



SCHOOL PROGRAMS

800 Main Street Hartford, CT 06103 | (860) 522-6766 | www.ctoldstatehouse.org

PRE-VISIT LESSON: *INTRODUCING THE THREE BRANCHES OF STATE GOVERNMENT*

GOAL: Explain and define the three branches of Connecticut state government and why it is important to have three branches of government.

- I. Objective: Students will be able to explain the three branches of state government, the role of each branch, and the importance of each branch by successfully completing the *Three Branches of Government* activity stations that detail the differences between the branches and why they are important.
- II. Procedures
 - a. Start of class: students will fill in the K and W pieces of the *Know-Want to Know-Learned Chart* ("KWL") about the three branches of state government together as a class.
 - b. Students will break into small groups and transition throughout the classroom to learn about the three branches.
 - i. Either three or six stations will be set up depending on class size – one or two tables for each branch of government.
 - ii. Students will "meet" the three branches by filling out *The Three Branches of State Government* worksheet with questions about what each branch does, who is a part of the branch, and how the branches interact with each other. (see "Materials" on the next page)
 - c. End of class: students will fill in the L piece of a *KWL Chart* to complete the day and sum up what they learned about the three branches. Suggested discussion questions:
 - i. What else do you want to know about Connecticut's three branches of government?
 - ii. Why is it important to have three branches of government?

III. Materials

- a. *KWL Chart* (print pg. 3).
- b. *Connecticut's Three Branches of Government* information sheet (print pgs. 4-10).
 - i. Photographs of the current Governor, Lieutenant Governor, Secretary of the State, Treasurer, Comptroller, Attorney General, Supreme Court Justices, and the Legislative Branch's two houses (the Senate and the House of Representatives) gathered in their chambers at the State Capitol.
 - ii. Photographs and information about your own town or city legislators can be found using CT-N's *Find Your Legislators* database:
<http://www.cga.ct.gov/asp/menu/cgafindleg.asp>.
- c. *The Three Branches of State Government* worksheet (print pg. 11).

IV. Evaluations

- a. Participation in group discussion of *KWL Chart*.
- b. Completion of *The Three Branches of State Government* worksheet.
- c. Active group work and inquiry.



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KNOW-WANT TO KNOW-LEARNED (“KWL”) CHART

Directions: Before participating in the *Three Branches of State Government* activity, use this KWL chart to list what you **know** and **want to know** about state government. After the activity, you will fill in the **learned** section.

| What I Know | What I Want to Know | What I Learned |
|--------------------|----------------------------|-----------------------|
| | | |

CONNECTICUT'S THREE BRANCHES OF GOVERNMENT THE EXECUTIVE BRANCH

The Executive Branch of state government is composed of Officers called the Governor, Lieutenant Governor, Secretary of the State, Treasurer, Comptroller and Attorney General.

The Governor is the chief executive for the State. The Lieutenant Governor takes the place of the Governor when needed. The Secretary of the State keeps the government's records and runs elections. The Treasurer handles money for the State and the Comptroller pays the bills. The Attorney General is the State's lawyer.

While each office in the Executive Branch has its own responsibilities, the six members of the branch work together to enforce the laws of the State of Connecticut.

Connecticut's laws start as bills passed by the Legislature. The Governor works with the Legislative Branch by approving (signing) or rejecting (vetoing) the proposed laws. The Executive Branch works with the Judicial Branch by appointing judges. Each member of the Executive Branch is elected to a 4-year term in office.

CONNECTICUT'S THREE BRANCHES OF GOVERNMENT
THE EXECUTIVE BRANCH



Dannel P. Malloy
Governor



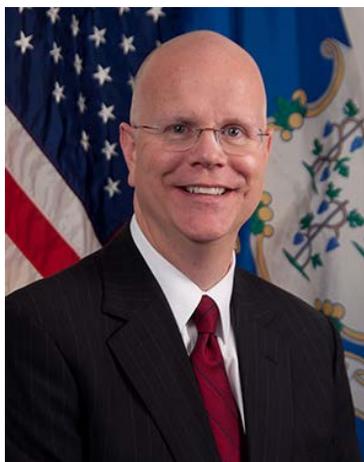
Nancy S. Wyman
Lieutenant Governor



Denise W. Merrill
Secretary of the State



Denise L. Nappier
Treasurer



Kevin P. Lembo
Comptroller



George C. Jepsen
Attorney General

Credit: State of Connecticut.

CONNECTICUT'S THREE BRANCHES OF GOVERNMENT THE JUDICIAL BRANCH

Connecticut's Judicial Branch includes four courts run by judges, also known as justices, who ensure that legal problems in Connecticut are solved fairly. In trials, judges are the heads of the courtroom and decide which evidence can be used.

When the Legislative Branch passes a bill, the Judicial Branch studies it to make sure that it follows the rules of our State Constitution and is legal. The Executive Branch nominates justices to serve on our highest courts and the Legislative Branch confirms the nominations. Justices are appointed for 8-year terms in office.

