Confederation*. The Articles, adopted by the Second Continental Congress in 1777, were not ratified by all the states until 1781.

The Articles of Confederation acted as the first constitution of the United States. The Articles were in use until the Constitution was signed in 1787. The Articles were weak because the colonists were reluctant to give much power to a central government. The colonies feared that a new central government might be no better than the English king had been. The states themselves had governments at this time, most with state constitutions.

When it became necessary to have a national or federal government for conducting the Revolutionary War, the states made the government weak. The Articles were so weak that the government could not even pay its bills. It did have limited powers to make war or peace, but other powers were lacking. Robert Morris stated that getting money from the states was like “preaching to the dead.” To raise money, the central government could only ask the states for funds; it could not tax.

At the end of the Revolutionary War, the American government was in serious financial trouble. Soldiers who had served without pay were granted western land certificates instead of money, but most had to sell their certificates for money to live on. Farmers with large debts rebelled against the courts that were taking away their farms. An example of such a rebellion was the *Shays’ Rebellion* by farmers in Massachusetts. Jails were crowded with debtors. States were taxing each other harmfully and arguing about land claims to the West. Tariff laws were needed for business and industry. Prices soared and credit disappeared. It became increasingly evident that the only solution was a stronger central government.

Weaknesses of the Articles

Listed below are weaknesses identified by the colonists:

- No national courts, only state courts.
- No power to tax.
- No real power to regulate commerce.
- All changes in the Articles had to be approved by all of the states.
- All important laws had to be approved by nine states.
- No real president, only a president of Congress who was like a chairman.

Civil Rights & the Articles of Confederation

Civil rights are those rights that are considered to be unquestionable; deserved by all people under all circumstances, especially without regard to race, creed, color, or gender. These personal rights are guaranteed and protected by the Constitution.

The fight for civil rights didn’t wait until the 1950s to happen. Some started as early as the Articles of Confederation! Paul Cuffee was a free black from Massachusetts. When he discovered he did not have the same property rights as whites, he refused to pay his taxes and was jailed. Cuffee later became a successful trader with his own fleet of ships and continued to fight for equal rights throughout his lifetime.

QUESTIONS

MATCH THE STATEMENT IN SECTION A WITH THE TERM IN SECTION B.

A

- ___ 1. Started by farmers in Massachusetts who were losing their farms.
- ___ 2. Form of government during the American Revolution.
- ___ 3. Had to approve important acts under the Articles.
- ___ 4. Fear of this was in the minds of many American colonists in the 1780s.
- ___ 5. This power was lacking in the Articles of Confederation.

B

- a. states b. Shays’ Rebellion c. taxation
- d. strong central government e. Articles of Confederation

TRUE OR FALSE? Write a **T** or **F** in the space provided.

- ___ 1. The Articles of Confederation acted as the first U.S. Constitution.
- ___ 2. The Articles were weak because of the fear of a strong central government.
- ___ 3. Shays’ Rebellion was carried out to support a weak central government.
- ___ 4. The Declaration of Independence was signed before the Articles of Confederation were written.
- ___ 5. The Articles were drawn up by the Second Continental Congress.
- ___ 6. Freedom from discrimination is considered an example of a civil right.

SHORT ANSWER

Explain what Morris meant by his statement “preaching to the dead.” _____

The authors of the Constitution could not have imagined that, in 200 years, people would be exploring outer space or going from coast to coast in a few hours. Nor could they have imagined all the changes in daily living that would occur. Today, we claim the protection of the Constitution, written when there were only a few million people in the United States. The Constitution now protects more than 320 million Americans. Almost everything about the United States has changed, except the Constitution. It is truly an outstanding document that has withstood the test of time.

Yet, the Constitution changes in some very important ways. In upcoming units, you will see how the Constitution is officially amended. Officials, who operate the government under the rules of the Constitution, constantly interpret its meaning. The Constitution allows a great deal of freedom to do this (and is referred to as a *living document*). It's a basic guide for government and safeguards our freedom. It's flexible and brief enough to allow for adjustments. For example, the Constitution sets up strict rules for making laws to ensure they are just and democratic. But, the Constitution also gives Congress the power to make laws. This provides our Congress with the ability to make laws in areas that did not even exist when the Constitution was written. Space exploration and the internet are two examples. Can you think of others?

Quotes on the Constitution

Two centuries of growth and unrivaled prosperity have proven the foresight of the 55 men who worked through the summer of 1787 to lay the foundation of American government. In the words of Archibald Cox, former solicitor general of the United States, "The original Constitution still serves us well despite the tremendous changes in every aspect of American life because the framers had the genius to say enough but not too much.... As the plan outlined in the Constitutional Convention succeeded, as the country grew and prospered both materially and in the realization of its ideals, the Constitution gained majesty and authority far greater than that of any individual or body of men."

Quotes from the Founding Father's give insight into the attitude and mindset of the time:

"Let our government be like that of the solar system. Let the general government be like the sun and the states the planets, repelled yet attracted, and the whole moving regularly and harmoniously in several orbits." — John Dickinson

"The happy Union of these States is a wonder; their Constitution a miracle; their example of Liberty throughout the world."

— James Madison

"Our new Constitution is now established, and has an appearance that promises permanency; but in this world nothing can be said to be certain, except death and taxes." — Ben Franklin

"The Constitution is the guide which I will never abandon."

