**Three Branches of Government Lesson Plan 1/30/17**

**Objective:**

Students will be able to understand the purpose and powers of the three branches of government.

Students will be able to reinforce their knowledge of checks and balances of the three branches of government through an interactive game.

Students will be able to evaluate the significance of each branch individually, as they all evenly balance one another.

**Standards:**

**SOCIAL STUDIES, 6.1A Grade 12 CPI 14.A**

**Standard:** U.S. History: America in the World

**Strand:** Civics, Government, and Human Rights

Evaluate the effectiveness of the checks and balances system in preventing one branch of national government from usurping too much power during contemporary times.

**SOCIAL STUDIES, 6.1A Grade 8 CPI 3.D**

**Standard:** U.S. History: America in the World

**Strand:** Civics, Government, and Human Rights

Compare and contrast the Articles of Confederation and the United States Constitution in terms of the decision-making powers of national government.

**Guiding Questions:**

EQ: How does each branch of government guide/check one another?

GQ1: What checks does the Legislative Branch have on the others?

GQ2: What checks does the Judicial Branch have on the others?

GQ3: What checks does the Executive Branch have on the others?

**Formative Assessment:**Anticipatory set, video discussion, flow chart fill-in assignment, interactive review, and discussion board with student evaluation of three branches.

**Procedure:**

1. **Anticipatory Set:** Play a game of Rock, Paper, Scissors with your table partner. Which is the strongest? Rock, paper or scissors? How do they balance each other?
2. Teacher will ask students, based on your prior knowledge of the checks and balances, “how are the three branches of government similar to the game Rock, Paper, Scissors?”
3. Teacher will lead a class discussion and ask students which branch of government has the most power. Have students consider what has more power, rock, paper or scissors as a clue.

Ask: if we had to get rid of one, which one would it be? Would this affect the other branches? Would this affect the game Rock, paper, scissors?

* 1. Ask students to play a game of “Rock and Paper, no scissors”
  2. Ask students, “How did the game change? Which one won every time?”
  3. This is why we need checks and balances and this is why the framers of our constitution made our government into the 3 branches. They provide a balance in the government that makes sure that no one branch has more power than the other.

1. Before starting the video, tell students that the video has all of the checks and balances in it. They will be held accountable for having the answers for one branch’s checks on the other two. We will jigsaw it together after the video into a flow chart demonstrating the checks and balances.
2. Show the video “3 Branches Rap”. Divide students into 3 groups, in which each group will be in charge of taking notes on 1 branch of government to share with the class after the video is over. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZCB8EOY5d48>
3. Ask each of the groups to present the 2 checks that they found for their branch while watching the video.
   1. If there is enough time, have students share in groups with one another to fill in their charts. If not, have them share their findings with the class. As students are presenting their video notes, the class will be asked to record what their classmates are saying in their checks and balance flow charts. After the discussion is over, all student’s flowcharts should be completed.
4. Teacher will tell students to turn to the person next to them and tell them 1 thing they are really confident that they know about each branch of government.
5. Teacher will ask students how this lesson has answered some of our guided questions for the unit:

EQ: How did the U.S. Constitution attempt to fix the problems that the Articles of Confederation created?

GQ1: How did the federalists convince the Anti-federalists to ratify (vote for) the U.S. Constitution?

**GQ2: How does the constitution organize our government in a manner far superior to the Articles of Confederation?**

**GQ3: How does the constitution affect our daily lives?**

1. Check for comprehension:
   1. Ask students to put their heads down and then answer each question by holding up a number amount using their fingers to do a formative assessment. Record the names of the students having trouble. Based on the order of the constitution, 1 = Legislative, 2 = Executive, 3 = Judicial
   2. Ask these questions:
      1. Which branch has the power to veto laws? – Executive (2)
      2. Which branch can override a president’s veto? – Legislative (1)
      3. Which branch can declare a law unconstitutional? – Judicial (3)
      4. Which branch can appoint judges to the Supreme Court? – Executive (2)
      5. Which branch can decide that the actions of the president are unconstitutional? – Judicial (3)
      6. Which branch approves the president’s appointments to the Supreme Court? –Legislative (1)
2. Ask students to decide which branch of the government is the most important and most powerful and why. Ask students to go to a different corner based on their answer.
   1. Ask them to discuss with the group in their corner why they believe that and must be ready to debate with another group and prove why their branch is the most powerful
   2. Students are to take a minute to gather their thoughts with their groups and then will start with one corner making a statement of their power to the rest of the class.
3. (*if there is time*) Teacher will reinforce the responsibilities and duties of each branch of government by using an interactive review game. Each group will receive a red, white, and blue piece of construction paper in which they will be asked a series of questions and will hold up the correct paper. Red for Legislative Branch, white for Executive Branch, and blue for Judicial Branch will be written on the whiteboard as well as on the sheets of paper.
4. (*If there is time*) Teacher will lead this activity in which they will ask questions such as:
   1. “What branch makes laws?” -- Legislative
      1. Why do you think the president or Supreme Court does not make the laws?
   2. “What branch has members that serve for life?” -- Judicial
      1. Do you think that members should serve for life? Do you find any problems with this idea?
   3. “What branch can declare war?” -- Legislative
      1. Why do you think the power to declare war is given to this branch?
   4. “What branch directs foreign policy?” --Executive
      1. Why do you think the president is the one that deals with other countries? Why not Congress or the Supreme Court?
   5. “What branch can declare a law unconstitutional?” -- Judicial
      1. How important is this responsibility?
      2. Give an example of a possible law that could be considered unconstitutional.
5. **HOMEWORK:** At the end of class students will be asked to participate in a discussion board in their google classroom answering these questions:
   1. Which branch has the power to veto laws? – Executive
   2. Which branch can override a president’s veto? – Legislative
   3. Which branch can declare a law unconstitutional? – Judicial
   4. Which branch can appoint judges to the Supreme Court? – Executive
   5. Which branch can decide that the actions of the president are unconstitutional? -- Judicial
   6. Which branch approves the president’s appointments to the Supreme Court? –Legislative