

The following instructional plan is part of a GaDOE collection of Unit Frameworks, Performance Tasks, examples of Student Work, and Teacher Commentary for the Fourth Grade Social Studies.

UNIT # 7 – “Our American Government”

Elaborated Unit Focus

In this unit, students will learn how the government of the United States operates. Students will use the connecting theme of *distribution of power* to learn the role of the branches of government and how the federal system of government operates. By learning about *rule of law*, students will understand how laws are created, enforced, and protect a citizen’s right.

Standards/Elements

SS4H5 The student will analyze the challenges faced by the new nation.

c. Identify the three branches of the U. S. government as outlined by the Constitution, describe what they do, how they relate to each other (checks and balances and separation of power), and how they relate to the states.

SS4CG1c The student will describe the meaning of

c. The federal system of government in the U.S.

SS4CG2 The student will explain the importance of the First Amendment to the U. S. Constitution.

SS4CG3 The student will describe the functions of government.

- a. Explain the process for making and enforcing laws.
- b. Explain managing conflicts and protecting rights.
- c. Describe providing for the defense of the nation.
- d. Explain limiting the power of people in authority.
- e. Explain the fiscal responsibility of government.

SS4CG4 The student will explain the importance of Americans sharing certain central democratic beliefs and principles, both personal and civic.

- a. Explain the necessity of respecting the rights of others and promoting the common good.
- b. Explain the necessity of obeying reasonable laws/rules voluntarily, and explain why it is important for citizens in a democratic society to participate in public (civic) life (staying informed, voting, volunteering, communicating with public officials).

Enduring Understandings/Essential Questions

Distribution of Power: The student will understand that distribution of power in government is a product of existing documents and laws combined with contemporary values and beliefs.

- Why is government necessary?
- Why is the Constitution important?
- How does the Constitution organize our government?
- Why does the federal government have certain powers?
- Why does the state government have certain powers?
- Why are some of these powers shared by the federal and state governments?
- How is government supposed to carry out its business?
- How are people chosen to serve in government?
- Why is it necessary to have limits on the power of a government?
- How do the branches work together?
- Why is there a balance of power in our system of government?
- How do citizens stay informed?
- How do citizens communicate with public officials?
- How might a citizen volunteer?
- Why did the framers of the constitution include "checks and balances" in our nation's government?
- Why must citizens in a democracy be informed and educated?
- Why is it important for citizens in a democracy to participate in civic life?

Rule of Law: The student will understand that in a democracy, rule of law influences the behavior of citizens, establishes procedures for making policies, and limits the power of government.

K-5 EU: The student will understand that laws are made to keep people safe and explain what the government can and cannot do.

- How does the rule of law in a democracy influence the behavior of its citizens?
- How does the rule of law in a democracy establish procedures for making policies?
- How does the Constitution protect our basic rights?
- Why are laws needed?
- How does Congress make a law?
- How are laws enforced?
- Why is it important to respect the rights of others?
- Why is it important for our government to be concerned with the common good?
- How does the rule of law provide for our country's defense?
- How does the rule of law insure that the rights of others are respected?
- How does the rule of law insure the fiscal responsibility of the government?
- How does the rule of law insure citizens' rights to freedom of expression?
- How can a law be unfair?
- How can a law be changed?

*NOTE: The balanced assessment plan included in this unit is presented as a series of suggested activities. It is not expected that the teacher complete all assessments for a successful unit.

Balanced Assessment Plan

Description of Assessment	Standard/ Element	Type of Assessment
<p>Understanding the First Amendment</p> <p>Part One Students will analyze the words of the First Amendment using their textbook or the Education for Freedom website. The website breaks the First Amendment into the five categories that it covers:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Freedom of speech 2. Freedom of religion 3. Freedom of the press 4. Freedom of assembly <p>They will use the Attachment to guide their analysis.</p> <p>Part Two After reading each part, students will create a 5-stanza poem or rap that explains each right and connects it to a modern day example, i.e.:</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>Example of a Freedom of religion stanza:</i> <i>You can visit a mosque, a temple, or a church to pray</i> <i>Because James Madison and his pals said so one day</i> <i>In the First Amendment that tells ways we are free</i> <i>And lets ME decide who will be my holy emcee</i></p> <p>Students can use the attached guide to plan their poem or rap. Students can complete this activity in pairs or independently. If needed, students can use an online rhyming dictionary, such as the Rhyme Zone, to help them complete their poem or rap.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Attachment 1 First Amendment Analysis</i> • <i>Attachment 2 First Amendment Rap/Poem Guide</i> <p><u>Modifications:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Facilitate the analysis and rhyming tasks with a small teacher-led group • As an alternative task, allow students to illustrate the parts of the First Amendment using characters and thought bubbles • As a whole group, pull out key words and create a word bank of rhyming words for students to choose from as they write their raps and/or poems. 	<p>SS4CG2</p>	<p>Constructed response</p>