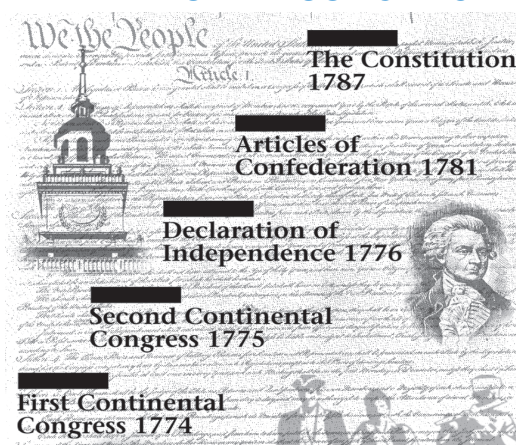
— George Washington

Within the framework of the Constitution, as interpreted by the courts, we are governed by laws, treaties, and customs. Later, you will study judicial review and the amending process, helping you better understand how the Constitution is changed.

The Constitution has lasted because it:

- provides for a government by the people;
- provides for a government that can act when in danger;
- provides for a federal union where people retain certain rights and powers in their states;
- guarantees individual rights even when the individual's views are unpopular or in the minority;
- has preserved the Union;
- provides the leaders of our government an opportunity to interpret the Constitution and apply it to changing times;
- has provisions for orderly changes.

STAIRWAY TO THE CONSTITUTION



The chart above shows the documents and events leading up to the signing of the Constitution in 1787.

QUESTIONS

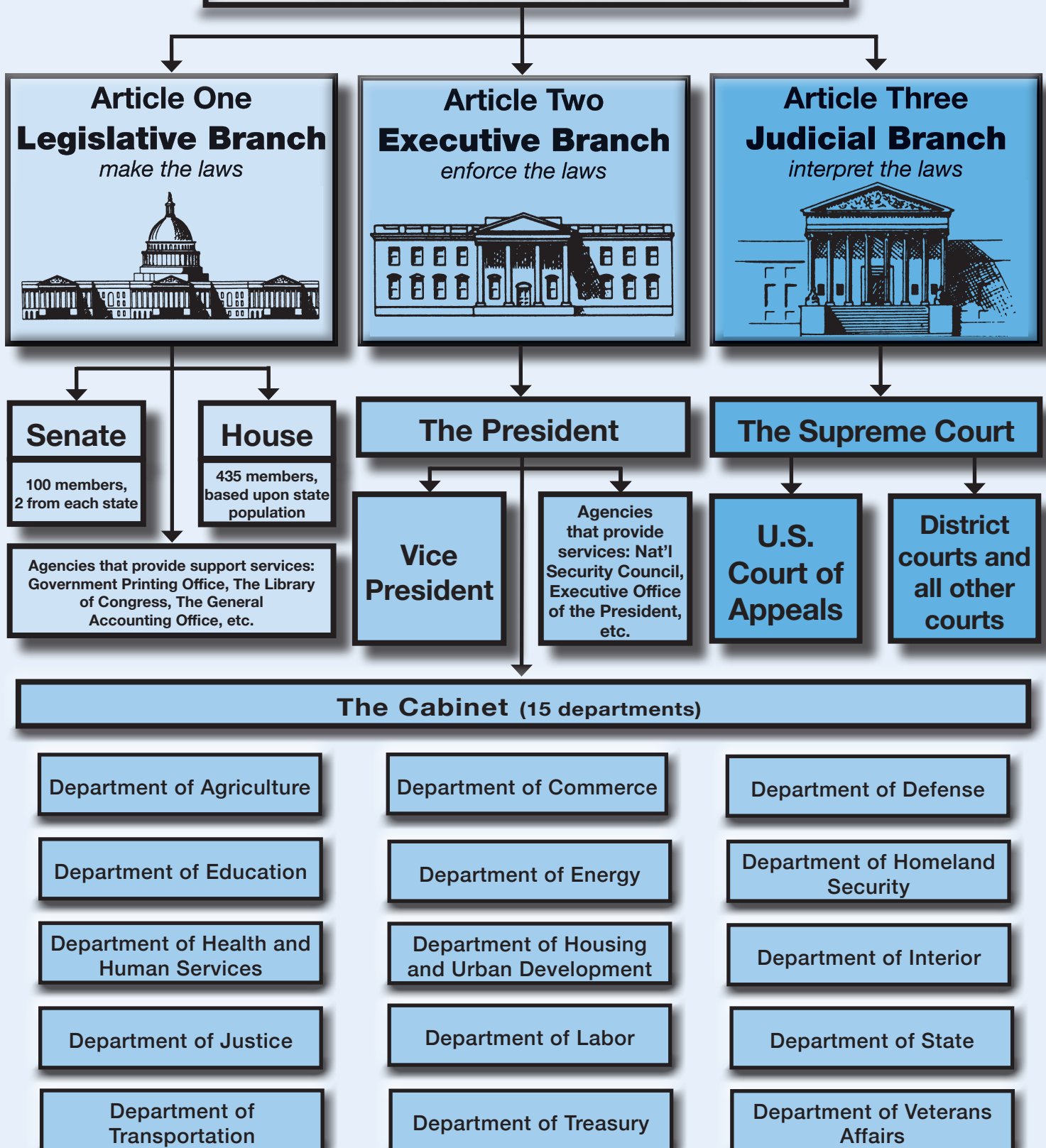
TRUE OR FALSE? Write a **T** or **F** in the space provided.

- Changing the interpretation of the Constitution is what makes our Constitution weak.
- The Constitution allows laws to be made for subjects that did not exist in 1787.
- The Constitution can be changed only through rebellion and revolution.
- Over 500 delegates attended the Constitutional Convention and signed the Constitution.

