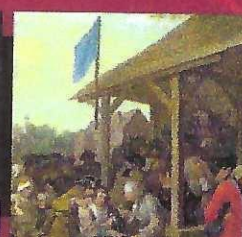


networks

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- ✓ **BIOGRAPHY** Sandra Day O'Connor
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- ✓ **SLIDE SHOW** The Oval Office



Lesson 2

Government and the People

ESSENTIAL QUESTION *How do new ideas change the way people live?*

IT MATTERS BECAUSE

In a nation where the people rule, citizens must understand their government and their rights and responsibilities.

The Federal Government

GUIDING QUESTION *What are the three branches of government?*

To achieve a separation of powers, the Constitution divides the federal government into three branches. They are called the legislative, executive, and judicial branches.

The Nation's Legislature

Congress is the legislative branch of government. It has two houses—the House of Representatives and the Senate. Currently the House has 435 voting members and 6 nonvoting delegates from the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico, Guam, American Samoa, the Virgin Islands, and the Northern Mariana Islands. Representatives, who must be at least 25 years old, serve two-year terms. There is no limit to the number of terms a person can serve.

The number of representatives from each state is based on the state's population. States with more people have more representatives in Congress, though every state has at least one representative. The federal government resets each state's share of the 435 House seats every 10 years. A state's number of representatives may go up or down depending on population changes.

(l) JEWEL SAMAD/AFP/Getty Images; (d) iStockphoto.com; (c) William Hogan/Getty Images; (r) Zach Boyden-Holmes/Getty Images

New York Academic Standards

7.4c, 7.5b

Reading **HELPS** **CCSS**

Taking Notes: Summarizing

Write a short summary of the job of each branch of government as you read along. Then compare how each branch differs from the other two.

Content Vocabulary

- **judicial review**
- **naturalization**
- **due process**
- **equal protection**

The Senate has 100 senators, two from each state. Senators must be 30 years old, and they serve six-year terms. Only a third of the seats come up for election every two years. As with House members, there are no term limits for Senators.

Article I of the Constitution describes the role of Congress. Congress makes the nation's laws. These laws are not just rules for behavior. Congress passes laws that impose taxes, authorize the spending of money, and create government programs. Congress also has the job of declaring war.

Both houses of Congress must agree on a bill, or proposed law. Once both houses do this, the bill goes to the president. If the president signs the bill, it becomes law.

The Executive Branch

The executive branch is led by the president and vice president, who each serve four-year terms. It also includes the president's cabinet, or top advisers, and many other offices, departments, and agencies. The executive branch's main job is to **administrate**, or carry out, the laws passed by Congress. The president does, however, propose laws to Congress.

The president has many other powers laid out in Article II of the Constitution. These include directing foreign policy, naming ambassadors, and negotiating treaties with other nations. The president is also the commander-in-chief of the armed forces.

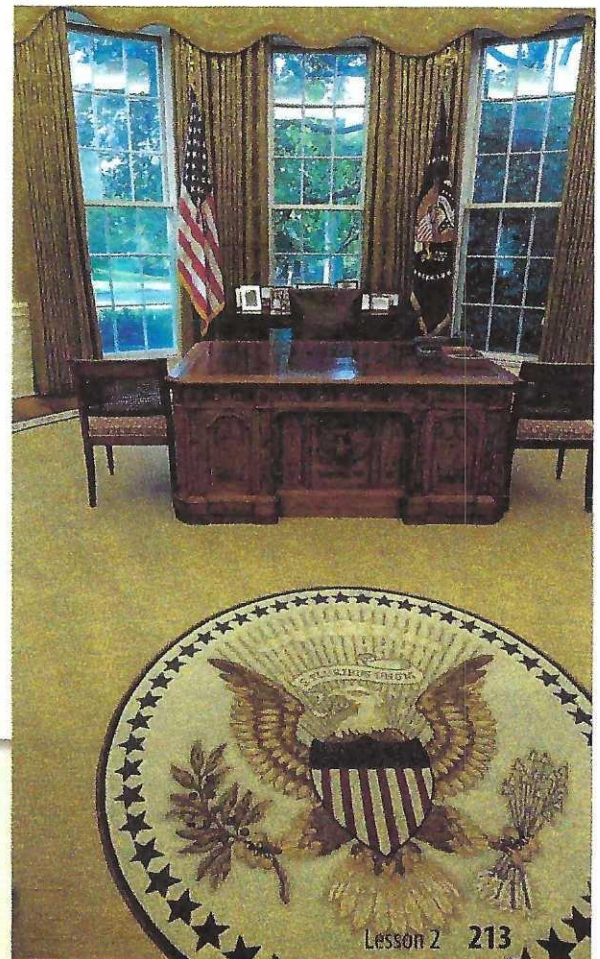
The Judicial Branch

Article III of the Constitution establishes a Supreme Court and allows for Congress to create lower courts. Congress has established district courts, which are the main trial courts for the federal government, and appeals courts, which hear cases on appeal from lower courts. There are several other types of federal courts as well. For example, there are special federal courts for hearing bankruptcy cases. Bankruptcy is a legal process for people or businesses that cannot pay off their debts.

The Supreme Court is at the top of the United States legal system. It rules on only the most difficult legal questions, and its rulings are never appealed.

The Supreme Court also has the power of **judicial review**. This means that the Court can review the actions of the executive and legislative branches to determine whether or not they violate the Constitution.