<p>The Three Branches</p> <p>Students will create a tree using pipe cleaners, twigs, or other materials. Their tree should have three main “branches” that are equal in size. Students decorate their tree with the names of the three branches of government (executive, legislative, and judicial) and a picture of the main building of that branch (U.S. Supreme Court, White House, and the Capitol). Students will then sort the "responsibility leaves" included on the <i>Three Branches Attachment</i> into the appropriate branch. Each leaf contains a responsibility of a particular branch of government. <i>An example of a leaf's statement is "Can ratify treaties."</i> Students can use their textbooks, trade books, encyclopedia, or the Internet to research and sort the "responsibility leaves" into their correct branch. Leaves can be hole- punched and wrapped into the pipe cleaner, paper clipped in a chain, or glued to the tree. Students can work independently, in pairs or small groups. After completion, students will decide which, if any, of the three branches they believe has the most responsibility.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Attachment 3 The Three Branches leaves</i> <p><u>Modifications:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Allow students to use clip art for pictures of buildings • Before students begin to research the three branches of government, help students connect by analyzing the structure of the "government" within the school building and the responsibilities of each "branch": principal, assistant principal, teachers. • Work with a small group to assist students as they sort through information sources to classify their leaves under each branch 	<p>SS4H5</p>	<p>Selected Response</p>
<p>The Common Good</p> <p>The main purpose of a republican form of government is to promote the common good. The common good means what is best for the community as a whole. When a government is trying to help everyone in a country, we say it is serving the common good. The common good is what is good for everyone in the country, not just a few people.</p> <p>In small groups, the students brainstorm school wide situations in which people disagree. <i>Example situations: complaints about "unfair" rules, wearing uniforms, homework policies, discipline measures, etc.</i> Using input from the small groups, a class list of school wide situations in which people disagree is created. These disagreement situations are listed on separate index cards. Each group draws one index card. The groups discuss, write and share solutions for the situation they drew. Their solution should attempt to do what is best for everyone and address the common good of the school community.</p>	<p>SS4CG4a</p>	<p>Constructed Response</p>

<p><u>Modifications:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students may use a problem/solution chart to help them organize their thoughts Decision Making Chart. • Display a checklist of solution criteria for students to refer to. Checklist items might include: 1) The solution benefits the majority of the people, 2) the solution is not unfair to anyone, 3) the solution is possible, 4) the solution does not discriminate against particular groups of people. 		
<p>It's the Law Students will imagine that their class is a town and they have been chosen to help make the laws for the town. With a partner, students will create two safety laws. For each law, students must provide one reason the law is necessary. They should create and describe two consequences for breaking the law. Students will share their laws and consequences with others in discussion groups.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "How Laws are Made" <p><u>Modifications:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use the glossary provided on the link to preview key vocabulary words prior to the activity • Integrate the use of a flow chart for students to complete during and/or after the online activity • Assign peer partners • Prior to the online activity, stage a scenario where the class is passing a new classroom rule using the same process as the government in passing new laws. 	SS4CG3a	Constructed response, dialogue and discussion
<p>The Federal System - National, State, or Shared Power Prior to studying our federal system of government, the teacher may ask "What does your government do for you?" After listing student responses, the teacher may select one response and ask "Does the federal government or state government provide this service?" The teacher may need to clarify that the federal government is the national government and makes decisions for the country whereas the state government makes decisions concerning the state.</p> <p>With a partner, students complete the <i>Federal System Activity</i>. Following completion of the partner activity, teacher and students confirm and adjust answers as needed. Discussion may follow and lead into examination of our federal system using the textbook, the Constitution, and other resources. The teacher may lead students to the realization that the powers given to the federal government, state government, or shared by both governments make sense because some issues are of national concern and decided for the entire country while more local concerns are decided by the state. The teacher may lead a closing discussion of why a federal system of government was created.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Attachment 4 - Federal System Activity</i> 	SS4CG1c	Dialogue and discussion, observation, selected response