EVENTS IN ORDER. Write the numbers **1-4**, indicating which historical event happened **first (1)**, **second (2)**, **third (3)**, or **fourth (4)**.

- The ratification of the Articles of Confederation.
- The adoption of the United States Constitution.
- The beginning of the American Revolution.
- The signing of the Declaration of Independence.

The Constitution SETS UP THREE BRANCHES



Lawmaking and the Three Branches

A bill is introduced, sent to committee, then voted on. If passed in committee and later on the floor of the house, it is sent to the other house.

The president may sign the bill, and it will become law or may decide to veto. Congress may try to pass it over the veto by a two-thirds vote.

The courts see that justice is administered under the law. The Supreme Court may declare laws unconstitutional.



Legislative Branch

Two Houses of Congress



Executive Branch

The President



Judicial Branch

The Supreme Court and Other Courts

After Congress (legislative branch) has passed a bill and the president (executive branch) has signed it into law, it is the president's duty to enforce the law. The courts (judicial branch) then interpret it and administer justice under it. The Supreme Court may rule whether or not the law is constitutional. Please refer to the chart above.

What are Federal Laws?

There are different types of laws. Federal laws apply to everyone in the United States. States and local laws apply to people who live or work in a particular state, county, or municipality. The U.S. Constitution divides the power to make laws between the federal and state government.

The federal government is responsible for some types of laws, such as those pertaining to national defense, currency, interstate commerce, patents, and so forth. State and local governments may not pass these kinds of laws, nor may they pass laws that conflict with federal laws. One example is the 14th Amendment to the U.S. Constitution, which insures the Bill of Rights is applicable to all states. You will learn more about the differences between federal, state, and local laws in the upcoming units of this book.

Member of Congress: Typical Day

Regardless of whether they are in Washington, D.C., or in their congressional districts, members of Congress spend the majority of their time working. Members work long hours, up to 70 hours a week when Congress is in session. Members endure

unequaled public scrutiny and sacrifice family time to fulfill work responsibilities.

- 7:00 a.m.** Breakfast with the family, the only time they will see each other until late that evening.
- 8:00 a.m.** Trip to the office to go over e-mail and postal mail with an assistant. The mail may be heavy if a critical issue is pending.
- 10:15 a.m.** Meet with party members considering action on a bill that will come before Congress.
- 10:30 a.m.** House Ethics Committee meeting. This committee, which is his/her most important committee assignment, may be discussing new allegations of concern to Congress. Both senators and representatives may have more than one committee assignment.
- 11:00 a.m.** A party caucus (meeting) takes place.
- Noon** Lunch with other members from his/her home state. Congressional business is discussed.
- 1:30 p.m.** On the way to the House floor, he/she is stopped by the majority leader for a brief discussion of important bills.
- 1:40 p.m.** Remains on the floor for the entire afternoon House of Representatives session, voting on legislation.
- 3:30 p.m.** Short conference with other lawmakers concerning a defense bill.
- 3:45 p.m.** Lobbyist John Jones comes to the office seeking aid favorable to their organization.
- 5:00 p.m.** A reporter calls for an interview concerning the House Ethics Committee.
- 7:00 p.m.** Home for dinner. After dinner reads hometown newspapers, reads topics on social media, and works on a speech to be delivered the next day.

Perhaps the longest debate at the Constitutional Convention concerned the method of selecting the president. An early suggestion was to give this power to Congress. But that would have destroyed the idea of the separation of powers. How could we have three branches of government, each checking the other if the legislative branch (the Congress) picked the head of the executive branch (the president)?

The writers of the Constitution also weren't ready to give the selection of the president to the people or the "common man." So they wrote a compromise into Article 2 of the Constitution. The compromise set up a system of electors to select the president. These electors came to be known as the *Electoral College*, but the Constitution itself does not mention the term "Electoral College."

Each state would get as many "electors" as there were senators and representatives from that state. And, in the 23rd Amendment to the Constitution in 1961, three additional electoral votes were added for the voters of Washington, D.C. That made a total of 538 electors (electoral votes for each state equals the number of representatives plus two for the senators), and a vote of 270 or more would be necessary to select the president. The map below shows the distribution of electoral votes based on the 2010 reapportionment.

Before 1961, the voters in Washington, D.C., didn't get to vote for the president at all. This was not considered fair in the capital of our country.

