

THE EXECUTIVE BRANCH

Is It Lonely at the Top?

No way! That's because in our government there is no "top." The President is our leader, but our government was specially designed so the executive branch must share power with the legislative and judicial branches.

Yeah, sure, but...

No, really! The Constitution of the United States gives the President "**executive power**," which means the President's job is to carry out laws passed by the legislative branch. The Constitution gives the President very few powers of his own. Most of the time, the

President has to work closely with the legislative branch in order to accomplish anything. For example, the President can appoint new justices to the Supreme Court... but only with the Senate's approval. Or the President can make treaties with

"Execute"
means **"to carry out"**

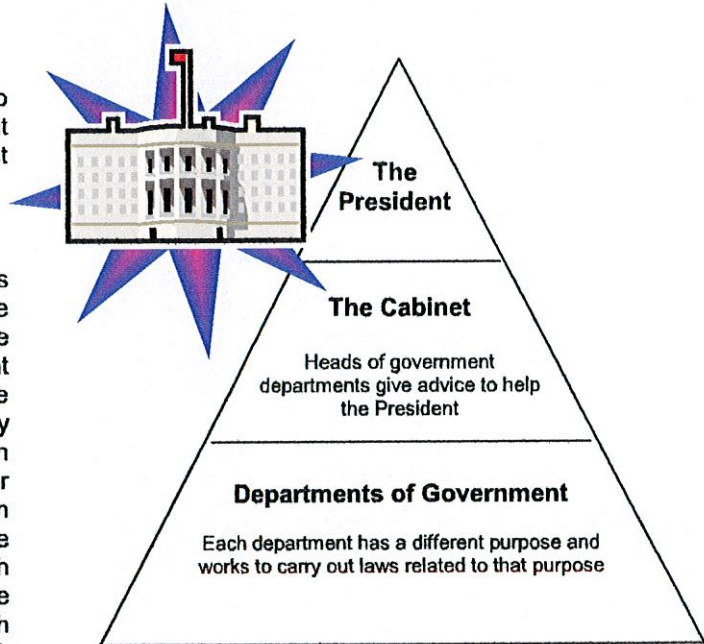
other countries... but only with the Senate's approval. The President has the power to order troops into battle, but only Congress can declare war. And the President can veto laws that Congress passes, but he cannot make laws.

Short End of the Stick?

Don't start feeling sorry for the President yet. The President has lots of special jobs. One of the most important is deciding which issues the country should focus on. There are many problems that need to be solved, and the President sets an **agenda** for the country by deciding which problems deserve the most attention. Then he will suggest ideas for laws that Congress should pass to help solve those problems. In the process, the President communicates with the American people about the issues he believes are important for the country. Often the President will hold a **press conference** to make announcements and answer questions from newspaper and television reporters. Also, once a year the President gives a **State of the Union Address** to discuss important issues facing our nation and what should be done about them.

But Wait—There's More!

As **Commander in Chief**, the President is in charge of the entire military. The President also has the power to pardon people who have committed crimes, which means they get to go free. In addition, when leaders of foreign countries visit the United States, the President receives them and makes them feel welcome.



Getting the Work Done

There's more to the executive branch than just the President. The executive branch is huge! That's because it's mostly made up of many **departments** that are in charge of carrying out different kinds of laws. For example, the Department of Education carries out education laws. The Department of Homeland Security carries out laws designed to secure our borders and keep the country safe from terrorism. Each department has lots of employees that do the everyday work of carrying out laws.

Advice, Please!

Nobody could carry out the laws of the United States all alone! That's why the President gets lots of advice from the people who are in charge of the departments. This group is called the **cabinet**. Each department head keeps the President updated about issues facing that department and offers advice about what should to be done to carry out the laws more effectively.

The most

To-Do List

- Set agenda
- Hold press conference
- Veto bill
- Meet with cabinet
- OK treaty with Senate
- Welcome foreign leader
- Suggest new law
- Run for reelection!

That was Fun—Can I Do It Again?

A President and Vice-President get elected as a team, and they serve a four-year term. At the end of the four years they can run for office again, and if they win they will serve four more years. Eight years is the limit, though—nobody is allowed to be President longer than that. A new President brings a new agenda for the country and chooses new leaders for each department of government.



Name _____

Date _____

A. That's Incorrect! Whoever wrote these sentences needs some help understanding the executive branch! Cross out the parts that are wrong and make corrections on the line provided.

The President's job is to carry out the laws he makes.

The executive branch is made up of only the President.

As Commander in Chief, the President is in charge of the entire Department of Education.

The President and Vice President get appointed to a four-year term.

The President doesn't need anyone's approval to appoint new Supreme Court justices.

A new President keeps the outgoing President's agenda and cabinet.

When foreign leaders visit our country, the President snubs them and gives them the cold shoulder.

Nobody would dare try to give advice to the President.

The Constitution gives the President total power over the government.

D	T	F	E	W	G	L	P	Y	S	A	C	H
U	N	R	C	Z	W	S	Y	H	T	J	O	Q
P	E	X	N	A	D	N	E	G	A	R	H	V
Y	D	H	E	T	B	E	G	I	T	T	E	F
U	I	S	R	X	V	I	M	E	E	T	I	D
R	S	N	E	L	E	R	N	L	O	J	Z	W
G	E	Z	F	C	X	C	R	E	F	K	X	G
F	R	N	N	I	X	L	U	C	T	M	F	N
D	P	H	O	D	Z	Z	O	T	H	X	D	S
U	E	A	C	D	P	J	F	E	E	S	J	L
P	C	D	S	G	R	G	K	D	U	A	X	C
B	I	V	S	L	R	A	Z	N	N	D	Q	H
P	V	I	E	J	W	N	P	R	I	U	A	X
N	A	C	R	O	L	G	V	L	O	H	K	F
H	D	E	P	A	R	T	M	E	N	T	S	Z

B. Word Search. Find and circle a word that matches each clue:

- Means "to carry out"
- How a person gets to become President
- Large units of government in charge of carrying out different kinds of laws
- The President's decision about which problems deserve the most attention
- When Congress passes a law, the President can choose to do this to reject it
- Number of years in one presidential term of office
- The President's yearly speech
- The group of people who advise the President
- Total number of years anybody can be President
- The President can do this for a person who committed a crime
- This person gets elected with the President
- What the cabinet gives the President

Mystery Word: One word is in the puzzle but not in the clue list. Write that word and its definition below:

our courts EXECUTIVE BRANCH SCRAMBLE!

Name _____

Directions:

The executive branch is made up of many departments. Each department has a mission and lots of agencies inside the department to help carry out the laws. The four departments in this list are all mixed up, and it's your job to re-organize them! Fill in the chart by finding a place for each department, mission, and agency on the list. And don't forget who's in charge!

- Food Safety and Inspection Service (*inspects the food supply to make sure it is safe and properly labeled*)
- Department of Agriculture
- To manage the government's money and finances
- U.S. Mint (*prints paper money and makes coins*)
- To keep the country secure from terrorists and welcome lawful immigrants
- Department of Homeland Security
- Transportation Security Administration (*provides security for airlines and other transportation*)
- To help workers, people looking for work, and retired people.
- U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (*assists people from other countries who want to become a United States citizen*)
- Food and Nutrition Service (*helps low-income families buy food*)
- The President
- Department of Labor
- Employment Standards Administration (*enforces laws about peoples' rights at work*)
- Internal Revenue Service (*collects taxes*)
- To help the country have a safe and productive food system
- Department of the Treasury
- Occupational Safety & Health Administration (*makes sure employers follow laws about creating a safe workplace*)