<p><u>Modifications:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The teacher may facilitate a small group of struggling learners as they complete the <i>Federal System Activity</i> • Make sure students understand the difference between our country and our state. Use a large map of the U.S. map to give students some perspective. • To help students sort federal and state issues, use a t-chart with one column titled <i>federal</i> and the other titled <i>state</i>. As students present their responses to the question, "What does your government do for you?" add them to the chart. http://www.eduplace.com/graphicorganizer/pdf/tchart_eng.pdf 		
<p>The Importance of Civic Participation Students will role play a scene to show how lack of participation can cause unknown outcomes. After role playing, the teacher may follow up with a discussion of importance of involvement in public life and personal life. Each response in the role play represents citizen responsibilities of staying informed, voting, volunteering, and communicating with public officials.</p> <p>Role Play Select students to participate in the following scene. Have one student ask the question and have other students stand in front of the class and respond. You may create note cards with dialogue. Students may create their own scenario illustrating lack of participation.</p> <p>Scenarios</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. <i>Do you know the lunch choices for today?</i> <i>No, I haven't paid attention. (staying informed)</i> 2. <i>Have you made your lunch choice?</i> <i>No, I don't care. (voting)</i> 3. <i>Will you take the lunch money to the office?</i> <i>No, I don't think I'll do that. (volunteering)</i> 4. <i>Will you tell the lunch lady we cannot order lunch because we are out of order forms?</i> <i>No, I don't think I should do that. (communicating)</i> <p>The teacher may follow up scenario asking: Will you (the person in the scene) have lunch today? You may or may not. It may be what you want or it might not be. This is a simple scene but it portrays a bigger picture of what would happen if people take the same kind of attitude with public life. In order for our democracy to continue to be strong and to grow, we (the People) have to take part and be involved in it. Let's go back through the scene –</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Was the person informed? No. Is it important for citizens to be informed? (example: selecting a candidate, forming an opinion on a law/referendum) 2. Did the person select a lunch choice? No. Is it important for a person to vote? 	<p>SS4CG4b</p>	<p>Role play, discussion and dialogue</p>

<p>3. Did the person volunteer to get the job done? No. Is it important for people to volunteer within the community?</p> <p>4. Did the person communicate needs? No. Is it important for citizens to communicate their needs and wants?</p> <p>The teacher may then have students volunteer to come up and play the role as a cooperative classmate by replacing the uncooperative with cooperative responses. The teacher may continue lesson with the Citizen Responsibility Activity attached.</p> <p><u>Modifications:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Assign peer partners or facilitate a small group of struggling learners as they complete the activity 		
<p>Citizen Responsibility</p> <p>Involvement is very important to the strength and growth of our democratic country. What if we all said “I can’t do that” or “It’s not my responsibility”? We are given many rights and with those rights come responsibilities.</p> <p>Using the Civic Responsibility Organizer, students work in small groups to brainstorm and create a list of citizen responsibilities (voting, obeying the law, paying taxes, serving on a jury). After several minutes of working together, the groups share the list with the class. Using the Personal Responsibility Organizer, students work in small groups to brainstorm and create a list of personal responsibilities to support the community/country (education, respect for others, and involvement in clubs or organizations, setting a good example). After several minutes of working together, the groups share the list with the class.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>Attachment 5 - Civic Responsibility Organizer</i> <i>Attachment 6 – Personal Responsibility Organizer</i> <p><u>Modifications:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Help students to connect to the responsibility issue by having a discussion about home responsibilities and how the members of a household keep the household together by taking responsibility. Also discuss what happens when members are not responsible. 	<p>SS4CG4b</p>	<p>Constructed response</p>

Sample Performance Task

Distribution of Power: The student will understand that distribution of power in government is a product of existing documents and laws combined with contemporary values and beliefs.

Rule of Law: The student will understand that in a democracy, rule of law influences the behavior of citizens, establishes procedures for making policies, and limits the power of government.

Georgia Performance Standards:

H5c; CG1c; CG2; CG3a,b,c,d,e; CG4a,b

Young Teachers' Task Force: The United States Government in Action!

Congratulations! Your team has been selected to teach children visiting from foreign countries how the government of the United States works. For this special assignment, your team must prepare a **Democracy in Action Tri-board Display**. Your display must explain how our system of government works and identify current or historic examples of our democracy in action. You may use news articles, illustrations, photographs, political cartoons, or any other means to convey information about the following:

- The Three Branches of the U.S. Government
- The Federal System
- The Functions of the U.S. Government
- Civic Responsibility in a Representative Democracy

Your team will be given ten minutes to share your **Democracy in Action Tri-board Display** in a special diplomatic assembly. The oral presentation must include a clear and concise explanation of the materials on your display. Your team should be well-rehearsed and informative. A short question and answer time will follow the presentation. Remember, you are representing the children of the United States of America. Be prepared to respond thoughtfully to questions about how our democracy works and why the examples you chose depict specific ideas. Thank you for accepting this important assignment! As you know, it is the responsibility of the citizens in a democracy to participate in public life!