To summarize, if a candidate gets the most popular

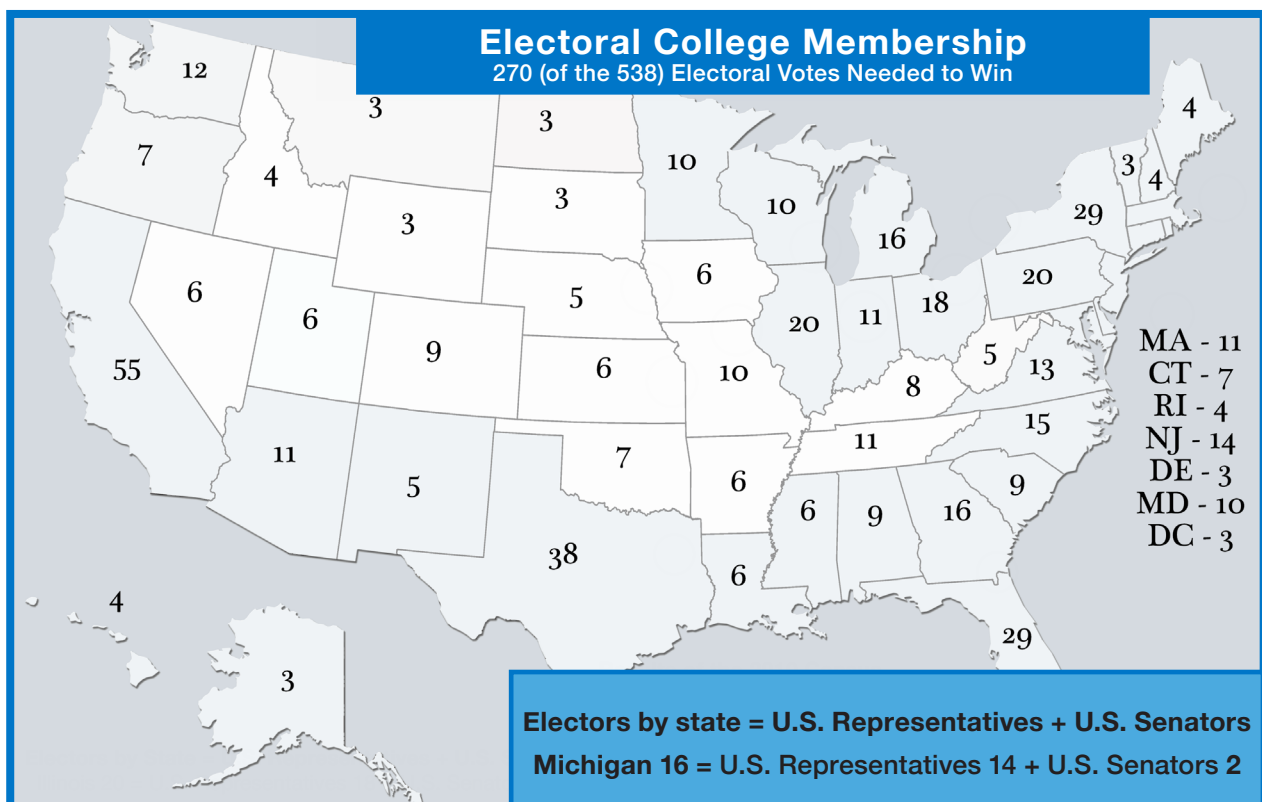
(people) votes in the state, the "electors" will then cast their votes the same way. Thus all the electoral votes for the state will (except for Maine and Nebraska) go to the winner of the state.

The writers of the Constitution also thought that the Electoral College gave states with a small population more equal weight in the presidential election.

One of the problems political scientists see in the Electoral College is that it allows a person to be selected president who has not won the popular vote in the country. In our growing beliefs in the power and rights of democracy in our nation, that could be a problem. Because all the electoral votes of a state go to the candidate who wins the vote in that state, whether the candidate wins by a single vote or a million votes, it is possible to be elected president without having the most votes.

That has not happened very often, but it did occur in 2000 when George W. Bush became president and again recently in the 2016 election. President Trump became president even though Hillary Clinton won a majority of the popular votes. And, because this has happened so recently, Americans are debating the pros and cons of the Electoral College. Since a change in the electoral vote would require a constitutional amendment, change will not come easily. Supporters of the current system say that it has served the nation well and forces candidates to gain broad geographic support rather than concentrating only on large metropolitan areas.

continued



Americans pick their presidents and vice presidents from the candidates presented by the Democratic and Republican parties. People do not vote directly for the president and vice president; instead, the Electoral College allows voters to vote for electors. These electors then cast votes a specific candidate, a system described in Article II of the Constitution.

The responsibility of voters has increased with the growth of our country and government. Even if you are not of voting age, now is the time to get familiar with the process and the importance of voting. Students are the future of this country, and your vote determines the fate of policies and tactics of leaders.

Follow along with this process in the presidential elections in 2020 and 2024.

Campaigning: General election campaigning begins after each political party chooses a single presidential nominee. Those candidates travel the country, holding rallies and town halls, explaining their views and trying to win potential voters' support.

STEP 4 - GENERAL ELECTION

Voting at the General Election:

Every four years, citizens in every state cast their votes for one president and vice president. These voters select groups of electors to represent each state on behalf of the voters.



November 2020
General Election

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
		3				



STEP 3 - NATIONAL CONVENTIONS

National Conventions:

Both parties have delegates that will choose the nominees for president and vice president. They will also adopt a platform outlining the party's policy priorities and values.

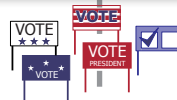
March 2020
Michigan Primary

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
		10				



Primary Elections:

A state-level election where party members choose a candidate to represent that political party at the general/presidential election.



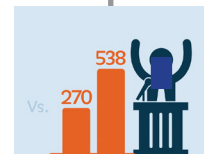
Caucuses:

Citizens participate in local meetings where members gather votes for their preferred candidate, used to elect delegates to the national party convention.

STEP 5 - ELECTORAL COLLEGE

Electoral College System:

In the Electoral College system, each state gets a certain number of electors based on its representation in Congress. A simple majority of the 538 (or 270 votes) is needed to win.



FINISH

(Inauguration Day -
January 20, 2021)



START

(in Fall 2018)

STEP 1 - IDENTIFY THE CANDIDATES

Incumbent -

Donald Trump -
eligible for one
more term.

Challengers-

Many candidates
participate in de-
bates to gain party favor.

