

TITLE OF LESSON

American Government Unit 1 Lesson 19 – The Constitution: Articles  
*What type of government is the United States?*

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TIME ESTIMATE FOR THIS LESSON

One class period

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ALIGNMENT WITH STANDARDS

California – History 12.4

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MATERIALS

The Constitution of the United States of America – Reading from <http://memory.loc.gov/const/const.html>  
Schoolhouse Rock, *The Preamble* – American Rock Video  
**Preamble 6 Goals** – Student Page  
**Constitution Scavenger Hunt** – Student Page  
**Constitution Scavenger Hunt Key** – Teacher Page  
**‘Round the Clock** – Student Page  
**Current Events 1** – Student Page

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LESSON OBJECTIVES

- To examine the Articles of the Constitution and their purpose.
  - To analyze the articles to determine details and structure of the US Government
  - To be exposed to the ideas of “separation of power” and “checks and balances”.
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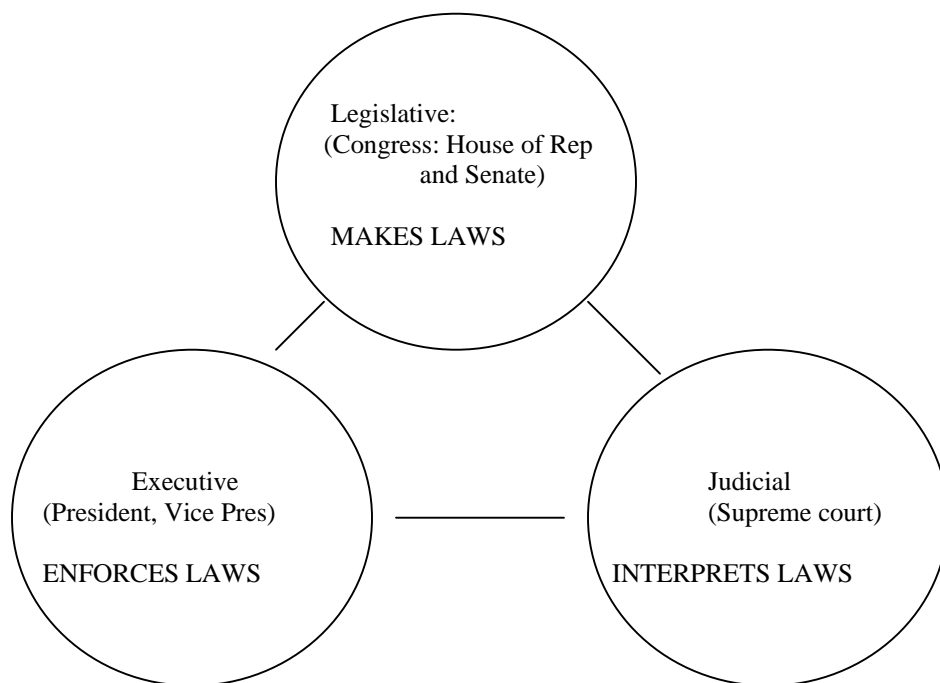
FOCUS AND MOTIVATE STUDENTS – WARM-UP ACTIVITY

- 1) Homework Check – Stamp/initial complete homework assignments. Pass back graded assignments and have students place them in the appropriate section of their binders.
  - 2) **Agenda** – Have students copy the goal, agenda and homework onto the next clean page in a notebook.
  - 3) **Journal 4** – Below the goal/agenda have students answer the following question: Which goal(s) of the Preamble of the Constitution most closely relates to your GIP problem? Why? (one full page)
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ACTIVITIES – INDIVIDUAL AND GROUP

1. Review and Discuss – As students complete the warm-up activities, quickly go around and check their homework assignment from the previous lesson by having students take out their **Preamble 6 Goals** for you to review. It’s a good idea here to be playing the *The Preamble* from the Scholastic Rock Video in the background so that students become more familiar with the song. When students have mostly completed their warm-up, review the handout and complete column 3 by asking students to contribute what they wrote down for column 2. Students will have a difficult time with understanding the terms “common defense” and “general welfare” so you might have to spend considerable energy making sure they understand these concepts well. To conclude this activity, review the warm-up question and have different students explain their answers. If some students struggle with this question (for instance if their GIP issue is animal rights), have other students try to find a connection to one of the goals. Collect the homework.
2. Articles – Next, have students take out their copies of the Constitution and tell you, again, what the three main parts are (Preamble, Articles, and Amendments). Tell them that today you will be focusing on the Articles and that you want them to take a couple of minutes to look at and read the Articles, especially Articles I, II, and III. Ask them to read silently. They may **highlight/annotate** for the main ideas of each (if you have distributed individual copies) or take notes (if you only have a class set).

3. Discussion and **Notetaking** – After about 3 or 4 minutes ask them to tell you what the main topic is of each of the first three Articles (legislative, executive, and judicial). Write these on the board and have students copy them into their notebooks under the title “3 Branches of Government”. Next, see if students can tell you what the purpose of each branch is. This will be difficult, but if they look at their copies carefully (see Article I, Section 8 for an example) they can get an idea. When completed, the students’ notes should look like the following:



Though, they will get more of this later, explain to students that these different purposes are known as separation of powers. Ask them briefly why the founders decided to design our government this way (remember the ideas of autocracy and King George).

4. Constitutional Scavenger Hunt – Students will need to use their copies of *The Constitution* to find pieces of information about the three branches of government. Have students take out their **‘Round the Clock** forms and copies of the *US Constitution*. Explain that once they are with their partners they will be given an envelope (see below) with a collection of question-strips inside. Their task is to find the answer to the question, highlight the area (or underline it), and write the number of the question next to the highlight. Their partner should then do the same on their copy of the *US Constitution*. They should continue until they have found, highlighted and numbered all of the questions in their envelope. Be sure that they understand what they are supposed to do before you give them their appointment time. When ALL students understand, give them their time and have them move into side-by-side pairs.

**NOTE:** Before beginning this activity, you should make copies of the **Constitution Scavenger Hunt** sheets (four sets should be sufficient) and then cut them into strips along the dotted lines. Take the following set of strips and put them into the corresponding envelopes:

Envelope A (Article 1, Sections 1, 2 and 7) – Questions #1-6  
Envelope B (Article 1, Section 3 and Article 2, Section 2) – Questions #7-12  
Envelope C (Article 1, Sections 8, 7 and Article 5) – Questions #13-18  
Envelope D (Article 2, Sections 1,2 and Article 1, Section 7) – Questions #19-25  
Envelope E (Article 3, Sections 1,2 and Article 1, Section 3) – Questions #26-30

When students get into their pairs you will then give each pair an envelope with their question strips inside.

While students are working on this activity, you will probably need to get many of the students jump-started by having them first guess which Article might contain their information (using their notes) and then scanning the actual text to find the answer. There will be no way for them to finish this activity today, but they will continue it in the next lesson.

5. Homework Review – A few minutes before the end of class, have students put all of the papers away and pass out the **Current Events 1** for their homework. Distribute newspapers to students who need them.
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HOMEWORK

- 1) Complete a new **Current Events 1**.
  - 2) Study vocabulary and notes to date.
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GROUP ROLES

None

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DOCUMENTATION FOR PORTFOLIO

None