Modifications:

- Have students take on assigned topics within their teams so that special needs students can focus on one aspect of the content, and then consult with them regularly to monitor their progress, provide feedback, and assist with locating information sources.
- Provide a short list of information sources accessible from school such as websites, textbook pages, and non-fiction books.
- Allow students to type information on a word processor and print it for use on the tri-fold.
- As an alternative to writing paragraphs, suggest [graphic organizers](#) as a way to communicate information on the tri-fold. Help students select the type of organizer to use based on their topic and the information that they want to present.

Map and Globe Skills:

Information Processing Skills: 5,7,11

Content Rubric for Performance Task

<u>Criteria</u>	<u>Does Not Meet</u>	<u>Needs Improvement</u>	<u>Meets Standard</u>	<u>Exceeds Standard</u>
Explains and provides at least two examples of how the three branches of the U.S. government are organized and work	Incorrectly explains how the three branches of the U.S. government are organized and provides erroneous examples of how they work.	Partially explains and provides examples of how the three branches of the U.S. government are organized and provides.	Correctly explains and provides at least two examples of how the three branches of the U.S. government are organized and work.	In addition to meets, the students analyzes the importance of each branch by comparing the different responsibilities of each branch.
Explains how the U.S. federal system of government is organized and provides an example of its operations	Incorrectly explains and how the U.S. federal system is organized and provides insufficient example of how it operates.	Partially explains and provides an example of how the federal system is organized and operates.	Correctly explains and provides examples of how the federal system is organized and operates.	In addition to meets, the students analyzes how the U.S. federal system of government is organized by summarizing why we need shared powers between national and state levels.
Explains how the functions of the U.S. government operate and reflect the beliefs and ideals of a democratic society	Incorrectly explains how the functions of the U.S. government operate and reflect the beliefs and ideals of a democratic society.	Partially explains how the functions of the U.S. government operate and reflect the beliefs and ideals of a democratic society.	Correctly explains how the functions of the U.S. government operate and reflect the beliefs and ideals of a democratic society.	In addition to meets, the student analyzes how the functions of the U.S government operate and reflect an understanding of personal beliefs and ideals by explaining why it is important to participate in a democratic society.
Provides a minimum of two examples of how U.S. government functions and reflects the beliefs and ideals of a democratic society	Incorrectly uses two examples of how the functions of the U.S. government functions and reflects the beliefs and ideals of a democratic society.	Provides a minimum of two examples of the functions of the U.S. government but they reflect only a partially understanding the beliefs and ideals of a democratic society.	Correctly uses at least two examples of the functions of the U.S. government that reflect an understanding of the beliefs and ideals in a democratic society	In addition to meets, the student explains why those examples reflect the beliefs and ideals of a democratic society.
Describes and provides a minimum of two examples of civic responsibility in a democratic society	Incorrectly uses descriptions or examples of civic responsibility in a democratic society.	Provides a description and minimum of two examples of civic responsibility but they reflect only a partial understanding.	Correctly uses at least two examples of civic responsibility in a democratic society.	In addition to meets, the student explains how the examples demonstrate civic responsibility by describing how the civic responsibility relates to his/her life.

Product Rubric for Performance Task

<u>Criteria</u>	<u>Does Not Meet</u>	<u>Needs Improvement</u>	<u>Meets Expectation</u>	<u>Exceeds Expectation</u>
Uses standard written and oral English conventions	Errors impede understanding	Errors are present but do not impede understanding	Text and oral language is relatively free of errors	Text and oral language is free of errors
Oral presentation is focused and organized	Oral presentation lacks focus and organization	Oral presentation demonstrates loose organization and some focus	Oral presentation is generally organized and focused	Oral presentation is highly organized and focused
Backboard display is neat and attractive	Backboard display lacks eye-appeal	Backboard display has some eye-appeal	Back board display is neat and attractive	Backboard display is neat, attractive and exhibits special attention to detail.
Oral presentation is well-rehearsed and engaging	Oral presentation lacks preparation and fails to sustain the interest	Oral presentation shows some advance preparation and adequately sustains interest	Oral presentation is well-rehearsed and engaging	Oral presentation is well-rehearsed and engaging. Audience interest is high and enthusiastic

Resources for Unit

<http://bensguide.gpo.gov/3-5/index.html> - Ben's Guide to Government for Kids -
 Provides information, games and activities on a variety of government related topics.