Candidates must be:

- ☒ a natural-born citizen
- ☒ 35-years old
- ☒ Resident for 14 years

STEP 2 - CAUCUSES and PRIMARIES

The authors of the Constitution wanted to be sure that no person or group would seize power and control the American government. To insure that this would not happen, our United States government, under the Constitution, was divided into three parts: the executive, the legislative, and the judicial. Each of these three branches has a check on the powers of the others. These checks provide a system of balance in our government, and that is why we call the system *checks and balances*.

You may also hear this system referred to as a *separation of powers*. Although not directly mentioned in the Constitution, the first three articles mark the responsibilities of the executive, legislative, and judicial branches. It gives some power to each branch of government instead of giving all the power to one branch.

These are the most important checks and balances:

- 1. Executive branch** has the power to check the legislative branch by vetoing laws that Congress wants to pass.
- 2. Legislative branch** may check the executive branch by passing laws over the veto by a two-thirds vote in each house.
- 3. Judicial branch** may check both the legislative and executive by declaring laws unconstitutional.

Obviously, this is not the whole system, but it is the main idea. Other checks and balances include:

Executive over the judicial branch: The president appoints all federal judges and may grant pardons or reprieves for those convicted in court.

Legislative over the executive branch: The legislative branch must approve appointments that the president makes; the Senate must approve treaties that the president makes, and the legislative branch may investigate the executive branch.

Legislative over the judicial branch: The legislative branch must approve the president's choice of judges to the judicial branch and may propose constitutional amendments to overturn judicial decisions.

Legislative over the executive and judicial branch: The legislative branch has impeachment powers over all federal officers.

Judicial over the executive branch: Supreme Court justices cannot be fired by the president.

There are other checks and balances in the American government besides those between branches of government. They include:

Checks in Congress

The Senate and House can check each other by rejecting bills passed by the other. The House has the added check of sole power to start revenue bills.

continued

A System of Checks and Balances

Legislative Branch *make the laws*



- must approve appointed judges
- have impeachment powers over federal officers
- may propose amendments to overturn judicial decisions

- may declare a law unconstitutional

- may pass laws by overriding a presidential veto
- must approve presidential appointments and foreign treaties
- may investigate actions of the executive branch
- have impeachment powers

- president can veto laws Congress wants to pass
- president can make foreign treaties

Executive Branch *enforce the laws*



Judicial Branch *interpret the laws*



- Supreme Court justices cannot be fired by the president
- may rule that a presidential action or law is unconstitutional

- president appoints federal judges
- may grant pardons and reprieves for those convicted in court

Michigan's history is rich and distinguished. The state is named after Lake Michigan. The Chippewa Indians called the lake *Michigama*, which means "Great Lake."

At the time of the arrival of white men in Michigan, about 15,000 Indians were living in the region, most from the Algonquian language group. The first white man to explore the area was Frenchman Etienne Brule around 1620. Other important explorers and missionaries were Jean Nicolet and Father Rene Menard, who established a mission in hopes of converting the Indians to Christianity.

In the late 1600s, more Frenchmen followed, exploring, mapping, and building missions, forts, and trading posts. Names such as Father Jacques Marquette, Louis Joliet, and Sieur De La Salle are an important part of early Michigan history.

While the French controlled the Michigan region for almost 150 years, few significant changes took place in the territory. The French were not primarily interested in settling the region. Instead, they wanted to use the area as a base for a profitable fur trading industry. The French also devoted considerable time trying to convert the Indians to Christianity.

Until 1763, the territory that was to become Michigan was held by the French. At the end of the French and Indian Wars in 1763, the land came under the control of the English as part of the settlement of the war. The English, like the French, were primarily interested in the Michigan region as a source of valuable furs. The state derived its nickname from the beautiful wolverine fur.

When war broke out between the colonists and the British, Michigan became strategically important. The British sent raiding parties from Detroit to attack American settlements. After the Revolutionary War ended in 1783, the United States gained control of all land up to the Mississippi River. A plan had to be devised to settle state claims to the new land, and the *Northwest Ordinance of 1787* was passed. This federal law provided that the land would be divided into

not less than three nor more than five states. Also, a governor and council were appointed to pass legislation. One of the most important provisions of the Northwest Ordinance set up townships, which provided land for public schools. This promoted free public education in the new territory.

In 1800, Congress created the *Indiana Territory*, which included part of Michigan. In 1805, the *Michigan Territory* was created, which included most of present-day Michigan, except for the western section of the Upper Peninsula.

The people of the Michigan Territory drew up and approved a state constitution in 1835. Although the territory met all requirements for statehood, Congress delayed admission of Michigan to the Union due to a land dispute with Ohio. On January 26, 1837, Michigan became the 26th state. Michigan's population multiplied rapidly. People from other parts of the United States and Europe saw Michigan as a place where new opportunities would be available to them.