In addition to judges, there are other people important to the Judicial Branch. When a court listens to a civil trial, a court clerk is necessary to swear in the witnesses so their testimony is under oath. A plaintiff is the person who files the complaint at the center of the case, and the defendant is the person who defends himself or herself against the plaintiff. Both the plaintiff and defendant are represented by lawyers. A jury of citizens, or jurors, is selected to also hear the case and decide in favor of the plaintiff or defendant.



CONNECTICUT'S THREE BRANCHES OF GOVERNMENT
THE JUDICIAL BRANCH:
SUPREME COURT JUSTICES



Seated, L to R: Justice Richard N. Palmer, Chief Justice Chase T. Rogers,
Justice Peter T. Zarella. Standing, L to R: Justice Carmen E. Espinosa,
Justice Andrew J. McDonald, Justice Dennis G. Eveleigh,
Justice Richard A. Robinson, Senior Justice Christine S. Vertefeuille.

Credit: State of Connecticut Judicial Branch.

CONNECTICUT'S THREE BRANCHES OF GOVERNMENT THE LEGISLATIVE BRANCH

Connecticut's Legislative Branch is made up of two "Houses" called the Senate and the House of Representatives. Together, they are known as the General Assembly. Each Senator and Representative is elected by the people to represent specific districts, or areas, within the state. Districts can cross town and city lines. There are currently 36 Senators and 151 Representatives in Connecticut.

The Legislative Branch is responsible for creating new laws for the state. A law starts as a Bill, and once it is approved by a vote of the members of the Senate and House, it becomes an Act. At that point, the Act is sent to the Governor, who heads the Executive Branch. The Governor can approve (sign) the Act, turning it into a law or "statute," or veto (reject) the Act, so that it will not become a law at that time. If the Legislative Branch votes again and 2/3 of the House and Senate members vote for it, the Governor's veto will be "overridden" and the Act will become a law.

When the Legislative Branch proposes laws, the Judicial Branch reviews them to make sure that they follow the rules of Connecticut's Constitution (the Constitution is a written document that lays out how our government works). The Legislative Branch also approves the Governor's judicial appointments. Each member of the Legislative Branch is elected to a 2-year term in office.



CONNECTICUT'S THREE BRANCHES OF GOVERNMENT
THE LEGISLATIVE BRANCH:
THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES



Credit: CBIA News Magazine.

CONNECTICUT'S THREE BRANCHES OF GOVERNMENT
THE LEGISLATIVE BRANCH:
THE SENATE



Credit: Christopher Capozziello for The New York Times.

THE THREE BRANCHES OF STATE GOVERNMENT

Name: _____

Date: _____

Directions: Complete this graphic organizer as you read about each branch of state government and look at photographs of our current elected officials.



Executive Branch

Who works in the Executive Branch?

What does the Executive Branch do?

How does the Executive Branch work with the other branches?

Legislative Branch

Who works in the Legislative Branch?

What does the Legislative Branch do?

How does the Legislative Branch work with the other branches?



Connecticut's Old State House in Hartford (right) served as a capitol from 1796-1878.

Judicial Branch

Who works in the Judicial Branch? _____

What does the Judicial Branch do? _____

How does the Judicial Branch work with the other branches?

THE THREE BRANCHES OF STATE GOVERNMENT

ANSWER KEY

Executive Branch

Who works in the Executive Branch?

The Governor, Lieutenant Governor, Secretary of the State, Comptroller, Treasurer, and Attorney General.

What does the Executive Branch do?

Each office of the Executive Branch has its own responsibilities, but the six members work together to enforce the laws of the State of Connecticut.

How does the Executive Branch work with the other branches?

The Executive Branch appoints judges to the Judicial Branch and approves or rejects statutes from the Legislative Branch.

Legislative Branch

Who works in the Legislative Branch?

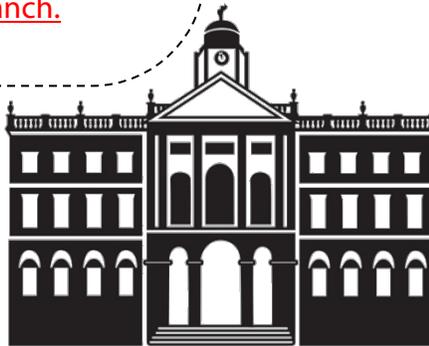
State Senators and Representatives.

What does the Legislative Branch do?

The Legislative Branch creates the laws for the State of Connecticut.

How does the Legislative Branch work with the other branches?

The Legislative Branch approves judicial appointments and can override a veto on a statute from the governor.



Connecticut's Old State House in Hartford (right) served as a capitol from 1796-1878.

Judicial Branch

Who works in the Judicial Branch? Four courts run by judges, or justices.

What does the Judicial Branch do? The Judicial Branch ensures that legal problems in the State of Connecticut are solved fairly.

How does the Judicial Branch work with the other branches? The Judicial Branch studies statutes from the Legislative Branch to make sure they follow the rules of the State Constitution and that they are legal. Judges in the Judicial Branch are appointed by the Executive Branch.