This unit was created by Laurie Jones, Gina McGowan, Michelle Pinch, and Neena Knight and approved by the Social Studies Advisory Council and the Georgia DOE Social Studies Staff. It was last updated 8/27/08.

Attachment 1

First Amendment Analysis

Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion or prohibiting the free exercise thereof; or abridging the freedom of speech or of the press; or the right of the people peaceably to assemble, and to petition the government for a redress of grievances.

When was it created? _____

Who wrote the passage? _____

Who does it apply to? _____

Why was it written? _____

Why is this document important? _____

Find any unknown words and use a dictionary to record their meanings in the table below.

Unknown word	Dictionary definition	Definition in my words

First Amendment Rap

Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion or prohibiting the free exercise thereof; or abridging the freedom of speech or of the press; or the right of the people peaceably to assemble, and to petition the government for a redress of grievances.

1. Freedom of Religion stanza

2. Freedom of Speech stanza:

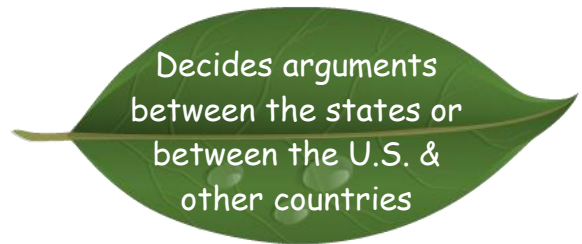
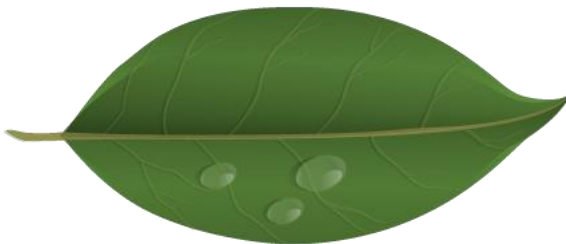
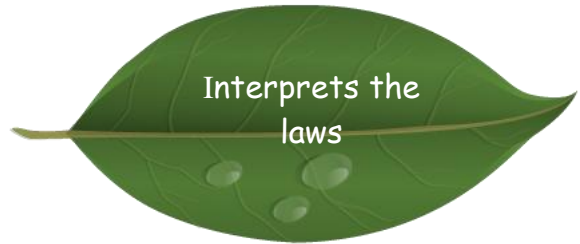
3. Freedom of the Press stanza:


4. Freedom of Assembly stanza:

5. The Right to Petition stanza:


Attachment 3

Three Branches Responsibility Leaves







Carries out
the laws



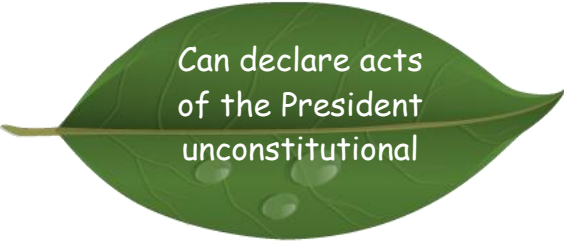
Can grant
pardons



Negotiates
treaties with
other countries




Can ratify
treaties




Can declare acts
of the President
unconstitutional



Recommends
appointments to
the federal
courts



Can declare
war




Recommends the
appointment of
ambassadors




Appropriates
money



Introduces
amendments to
the Constitution



Can override
vetoes



May increase
or decrease
taxes

FEDERAL SYSTEM ACTIVITY

1. With your partner, cut out the power cards.
2. Create a pile for federal, state, or shared powers.
3. Discuss each power with your partner and place each power card in appropriate pile - federal, state, or shared.
4. Wait until time is called to share your answers.

FEDERAL

STATE

SHARED

Prints money	Collect taxes	Controls trade between states	Provides national defense
Sets up court systems	Grants divorces and marriage licenses	Makes peace treaties	Declares war
Elections	School systems	Controls trade within state	Runs the Post Office

Attachment 5

CIVIC RESPONSIBILITY

These actions help make a democracy work

Attachment 6

PERSONAL RESPONSIBILITY

These actions help improve your life and the lives of others