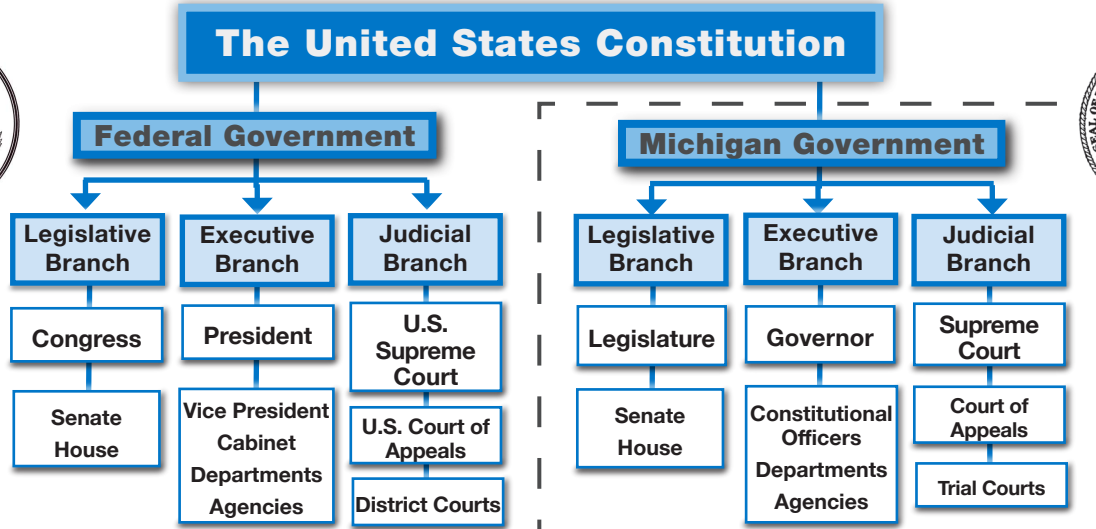
In its first 50 years, Michigan saw farming replace fur trading as the chief occupation of the region. Because of Michigan's fertile soil and favorable climate, agriculture continues to play an essential role in the state's economy.

The discovery and exploitation of iron and copper ore made Michigan a vital mining state. Because of its abundant timber resources, logging also developed into an important industry. By the 1870s, Michigan was the nation's leading lumber producer, providing building material for a developing country.

In 1847, Lansing became the state capital. It proved that the state was growing and that the interior was becoming critical to the state. The population of Michigan doubled between 1875 and 1900, primarily due to immigrants from Canada, Germany, Holland, Britain, Scandinavia, and Ireland.

As the automobile rapidly gained importance in the American way of life during the early 1900s, Detroit

continued



The U.S. Constitution splits governing powers between the federal government and the states. This unit will cover the state government portion of the chart above. It will also include the study of local government bodies.

districts are reshaped to correspond with the census results. Changing a district's shape and size is known as *reapportionment*.

State Senate

There are 38 Senate districts in the state of Michigan. The state Senate consists of one member from each district. Each district has approximately 212,400 to 263,500 residents. Senators are elected to four-year terms at the same time the governor is elected: November of even-numbered, non-presidential years. Terms for senators begin on January 1, following the November general election. In addition to regular lawmaking powers, the Senate has certain special duties. One of these is to serve as the jury in cases of impeachment; another is to vote on appointments made by the governor.

Senate Leadership

The presiding officer of the state Senate is the *lieutenant governor*, who may vote only to break a tie. He or she also ensures that its members are following the senate rules. In the lieutenant governor's absence, the *president pro tempore* of the Senate presides. Both the majority party (currently Republicans) and minority party (currently Democrats) also elect a leader, assistant leaders, and a caucus chair. These leaders provide direction and advice to members on proposed legislation and party business.

State House of Representatives

There are 110 House of Representative districts in the state of Michigan. The state House of Representatives consists of one member from each district. Each district represents between 77,000 and 91,000 residents. They are elected to two-year terms in November of even-numbered years. Besides its

duties of lawmaking, the House has the sole power to start impeachment proceedings. A majority of the members in the House must vote in favor of starting proceedings against an official.

House Leadership

The presiding officer of the state House is known as the *speaker of the house* and is elected by the members themselves. In addition to presiding over the body, the speaker also has the chief leadership position, controlling the flow of legislation and committee assignments. He or she also maintains order on the House floor and works with minority leaders to resolve the problems that may be hindering legislation. In the speaker's absence, the *speaker pro tempore* presides. Both the majority party (currently Republicans) and minority party (currently Democrats) also elect a floor leader and assistant leaders.

QUESTIONS

WHICH BODY OF THE LEGISLATURE? The following details may closely match the state Senate or state House. In some cases, that may relate to both or neither of these. Answer **Senate (S)**, **House (H)**, **neither (N)**, or **both (B)**.

1. ___ Elected by the people.
2. ___ Have 110 members.
3. ___ Have 38 members.
4. ___ Receive a salary of \$71,685.
5. ___ Speaker is the presiding officer.
6. ___ Make laws for all 50 states.
7. ___ Term is two years.
8. ___ Term is four years.
9. ___ Start impeachment proceedings.
10. ___ Must be at least 35 years old.
11. ___ Must be a resident of their district.
12. ___ Approves appointments made by the governor.
13. ___ Lieutenant governor is the presiding officer.

Great Seal of Michigan and Exercise

The *Great Seal of the State of Michigan* is the official emblem of the state. Article 3, Section 3, of the Michigan Constitution identifies 15 types of state documents that are eligible to receive an impression of the Great Seal.



The Great Seal was created in 1835 and features the state coat of arms and state motto (which also appears on Michigan's state flag). **Research the Great Seal and answer the following:**

1. What do the Roman numerals MDCCCXXXV on the seal represent? _____
2. What are the two animals on each side of the seal? _____
3. What items does the American Eagle hold? _____
4. What does the word "Tuebor" mean? _____
5. What is the state motto? _____

"...the judicial power of the state is vested exclusively in one court of justice which shall be divided into one supreme court, one court of appeals, one trial court of general jurisdiction known as the circuit court..." — Michigan Constitution, Article 6

The judicial branch of government in Michigan administers justice and interprets the laws. These state courts are the workhorses of the American legal system. Each court has specific responsibilities and restrictions on legal matters. It is composed of a network of courts, each designed to fill a particular need. These courts hear cases involving state law.