The Oval Office is the official office of the president of the United States.



judicial review power of the court to judge whether or not actions of other branches are constitutional

Academic Vocabulary
administrate to carry out

BIOGRAPHY



Sandra Day O'Connor
(1930 –)

In his 1980 election campaign, Ronald Reagan promised to name the first woman justice to the Supreme Court. During his first year in office, a vacancy opened on the Court. Reagan chose Sandra Day O'Connor, an Arizona appeals court judge, to fill the vacancy. O'Connor served as a justice until 2006. In an interview, she discussed the increased opportunities for women she had witnessed: "When I went to law school, about 1 percent of all law students were women. And last year, over 50 percent were."

► CRITICAL THINKING

Describing What view does Sandra Day O'Connor express about the progress of women's opportunities? Explain.

Members are nominated by the president and approved by Congress. Today the Supreme Court is made up of nine justices—the chief justice and eight associate justices. The Constitution gave Congress the power to set this number. Justices serve no fixed term. Unless removed for bad behavior, they stay on the bench until they retire or die.

The main duties of the justices are to hear and rule on cases they choose from among the thousands that are presented to them each year. They listen to arguments, and then they must present and explain their decision—called the Court's opinion. This opinion is then used by lower courts in making their rulings.

✓ PROGRESS CHECK

Identifying What parts of the Constitution discuss the establishment and duties of the three branches of our federal government?

What it Means to be a Citizen

GUIDING QUESTION *What are the rights and elements of participation of American citizens?*

Citizens of the United States enjoy certain rights and liberties. Being a citizen also involves some responsibilities.

Our Rights

Our rights fall into three main categories: The right to be protected from unfair government actions, the right to be treated equally with others, and the right to enjoy basic freedoms.

Our government must treat people fairly and according to clear rules. This is spelled out in the Fifth Amendment, which says no one shall "be deprived of life, liberty, or property, without due process of law." **Due process** means the government must follow established procedures in taking action against a citizen.

The Fourteenth Amendment guarantees all people **equal protection** of the laws. This principle means all people, regardless of race, religion, or political beliefs, must receive the same treatment under the law.

The First Amendment outlines many of our basic freedoms. These include freedom of religion, freedom of speech and of the press, freedom of assembly, and freedom to petition the government. The Framers knew that in a free society in which the people rule, people must be able to share ideas.

Reading HELPDESK



due process the legal rules and procedures the government must observe before depriving a person of life, liberty, or property
equal protection the equal application of the law regardless of a person's race, religion, political beliefs, or other qualities

naturalization
the process of becoming a citizen of another country

Academic Vocabulary

diminish reduce, make smaller

Our rights and freedoms have some limits. For example, government can limit our freedom of speech or our right to hold a protest if it threatens public health or safety. Also, one person's exercise of his or her rights cannot take away the rights of other people. Limits on rights and freedoms must be applied equally to all people.

The Duties and Responsibilities of Citizenship

A citizen is a person who owes loyalty to a nation and is entitled to its protection. For the most part, anyone born on U.S. soil is automatically a U.S. citizen. U.S. soil includes American territories and military bases around the world.

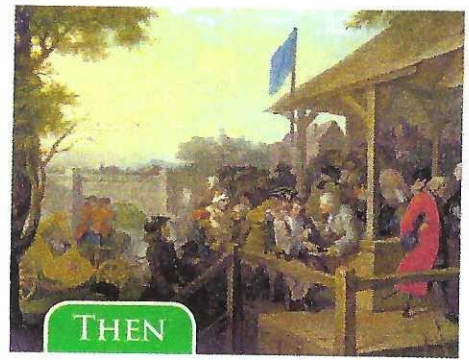
Citizenship is also granted to anyone born outside of the United States if one parent is a U.S. citizen. A person who was born in another country can become a citizen through the process called **naturalization** (NA•chuh•ruh•lih•ZAY•shuhn).

With citizenship comes duties and responsibilities. Duties are things we must do, while responsibilities are things we should do. Citizens have a duty to obey the law, to pay taxes, and to sit on a jury if called. Another key duty is defending the country. All males 18 and older must register with the government in case they are needed to serve in the military.

Responsibilities are things a person should do, though they may not be required by law. However, if people do not fulfill their responsibilities as citizens, the quality of our government and communities is **diminished**. Exercising the right to vote is probably the most important responsibility of a citizen. Voting allows you to participate in government and guide its direction.

✓ PROGRESS CHECK

Contrasting What is the difference between a duty and a responsibility? Why should citizens fulfill both?



Early in United States history, voting was generally limited to white men who owned property. Today, the right to vote is available to most citizens 18 years of age or older.



► CRITICAL THINKING

Drawing Conclusions Why do you think the people of the United States have steadily expanded the eligibility to vote?

LESSON 2 REVIEW



Review Vocabulary

1. Write a brief paragraph that includes the following terms:
 - a. due process
 - b. equal protection
2. Explain the significance of these terms:
 - a. judicial review
 - b. naturalization

Answer the Guiding Questions

3. **Summarizing** How does a person become a citizen of the United States?
4. **Describing** What are the three branches of government, and what are their roles in the government?
5. **Explaining** Explain how our freedoms help people become more effective and knowledgeable citizens.
6. **NARRATIVE** In the United States, voting is considered a responsibility. Should the United States make voting a duty and require all citizens to vote? Write a short essay that supports your position.