

3rd Quarter

Title: *A Kid's Guide to U.S. Government*

Instructor: Leila Leoncavallo

Grades: 4-6

Description: Students will learn about the importance and function of the U.S. government. We will begin by contemplating the purpose of government as we examine those in different countries. We will shift our focus to the origins of the U.S. federal government by studying how and why it was established. Students will learn about the different powers of the legislative, executive, and judicial branches as set forth in the Constitution. Students will be challenged to identify the use of checks and balances among the three branches by studying examples from current events.

Best suited for: This class is best suited for analytical and advanced learners who learn best through interactive class discussion. Although strong reading and writing skills are not required, please notify the instructor in advance so accommodations can be made where necessary.

Week One

INTRODUCTION

Students will be asked to consider the importance and role of government: What is government? Why do we have governments? What are some different types of government systems around the world?

Week Two

HISTORY OF U.S. GOVERNMENT

We will discuss the British government of the 1770s, and its impact on the development of U.S. government. Students will learn about government under the Articles of Confederation and why this system failed. We will discuss the Constitutional Convention of 1787 when the Founding Fathers set up our current system of federal government and established its three branches.

Week Three

THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Students will learn the purpose and powers of the House of Representatives. Students will learn the qualifications necessary to become a representative, who represents them in Congress, and how representatives are elected.

Week Four

THE SENATE

Students will learn the differences between the House and Senate as we discuss the unique powers of each. Students will learn the qualifications necessary to become a senator, who their senators are, and how they were elected.

Week Five

THE PRESIDENT

Students will learn about some of the departments that comprise the executive branch and the responsibilities of the president. Students will learn the qualifications necessary to become president and how presidents are elected through the electoral college. We will read stories about some of our country's most important presidents.

Week Six

THE SUPREME COURT

Students will learn about the judicial branch and the role of the courts in interpreting law. Students will learn about the job of Supreme Court justice, who the current justices are, how they got their job, and the types of cases that they decide.

Week Seven

CHECKS AND BALANCES

We will discuss some recent examples of government in action to illustrate how the three branches work together through a system of checks and balances.

Week Eight

REVIEW

Students will review all material learned in Weeks 1- 7 through interactive class games.