The state constitution defines the judicial branch's powers and its structure. All judges are elected on a non-partisan basis (no party labels appear on the ballots) and may be reelected. If a judge resigns before their term ends, a judge will be appointed by the governor.

State Supreme Court

The final authority on the state constitution and the highest tribunal for any action begun in the state courts, except when a federal question is raised, is the state *Supreme Court*. A primary function of the Supreme Court is to ensure independent, open, fair, and efficient resolution of disputes per federal and state constitutions and laws. This court decides which cases to hear, reviewing approximately 2,500 applications annually, but only hearing about two to three percent of these cases each session (August 1 through July 31 of the next year).

No testimony is taken in the Supreme Court. The court disposes of cases with printed briefs and oral arguments by counsel. The court reviews cases according to a calendar set by the chief justice. The Supreme Court consists of seven judges elected to eight-year terms. Every two years one justice is selected by the court as chief justice. Although justices are nominated by political parties, they are elected on a nonpartisan ballot. Justices can run for election until they turn 70 years old. The courtroom and offices of the court are in the *Michigan Hall of Justice* in Lansing.

Court of Appeals

Michigan has established a *court of appeals* to hear appeals from the lower courts. This court is an "intermediate" appellate court between the state trial courts and the Michigan Supreme Court. The Michigan Court of Appeals has jurisdiction in civil and criminal cases appealed from lower courts. There is no testimony given in this court. Cases are reviewed by written transcript and oral arguments by attorneys.

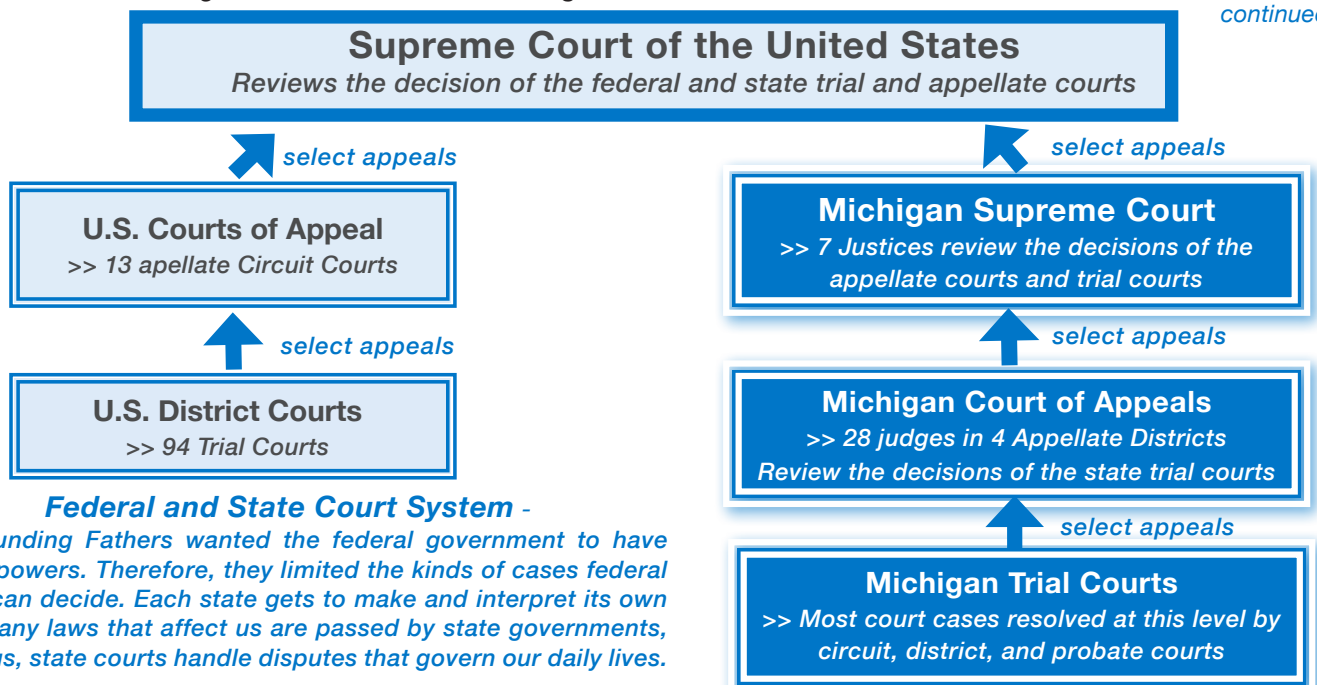
Example of Court of Appeals Process

Peggy and her attorneys claim legal mistakes were made at the trial court. Three Court of Appeals judges reviewed the record of Peggy's court case. The judges found a legal error, granting her a new trial in the lower court.

The Constitution of 1963 set up a new court of appeals, which is currently made up of 24 judges, elected to six-year terms, from four districts, drawn according to population. Court of Appeals hearings are held in Detroit, Troy, Grand Rapids, and Lansing. There is no courtroom at the Troy location. Hearings are also scheduled in Marquette and in a northern Lower Peninsula location in the spring and fall of each year for the convenience of the parties and their attorneys in those areas.

The judges of the Court of Appeals rotate between the court locations around the state, although they are elected or appointed from one of four districts. Judges are randomly assigned to panels to sit in all courtroom locations so that a variety of judicial viewpoints are considered. At least two of the three judges on a panel must agree on the ruling in a case for it to be binding. The Court of Appeals reviews about 6,000 cases per year.

continued



In a democracy, a citizen has the responsibility for the government under which he or she lives. The power of state government comes from the people. By voting and staying informed on the issues, he or she takes part in the business of government. With every freedom we enjoy, there are also corresponding duties. We must perform these duties, such as voting, if we expect to enjoy our freedom.

