Unit 1: Executive Branch

Content Area: **Social Studies**
Course(s): **Civics**
Time Period: **Semester 1 & 2**
Length: **4 Weeks**
Status: **Published**

Standards

6.1.12.CivicsPD.1.a	Use multiple sources to analyze the factors that led to an increase in the political rights and participation in government.
6.1.12.CivicsPI.2.a	Prepare and articulate a point of view about the importance of individual rights, separation of powers, and governmental structure in New Jersey's 1776 constitution and the United States Constitution.
6.1.12.CivicsPI.2.b	Examine the emergence of early political parties and their views on centralized government and foreign affairs and compare these positions with those of today's political parties.
6.1.12.CivicsPD.2.a	Compare and contrast the arguments of Federalists and Anti-Federalists during the ratification debates and assess their continuing relevance.
6.1.12.CivicsPR.2.a	Use primary sources to explain how judicial review made the Supreme Court an influential branch of government and construct an argument regarding the continuing impact of the Supreme Court today.
6.1.12.CivicsPI.3.a	Analyze primary and secondary sources to determine the extent to which local and state issues, publications, and the rise of interest group and party politics impacted the development of democratic institutions and practices.
6.1.12.CivicsPI.3.b	Describe how the Supreme Court increased the power of the national government and promoted national economic growth during this era.
6.1.12.CivicsDP.3.a	Compare and contrast the successes and failures of political and social reform movements in New Jersey and the nation during the Antebellum period (i.e., the 1844 State Constitution, abolition, women's rights, and temperance).
6.1.12.CivicsDP.3.b	Judge the fairness of government treaties, policies, and actions that resulted in Native American migration and removal.
6.1.12.CivicsDP.3.c	Examine the origins of the antislavery movement and the impact of particular events, such as the Amistad decision, on the movement.
6.1.12.CivicsDP.4.a	Compare and contrast historians' interpretations of the impact of the 13th, 14th, and 15th Amendments on African American's ability to participate in influencing governmental policies.
6.1.12.CivicsDP.4.b	Analyze how ideas found in key documents contributed to demanding equality for all (i.e., the Declaration of Independence, the Seneca Falls Declaration of Sentiments and Resolutions, the Emancipation Proclamation, and the Gettysburg Address).
6.1.12.CivicsPR.4.a	Draw from multiple sources to explain the ways in which prevailing attitudes, socioeconomic factors, and government actions (i.e., the Fugitive Slave Act and Dred Scott Decision) in the North and South (i.e., Secession) led to the Civil War.
6.1.12.CivicsDP.5.a	Analyze the effectiveness of governmental policies and of actions by groups and individuals to address discrimination against new immigrants, Native Americans, and African Americans.
6.1.12.CivicsDP.6.a	Use a variety of sources from multiple perspectives to document the ways in which women organized to promote government policies designed to address injustice, inequality, and workplace safety (i.e., abolition, women's suffrage, and the temperance movement).

6.1.12.CivicsDP.6.b	Relate the creation of African American advocacy organizations (i.e., the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People) to United States Supreme Court decisions (i.e., Plessy v. Ferguson) and state and local governmental policies.
6.1.12.CivicsPR.6.a	Use a variety of sources from multiple perspectives to evaluate the effectiveness of Progressive reforms in preventing unfair business practices and political corruption and in promoting social justice.
6.1.12.CivicsDP.7.a	Evaluate the impact of government policies designed to promote patriotism and to protect national security during times of war on individual rights (i.e., the Espionage Act and the Sedition Amendment).
6.1.12.CivicsHR.8.a	Analyze primary and secondary sources to explain how social intolerance, xenophobia, and fear of anarchism led to restrictive immigration and refugee laws, and the violation of the human rights of individuals and groups.
6.1.12.CivicsPR.10.a	Analyze how the Supreme Court has interpreted the Constitution to define and expand individual rights and use evidence to document the long-term impact of these decisions on the protection of civil and human rights.
6.1.12.CivicsPR.10.b	Assess the effectiveness of governmental policies enacted during the New Deal period in protecting the welfare of individuals (i.e., FDIC, NLRB, and Social Security).
6.1.12.CivicsDP.11.a	Use a variety of sources to determine if American policies towards the Japanese during WWII were a denial of civil rights.
6.1.12.CivicsHR.11.a	Assess the responses of the United States and other nations to the violation of human rights that occurred during the Holocaust and other genocides.
6.1.12.CivicsHR.11.b	Explain the reasons for the creation of the United Nations, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, and evaluate the effectiveness of United Nations' human rights policies and the commitment of the United States to them.
6.1.12.CivicsPI.13.a	Craft an argument as to the effectiveness of the New Jersey Constitution of 1947, New Jersey Supreme Court decisions (i.e., Hedgepeth and Williams v. Trenton Board of Education), and New Jersey's laws in eliminating segregation and discrimination.
6.1.12.CivicsDP.13.a	Analyze the effectiveness of national legislation, policies, and Supreme Court decisions in promoting civil liberties and equal opportunities (i.e., the Civil Rights Act, the Voting Rights Act, the Equal Rights Amendment, Title VII, Title IX, Affirmative Action, Brown v. Board of Education, and Roe v. Wade).
6.1.12.CivicsPI.14.a	Draw from multiple perspectives to evaluate the effectiveness and fairness of the processes by which local, state, and national officials are elected.
6.1.12.CivicsPI.14.b	Use case studies and evidence to evaluate the effectiveness of the checks and balances system in preventing one branch of national government from usurping too much power during contemporary times.
6.1.12.CivicsPI.14.c	Analyze how the Supreme Court has interpreted the Constitution to define and expand individual rights and use evidence to document the long-term impact of these decisions on the protection of civil and human rights.
6.1.12.CivicsCM.14.a	Use a variety of evidence, including quantitative data, to evaluate the impact community groups and state policies have had on increasing the youth vote.
6.1.12.CivicsPD.14.a	Draw from multiple perspectives and cite evidence to explain the conflicting ideologies and actions of political parties regarding spending priorities, the role of government in the economy, and social reforms.
6.1.12.CivicsDP.14.a	Draw from multiple perspectives and cite evidence to determine the extent to which nongovernmental organizations, special interest groups, third party political groups, and the media affect public policy.
6.1.12.CivicsPD.16.a	Construct a claim to describe how media and technology has impacted civic participation and deliberation.

