

Lesson: Separation of Powers

Grade Level: 8-12

Subjects: Social Studies: Government, US History, South Carolina History

Duration: One Class Period

Description: Students will be able to evaluate the three branches of government and analyze the Constitution as the written framework of the United States Government, including expression of the core principles of checks and balances, and separation of powers.

Standards:

HSHC-1.5 Explain how the fundamental principle of limited government is protected by the Constitution and the Bill of Rights, including democracy, republicanism, federalism, the separation of powers, the system of checks and balances, and individual rights.

USG-3.1 Contrast the distribution of powers and responsibilities within the federal system, including the purpose, organization, and enumerated powers of the three branches; the workings of the Supreme Court; and the operation of the law-making process.

8-3.3 Draw conclusions about how sectionalism arose from events or circumstances of racial tension, internal population shifts, and political conflicts, including the Denmark Vesey plot, slave codes, and the African American population majority.

Objectives:

1. Identify the three branches of government.
2. Evaluate the constitutional powers of each branch of government.
3. Analyze the differences in each branch of government.
4. Demonstrate how the branches of government check and balance one another.

Materials: Copy of the Constitution, rubric, internet, textbook, related SC Streaming video clips, smartboard, markers, paper, etc.

Activity: Break students into three groups. Each group takes one of the three branches of government to research. Each group will create a Venn diagram outlining the responsibilities and powers of their branch of government. The groups will then present their findings to the class. After the groups present each group will go back and summarize what the other groups presented. They will then create a final Venn diagram showing how the three branches of government interact with each other with special emphasis on the checks and balances.

This lesson plan was create by 2011 SC Supreme Court Institute attendees: Jerusha Tirado, Casey Pace, Tim Gaines, and James Koterba