Voting is a constitutional right. Early in American history, only white men over the age of 21 could vote. Then it took two constitutional amendments — one in 1870 and the other in 1920 — to give black people and women, respectively, the right to vote. Then, when Americans 18 and older were in the military fighting in wars, people began to think that if young people were old enough to die for their country, they were surely old enough to vote. So in 1971, the 26th Amendment to the U.S. Constitution gave 18-year-olds the right to vote, and so did the state of Michigan.

Elections held in Michigan are either *partisan* or *nonpartisan*. Partisan means running as a Democrat, Republican, Independent, or minor party candidate. Nonpartisan means having no party affiliation.

There are three basic types of elections in Michigan. The first type is the election of representatives to operate the government. These representatives will be elected during primary and general elections described below. The second type of election is voting on constitutional amendments (discussed previously). The third type is the election in which the people are asked to vote on a public issue (*referendum*). One example of a referendum is the local school district requesting a tax increase to fund a new school.

Primary Elections

Primaries are elections held before the general election in which party members select the candidates of their party, mainly the Republican Party and the Democratic Party. The winners of these primaries then face each other in the upcoming general election. Primaries are held in March before the fall general elections.

Voting at Age 17?

Should Michigan join 17 other states that allow 17-year-olds to vote in primaries if they'll be 18 by the November election? Advocates say the change allows youth to develop voting habits early, a key to ensuring they turn into lifelong voters. Critics have questioned whether teens are engaged enough to cast meaningful votes. What do you think?

General Elections

The most publicized elections in Michigan are the *general elections*. They are *biennial* elections. That

is, they are held every two years in even-numbered years. The Michigan gubernatorial election is held every four years. Michigan residents also vote for the President of the United States in every other general election. The next presidential election will be in 2020. President Trump will be eligible to run, as he will have served only one of the maximum two terms.

A *special election* may be held to fill a vacancy in the office of a U.S. senator or representative or a state legislator.

The Two-Party System

Our political party system is called the *two-party system* because most elections are won by a candidate from either the Democratic or Republican Party. The much smaller or special-interest parties in the country may also try to elect a candidate. These smaller parties are called *third parties* and may include the Constitution, Libertarian, and Green parties.

Voting Requirements

In Michigan, like any state, a citizen must obey the election laws. They also must meet the requirements that have been set up by those laws. Michigan requirements include:

- **Age:** Must be at least 18 years old on Election Day (by the date of the general, primary, or other election in which you want to vote);
- **Residency:** Voters must be a United States citizen and a resident of the state and your city or township for at least 30 days preceding the election.
- **Registration:** Voters must register to vote in their election district before, or the day of, the election. Registration procedures vary from place to place throughout the state. You can either register to vote at your local clerk's office or other designated location, by mail or at the polling place at the time of an election. Contact your county clerk's office to find out where to register to vote.
- **Photo Identification:** Voters are asked to present an acceptable photo ID, such as a Michigan driver's license or identification card. If you do not have an acceptable form of ID or fail to bring it to the polls, you can still vote. Simply sign a brief affidavit stating you are not in possession of a photo ID.

Absentee Ballots / Early Voting

Michigan voters can cast *absentee ballots* beginning 45 days prior to Election Day. Any registered voter who cannot go to their polling place on Election Day may choose to vote by absentee ballot, no excuse needed. You must request an *absent voter ballot* by submitting an application to your municipal clerk no later than 5 p.m. the Friday before the election. To be counted, the completed ballot must be postmarked or received by the clerk on or before Election Day.

The following self-test will help you prepare for your final Michigan section test. You will find the correct answers at the bottom of Page 79.

FILL IN THE BLANKS. Write the correct answer in the space provided.

1. If the governor dies, who becomes governor?
2. The highest court in Michigan.
3. The governor of Michigan.
4. Who may call special sessions of the Legislature?
5. Who is the chief legal officer of the state of Michigan?
6. Fractional vote needed for the Legislature to override governor's veto.
7. How can you still vote if not available on Election Day?
8. How many branches of government in Michigan?
9. Who can veto a bill passed by the Legislature?
10. Most interaction is done with this court, 105 of these in Michigan.
11. The vote on public issues are called?
12. The next presidential election will be in what year?
13. How many days does the governor have to consider a bill from the Legislature?
14. How many constitutions has Michigan operated under?
15. The executive branch officer that keeps the "Great Seal" and maintains the official records of the state.
16. Name the election used to select candidates for the general election.
17. The capital of Michigan.

MATCHING. The brief description in **Column A** should be matched with the correct response from **Column B**.

Column A

- _____ 18. Must be 21 years old or older
- _____ 19. They are elected by the people
- _____ 20. Declare laws unconstitutional
- _____ 21. Have lawmaking responsibilities
- _____ 22. Have 110 members and 110 districts
- _____ 23. Has speaker for chief officer
- _____ 24. Has governor as chief officer
- _____ 25. Their term is two years
- _____ 26. Vote on appointments made by the governor
- _____ 27. Have 38 members in 38 districts
- _____ 28. Are parts of the state Legislature
- _____ 29. Their term is four years
- _____ 30. Begin impeachment proceedings
- _____ 31. Have term limits
- _____ 32. Are appointed by the governor
- _____ 33. They meet in Lansing

Column B

- State House
- State Senate
- Neither
- Both