6.1.12.CivicsPR.16.a	Analyze government efforts to address intellectual property rights, personal privacy, and other ethical issues in science, medicine, and business that arise from the global use of new technologies.

Enduring Understandings

1. The U.S. Constitution outlines the powers, responsibilities, and qualifications of the President.
2. Over time, the role of the Executive Branch has evolved and adapted to meet the nation's changing needs.
3. Presidents have at times expanded the powers of the office, leading to ongoing debate about the limits of executive authority.
4. Cabinet members serve as the President’s closest advisors and help shape national policy.
5. The Electoral College and the presidential election process have sparked significant public debate and controversy, especially in recent elections.
6. State and local governments also have executive leaders, such as governors and mayors, who carry out similar responsibilities within their jurisdictions.

Essential Questions

1. Do we follow what the Constitution says about who can be President and what the President can do?
2. How and why has the power of the Executive Branch expanded since the founding of the United States?
3. Should there be limits on presidential power? Who decides what those limits are?
4. How do the President’s advisors influence decision-making at the highest level of government?
5. Is the Electoral College an effective way to elect the President? Should it be reformed or replaced?
6. How do executive roles at the state and local level compare to those of the President?

Knowledge and Skills

Knowledge – Students will know:

- The constitutional requirements and powers of the President as outlined in Article II of the U.S. Constitution.
- The structure and function of the Executive Branch, including the roles of the President, Vice

President, and Cabinet.

- Historical examples of the expansion of presidential power and their implications.
- The role of the Cabinet and federal agencies is to advise the President and implement policy.
- How the Electoral College functions and why it has been a source of controversy.
- The similarities and differences between executive roles at the federal, state, and local levels.

Skills – Students will be able to:

- Analyze primary sources, including Article II of the Constitution, executive orders, and presidential addresses.
- Evaluate arguments for and against the expansion of executive power.
- Trace the evolution of presidential power through key historical events and Supreme Court decisions.
- Compare the presidential election process to other forms of democratic elections, both domestically and globally.
- Construct arguments about the effectiveness and fairness of the Electoral College.
- Compare and contrast the roles and responsibilities of the President, governors, and mayors.
- Participate in simulations or debates that explore executive decision-making and leadership.

Transfer Goals

1. Students will be able to independently use their learning to:

   - Evaluate the role of executive leadership in a democratic society by applying constitutional principles and historical context to current events and civic debates.

   - Analyze and respond to the use of executive power in real-world contexts—such as executive orders, emergency actions, and presidential decisions—while considering the balance of power and the rule of law.

   - Engage in informed civic participation by understanding how presidents, governors, and mayors make decisions that impact their lives and by evaluating the effectiveness of the election systems that choose them.

   - Apply critical thinking skills to assess the legitimacy and limits of authority in diverse executive roles at the federal, state, and local levels, especially in moments of crisis or controversy.

   - Communicate well-reasoned arguments on constitutional and ethical questions related to executive

power, drawing on historical precedents, primary sources, and contemporary examples.

Resources

Digital Sources:

iCivics - Engaging Students in Meaningful Civic Learning

C3 Teaching - College, Career and Civic Life

New Jersey Department of State

US Government Services and Information

Bill of Rights Institute

The Choices Program - Brown University

Civics 101 - Podcast Platform

PBS News Hour

Supplemental Resources:

How to Become President - INFOGRAPHIC

Electoral College - Fast Facts

What are the Primaries and Caucuses

NJ Mock Election

I Side Political Quiz

Crash Course Government and Politics

News publications, including but not limited to NYTimes, Washington Post. Fox News, MSNBC, CNN

270towin.com

livingroomdata.com (Database of Campaign Ads)

School Those Rock videos

National Archives

Annenberg Classroom

Digital Civics Toolkit

icivics

Voices of Democracy

SCOTUS blog

Stanford History Education Group

WH Databases, AI (Gemini, Copilot, Magicshoolai), Pear Deck

Web-based resources including but not limited to digital media (SIFT method), primary sources, peer reviews, historical documents and writings of historians

s.

Assessments

https://docs.google.com/document/d/1mKgdwpriGuRcVHIVCJUdBEk7lih12Q0ckKSTC4TMUXs/edit

Modifications

https://docs.google.com/document/d/1ODqaPP69YkcFiyG72fIT8XsUIe3K1VSG7nxuc4CpCec/edit