

Government Mini Lesson – The Judicial Branch (Supreme Court)

Standards:

4.4 GOVERNMENT: There are different levels of government within the United States and New York State. The purpose of government is to protect the rights of citizens and to promote the common good. The government of New York State establishes rights, freedoms, and responsibilities for its citizens. (Standards: 1, 5; Themes: GOV, CIV)

- 4.4a After the Revolution, the United States of America established a federal government; colonies established state governments.
 - Students will examine the basic structure of the federal government, including the president, Congress, and the courts.

Overview narrative:

This mini lesson is one of three mini lessons that gives students a brief overview of the three branches of government. This lesson aligns with standard 4.4a, in which students are examining the basic structure of the federal government. This mini lesson focuses specifically on the judicial branch (Supreme Court). Students complete three pre-video questions to activate prior knowledge. Then there is a short YouTube video from the History Channel on the legislative branch that the student watch, and they have been encouraged to take notes on. After the video there are 4 post-video questions and one written response for student to complete. This lesson is entirely self-directed inquiry and is delivered via Google Classroom.

Facilitator's Guide:

This government mini lesson is on the judicial branch (Supreme Court). It is one of three government mini lessons on the branches of government and can be used to give students a brief overview of each branch as part of a unit. This lesson is completely self-directed inquiry. The only role the facilitator plays is assigning and grading the assignment, as well as answering any questions that students might have, and troubleshooting any issues that may arise. Students complete each packet as they are assigned via Google Classroom or a similar document sharing platform. The packet consists of three parts. The first part asks students three pre-video questions about the judicial branch to activate any prior knowledge they have on the topic. These are all multiple-choice. It is not expected that students excel at this. The second task has students watch a short video on the judicial branch on YouTube that is from the History Channel. Students are encouraged in the directions to take notes during the video in order to better answer the post-video questions. There is also a list of possibly unfamiliar vocabulary included below the video that student may come across in the video. The word, definition, and part of speech are all listed for students' convenience. The third and final task consists of five post-video questions. Four questions are multiple choice and one question is short answer which asks students to summarize their learning about the judicial branch in complete sentences. Students are assigned the judicial branch mini unit at the middle of the week and are given two days to complete it. Each question is worth 12.5 points (8 questions and 100 total points for the assignment). Half or partial credit can be assigned at the discretion of the facilitator. Feedback is given to students in the form of a private comment highlighting

what they did well, as well as areas that they could improve in. Any students who do not complete the assignment by the specified end date will receive a zero. If the facilitator desires, a pre-lesson activity could be administered using the vocabulary included in this lesson. Students could engage in a matching activity in order to familiarize themselves with the vocabulary in this lesson beforehand.

Modifications for students with disabilities:

A clear set of instructions is provided in each section of the assignment to provide concise details on what is being expected of the students. Additionally, under the video in the second task a chart of possible unfamiliar vocabulary has been listed outlining the word, its definition, and the part of speech. Assistance from teachers (gen. ed. and special ed.) is also readily available to students.

Materials:

- Judicial branch packet (see PDF)
- YouTube video “What is the judicial branch of the U.S. Government?” | The History Channel <https://youtu.be/9giPmCWnepU>

Objectives:

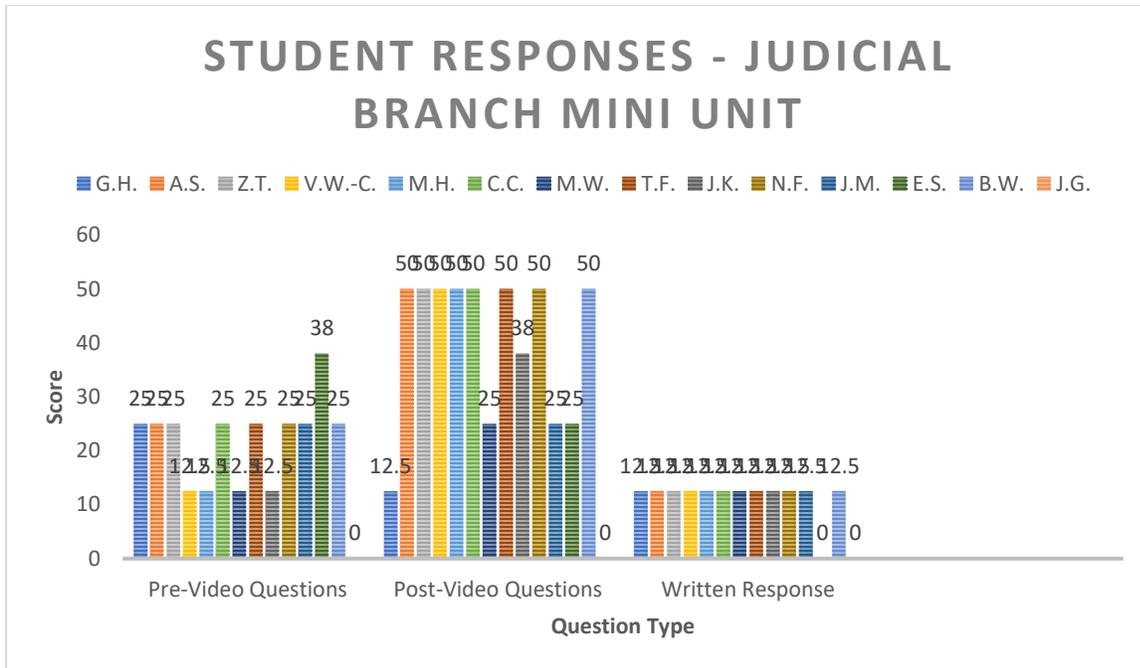
1. Students will be able to distinguish the difference between the judicial branch and the other two branches of government.
2. Students will be able to explain at least one thing they learned from the lesson.
3. Students will be able to investigate if their answers in the pre-video questions were correct.

Assessment description:

Students are being both formally and informally assessed in this lesson. The informal assessment comes in the form of seeing if students are engaging in the activity and completing their work. The formal assessment comes in the form of grading their responses to both the pre-video and post-video questions. Students are graded out of a total score of 100. There are 8 questions, so each question is worth roughly 12.5 points.

Summary of feedback:

Before posting this assignment on Google Classroom, I discussed and shared the packet and other resources for the lesson with my SBTE and special education teacher. We worked collaboratively to modify the questions in the packet to not only test the students’ abilities, but also to accommodate the special education students in this blended class. Questions were modified to include simpler language that all students could understand, as well as making all but one question multiple choice in order to give students more opportunities for success. Once my SBTE and special education teacher had given their approval, the packet was posted to Google Classroom. Of the 22 lessons assigned, 14 students turned it in. Of the 14 assignments turned in, 3 were turned in late. The graph below shows how students responded to each section of questions: pre-video, post-video, and written response. The most students could earn for the pre-video questions was 38 (37.5) points. The most students could earn for the post-video questions was 50 points. And the most students could earn for the written response was 12.5 points.



Answer key:

Pre-Video Questions

Question Number	Answer
1	b) judges
2	c) Washington, D.C.
3	d) the president

Post-Video Questions

Question Number	Answer
1	c) 9
2	d) 1789
3	a) as many as they want
4	c) decide if laws are constitutional
5	If student's response is reasonable, count as correct

Student and Parent Guide

Your task for this lesson is to answer pre- and post-video questions about the judicial branch. You will answer 3 multiple-choice questions before watching a video. After watching a video about the judicial branch, you will answer 4 multiple-choice questions and 1 written response.

Breakdown of steps:

1. Answer the first 3 multiple-choice questions in the judicial branch template.
2. Watch the video on the judicial branch found here: YouTube video “What is the judicial branch of the U.S. Government?” | The History Channel <https://youtu.be/9giPmCWnepU>
3. Answer the 4 post-video multiple-choice questions in the judicial branch template.
4. Answer the 1 written response in the judicial branch template.
5. Submit your judicial branch template to your teacher on the appropriate site.