

Teacher:

**Subject / Course:** ELA, History

Date:

**Unit Title:** Branches of Government

Grade:

**Duration:** 30–45 minutes

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## Mississippi Social Studies Framework:

### 4th Grade Mississippi Studies

#### DOMESTIC AFFAIRS

1. Understand the purpose, roles, and responsibilities of state and federal government.
  - a. Distinguish among the three branches of government and their roles at local, county, state, and national levels. **(DOK 2)**

#### CULTURE

6. Understand diversity in Mississippi.
  - c. Analyze the impact and interactions among all groups throughout the history of Mississippi (e.g., European American, African American, Asian American, Native American, Hispanic, etc.). **(DOK 3)**

#### CCRS:

- RI.4.4** Determine the meaning of general academic and domain-specific words or phrases in a text relevant to a grade 4 topic or subject area.
- W.4.2d** Use precise language and domain specific vocabulary to inform about or explain the topic.

#### Summary of Unit:

**Branches of Government.** Discuss the three branches of government. Introduce the “Good Ole Boys” poster to discuss achievements of Mississippians.

#### Lesson Objectives:

- Explain the differences in the three branches of government
- Create a tree map to organize information
- Discuss influential members of Mississippi government

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## Lesson Structure:

- The students will read the “How Our Government Works” handout to learn about the three branches of government.
  - The teacher will discuss the branches of government to ensure understanding. Make sure to highlight important vocabulary words. Students will need to use these in their tree map.
  - The students will complete the tree map activity to create a map of the branches to show their understanding and compare the branches. This can be done independently, in pairs, or small groups.
  - The teacher will discuss with the whole group and create a class tree map on the board to ensure all misunderstandings are cleared up.
  - The teacher will show the “Good Ole Boys” *Mississippi, Believe It!*<sup>TM</sup> poster to the class. The class will read the poster and discuss the accomplishments that have been made by the government officials in Mississippi’s recent history.
  - The teacher can extend this lesson by having the students discuss the jobs of the people on the poster, then add their jobs and names to the class tree map.
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## Guiding Questions:

1. What three branches make up our government?
2. What is each branch’s job?
3. What is a law?
4. Why are tree maps important to help us understand a topic?

## Activity:

### Tree Map Activity:

The teacher will explain the directions on the “Government Tree Map” handout. The students can work independently, in pairs, or groups to complete the handout. Allow the students to use the handout to fill out their tree map.

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**Key Vocabulary:**

- Legislative Branch
- Executive Branch
- Judicial Branch
- Law
- Congress
- Senate
- House of Representatives
- Cabinet
- Court

**Resources & Materials**

- Whiteboard
- Charts/Maps
- Computer
- Smartboard
- Video/Audio
- Textbook Pages
- Workbook Pages
- Handout
- Manipulatives
- Other:

**Assessments:**

- Pre-Test
- Post-Test
- Observation
- Oral
- Writing Assessment
- Journal
- Homework
- Demonstration
- Other:

## How our Government Works!

A group of people, called delegates, met at the Constitutional Convention to discuss problems with the government. They decided that it would not be fair to allow one person, or even a few people, to make decisions for the people in our country. They decided to split the government into three branches called the executive, legislative, and judicial branches. This would give the power to many people so they could share the responsibility of making decisions.



*Chief Phylliss Anderson*

The president of the United States leads the executive branch. He gets help from the vice president and Cabinet members to carry out the laws. The executive branch commands the military. The president can also veto or say no to new laws the legislative branch wants to make.

The legislative branch makes the laws. This branch is made up of congress that is separated into two groups. The House of Representatives and the Senate. Citizens of the United States vote for people in congress. This branch also deals with spending money and can declare war.



The judicial branch makes sure that the laws made by the legislative branch are followed. This branch is made up of the court system. Judges decide if someone has broken the law and makes a ruling if they are guilty or not guilty.

These three branches work together to create a government that has balance. One branch depends on another to work. One branch does not rule over any other branch.

# Branches of Government



## Government Tree Map

Use what you have read to create a tree map explaining the three branches of government. Use important words and have at least four facts about each branch.

