

We the People

Using Inspiration to Map Government Structures

OBJECTIVES

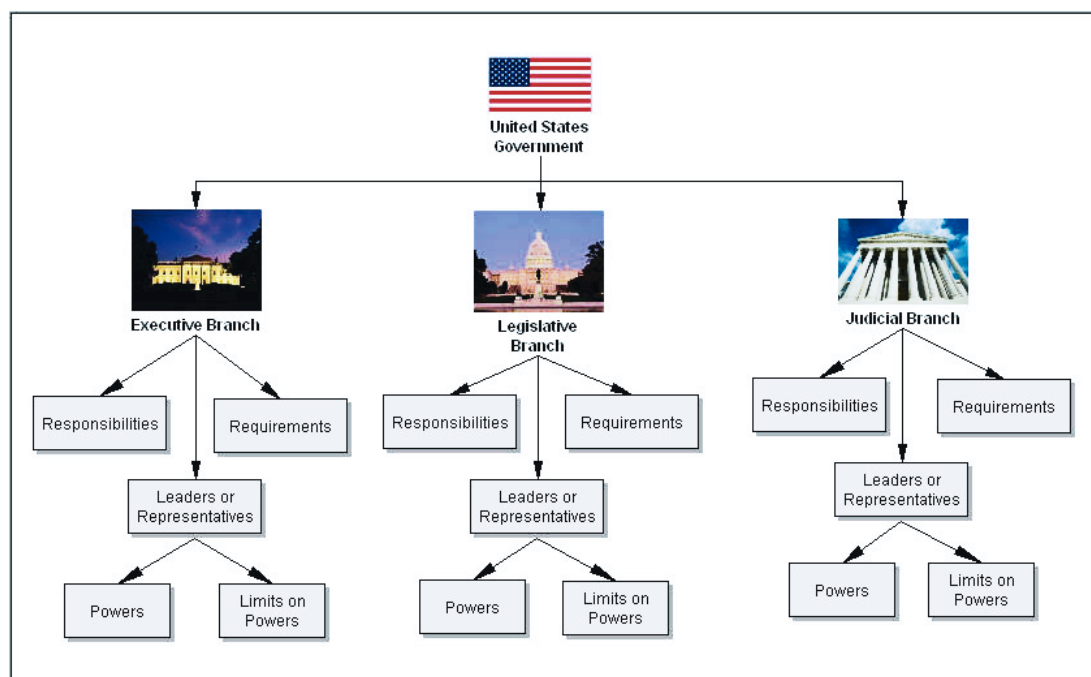
- Create a map illustrating the three branches of government
- Identify the branches of government and the shared or exclusive powers of each
- Use mapping as a prewriting strategy

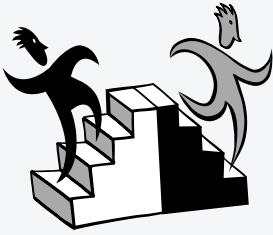
MATERIALS

- Inspiration software
- We the People Planning Sheet
- We the People Template
- We the People Sample Activity
- *United States Constitution*

Note: Be sure to review the We the People Template and Sample Activity and make modifications to suit the needs of your students and situation. Browse the Internet Connection section to get more ideas on teaching federalism and governmental structure to students.

“**W**e the People of the United States...” So begins the Constitution of the United States. This charter of freedom outlines our government and provides the framework for a democratic process. Understanding the American governmental structure and learning our responsibilities in forming that administration becomes critical in educating the youth of today for leadership roles in tomorrow’s society. In this lesson, students research political documents and use Inspiration to create a visual illustration of their national government.





Customizing to Meet Your Needs

- Younger students might enjoy mapping the structure of their student government or school administration.
- Older students could create comparative government scenarios by linking Inspiration maps of different governmental structures. Examples might include socialism, communism, British Parliament, or dictatorships.

Before the Computer

1. Launch the lesson with a discussion of our national government. Ask students if they can name the three branches of national government and the historical origins of that structure. Make copies of the United States Constitution available to help guide your discussion. Remind students that our governmental structure is outlined in the Constitution.
2. Encourage students to summarize their impressions of how the national government operates based on this document. Provide additional resources for students to study as appropriate. Invite students to share their ideas.
3. Next, bring students to the library or provide access to the Internet sites listed in the Internet Connection section in order for them to do additional research on federalism and our national government structure. Introduce terms including “separation of power” and “checks and balances.”
4. Distribute the We the People Planning Sheet and ask students to use the available resources to complete the government outline.
5. Before moving to the computer, be sure that students have provided detailed descriptions on the We the People Planning Sheet.

At the Computer

1. Direct students to the We the People Template and instruct them to rename and save the file in the appropriate location.
2. Next, tell students to use the We the People Planning Sheet as a guide in completing the We the People Template and adding the suitable text in the symbols provided. Point out the helpful notes available on the Template to assist them in completing their diagrams.
3. Remind students that they can switch to **Outline** view and easily enter detailed information or add notes to their data.
4. Invite students to use the **RapidFire** tool to add more symbols to their diagrams. They can also use the **Symbol** library to add clip art.
5. Tell students to print their government maps and begin drafting an essay describing their national government leadership and structure.

Other Great Activities

- Use the We the People Template to map the state or local government structure.
- Plan a re-enactment of the Constitutional Convention in order for students to understand better the process by which our national government was formed.

Internet Connection

<http://bensguide.gpo.gov/>

Browse Ben's Guide for a variety of lesson-planning ideas and a closer look at teaching government to kids.

<http://www.teengov.org/>

View this interactive site with lots of government resources for students to explore on their own.

<http://www.loc.gov/>

Visit the Library of Congress site to view historical records and get a first-hand look at our government in action.

<http://www.whitehouse.gov>

This site offers a peek into the daily workings of the White House.



Tips & Timesavers

- If you want to move a number of objects as one unit, you can group them by selecting the objects you want to group and choosing **Group** from the **Symbol** menu.
- When you switch to **Outline** view, the **Outline toolbar** appears at the top of your screen. The menus also change to provide you with the tools you need to create and edit outlines.