

Branches of the United States Government

The United States government is organized into three branches: the Executive Branch, the Legislative Branch, and the Judicial Branch.

Each branch has its own responsibility. The branches work together so that one person or group does not have all of the power, not even the President!

A plan has been set up so that each branch keeps an eye on the decisions made by the other branches. This plan is called "checks and balances."

The **Executive Branch** is run by the President. A new president and vice president are elected every four years. The President chooses a group of people to help him make decisions. This group of people is called the Cabinet. Each member of the Cabinet directs a certain part of the government. These parts include education, health and welfare, agriculture, energy, and defense. The Executive Branch's job is to enforce laws. They also direct the military.

The **Legislative Branch** is led by Congress. Congress includes two groups: the House of Representative and the Senate. There are members of Congress from every state. The people in each state elect the people who will represent them in Congress. Congress' most important job is to make laws for our country. Congress also has the power to make money and to declare war on other countries.

The **Judicial Branch** is led by the Supreme Court. The Supreme Court is made up of nine people, called Justices. The Supreme Court decides if laws are constitutional, if the laws agree with the constitution. There are many smaller courts around the country that make decisions on some issues. The biggest decisions are made by the Supreme Court. Their decisions can impact the entire country.

Checks and Balances:

Each branch keeps an eye on the other branches. This way, one person or group does not have all of the power.

How the Legislative Branch is checked:

- The President can veto, or say no to, a law that Congress makes.
- The Supreme Court can overrule a law that Congress makes, if they decide that the law does not agree with the constitution.

How the Executive Branch is checked:

- Congress can impeach the President. That means that they can vote to get rid of a President if he commits a crime.
- The Supreme Court can declare that something a President does is unconstitutional.

How the Judicial Branch is checked:

- Justices are appointed to the Supreme Court by the President.
- Supreme Court Justices that have been appointed by the President have to be approved by the Senate.