

Capital Field Trip

Mission: Take a field trip to the nation's capital. Enter each building, read the Constitution's own words on the walls, and figure out which branch works where and what power each one has.

Big question: How does the Constitution divide power among the three branches of government?

★ Warm-up: Branch charades

Which branch?

Makes the rules ✓ **Legislative.**

Enforces the rules ✓ **Executive.**

Key vocabulary

Legislative branch	Congress; makes laws.
Executive branch	The President; carries out laws.
Judicial branch	The courts; interpret laws.
Preamble	The introduction to the Constitution.
Separation of powers	Dividing government power among branches.

1 Box 1

Start at the Archives

In the simulator: Enter the National Archives and examine both objects.

What does "We the People" tell us about the government's power?

☐ It comes from the people ☐ It comes from the President ☐ It comes from Britain

✓ **It comes from the people**

2 Box 2

Tour the branches

In the simulator: Enter all 5 buildings and collect at least 9 objects.

What did you notice?

3 Box 3

Branch chart

Complete the chart.

Branch	Building	Main job
Legislative		
Executive		
Judicial		

4 Box 4

The Preamble

Which goals are in the Preamble? Choose all.

Choose all that apply.

☐ Establish justice ☐ Provide for the common defense ☐ Promote the general welfare ☐ Make everyone rich

✓ **Establish justice; Provide for the common defense; Promote the general welfare**

Why two houses?

Why does Congress have both a Senate (2 per state) and a House (based on population)?

☐ It was a compromise so both small and large states had power ☐ So there are more jobs

☐ Because Britain did it

✓ **It was a compromise so both small and large states had power**

5 Box 5

Separation of powers (RACE)

Why does the Constitution divide power among three branches? Quote the Constitution.

Answer

Look for: Explains dividing power; at least 12 words

Cite

Look for: an exact quote from the text; at least 10 words

Explain

Look for: Names a branch; at least 12 words

6 Box 6

Legend: Washington's example Legend only

Why was Washington's choice to step down after two terms important for a country that had just escaped a king?

Look for: Connects to limiting power; at least 20 words



Exit ticket: answer the big question in your own words

How does the Constitution divide power among the three branches of government?

Look for: The Constitution divides power: Congress (Capitol) makes laws, the President (White House) carries them out, and the Supreme Court interprets them. The Preamble shows the government's power comes from "We the People."

Completion codes

Students see a code like **ABC-I3** when they finish. The first part must match below. The letter is the level (E = Explorer, I = Investigator, L = Legend), and the number at the end is how many stars they earned.

Level	Code starts with
 Explorer	1LK-E
 Investigator	2C3-I
 Legend	1EF-L

! Watch for these misconceptions

- "The President is the boss of the whole government." The three branches are equal and check each other.
- "The Bill of Rights gives people rights." It protects rights people already have from government interference.
- "Freedom of speech means you can say anything anywhere with no consequences." It limits government, not every consequence.