Unit 3: Judicial Branch

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

Standards

6.1.12.CivicsPI.1.a	Explain how British North American colonies adapted the British governance structure to fit their ideas of individual rights, economic growth, and participatory government.
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.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.

Enduring Understandings

- Article III of the U.S. Constitution establishes the Judicial Branch and grants it the power to interpret laws and ensure justice under the Constitution.

- The U.S. court system is hierarchical, with the Supreme Court serving as the highest authority on constitutional interpretation.

- The principle of judicial review, established in *Marbury v. Madison*, gives courts the authority to strike down laws and executive actions that violate the Constitution.

- The judiciary is intended to be an independent branch of government, insulated from political pressure, but it is not entirely immune from influence.

- Landmark Supreme Court decisions have had profound and lasting impacts on civil liberties, civil rights, and public policy.

- Judicial decisions can evolve over time as interpretations of the Constitution change in response to societal shifts and legal arguments.

Essential Questions

1. What is the role of the judicial branch in the United States government, and how does it balance the powers of the executive and legislative branches?

2. How does the process of judicial review empower the Supreme Court, and what are its implications for American law and society?

3. What are the different levels of the court system, and how do they function within the broader judicial framework?

4. In what ways do landmark Supreme Court cases reflect societal values and changes in American culture?

5. How do judges and justices make decisions, and what factors influence their rulings in court cases?

6. What role does the judicial branch play in protecting individual rights and liberties, and how has this role evolved over time?

Knowledge and Skills

Students will know:

- The structure and function of the federal and state court systems.
- The roles of trial courts, appellate courts, and the U.S. Supreme Court.
- The process of judicial appointments, including the nomination and confirmation of justices.
- The significance and application of judicial review.
- The historical context and constitutional impact of landmark Supreme Court cases (e.g., Brown v. Board, Roe v. Wade, Miranda v. Arizona, Obergefell v. Hodges).
- The difference between civil and criminal law and the procedures in each.
- The balance between judicial independence and accountability.

Students will be able to:

- Interpret and analyze primary sources such as court opinions and constitutional clauses.
- Evaluate the reasoning and implications of landmark Supreme Court decisions.
- Distinguish between federal and state jurisdiction and between civil and criminal cases.
- Trace the path a case takes through the court system to the Supreme Court.
- Engage in simulations (e.g., mock trials or appellate arguments) to apply legal principles in practice.
- Debate the impact of judicial philosophy (e.g., originalism vs. living Constitution) on court rulings.
- Identify how court decisions have expanded or limited individual rights over time.

Transfer Goals

Students will be able to independently use their learning to:

1. Evaluate the role of the courts in upholding constitutional principles and protecting individual rights in a democratic society.
2. Interpret the impact of judicial decisions on public policy and daily life, recognizing how Supreme Court rulings shape national debates and local actions.
3. Engage with the legal system as informed citizens, understanding their rights and responsibilities and knowing how to navigate legal processes if needed.
4. Critically analyze court rulings and judicial behavior, including how justices' interpretations

and values influence constitutional outcomes.

5. Apply constitutional reasoning to contemporary legal and political issues, using precedent and constitutional principles to form and defend positions.

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:

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

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

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The Lobbyists Playbook (60 Minutes)

GOPOPRO - Increasing the Diffusion of Politcal Understanding Through Civic Engagement

Project Citizen

Assessments

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

Modifications

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