



Principles of the Constitution through Time Checks and Balances



Learning Objective: The student will understand how the principles of the Constitution have been reflected in historical events.

TEKS: Texas History 7.13A, USH 8.15D, Government 6D

Materials Needed: Copy of vocabulary graphic organizer, copy of appropriate principle handout, and access to internet to show video.

Teacher Background: The following lesson plan is designed to accompany the LRE video series #LiamLearns. The lesson plan that is provided is designed to be used in the following subjects: Texas History, 8th Grade US History, US History 1877 to the present, and U.S. Government. Each of the stimulus pieces attached to each principle have been selected to allow the principle to be reviewed throughout the various courses. Note: The intended course is located at the bottom of each page.

Teaching Strategy:

1. Explain to students that they will be reviewing “Checks and Balances” one of the principles of the Constitution and that they will be watching a short video to remind them of the concept followed by analyzing the concept in history.
2. Provide each student with a vocabulary graphic organizer, and explain that as they watch the following video, that they need to be prepared to define the principle, provide a definition, and an example.
3. Have students watch the video on Checks and Balances at the following link:
<http://www.texaslre.org/liamlearns/>
4. When students have finished watching the video, give them time to complete their graphic organizer and check for student understanding by having students share their learning.
5. Once students have an understanding of the term, provide them with the appropriate document for their grade level and have them analyze using the questions provided.

Note: Strategies for various types of primary sources have been included in this lesson to help students with analyzing different types of sources. They are located at the end of this lesson plan.

Each grade level is hyperlinked to a Google Document. Suggested Units to use documents:

1. [Texas History](#) – Progressive Movement
2. [8th Grade US History-](#) Jackson Unit
3. [US History 1877 to present –](#) US Becomes A World Power
4. [Government](#) – Constitution Unit or Executive Branch (note: can also be used in US History 1877 to present in unit on Modern Era)

Document Analysis Suggested Answers

Below you will find suggested answers for each of the documents. Each bullet represents the questions asked on the documents.

7th Grade

- If students circle terms such as “appointing” and make connections between the power of the governor and the power of the president to see similarities between the Texas and US Constitutions. If students can further explain the Legislative Branch approves appointments that would indicate an understanding of checks and balances.

8th Grade

- President Jackson is standing on the U.S. Constitution holding a veto. Text around the outside of the image also indicates the power of veto. If students recognize this as a check on the legislative branch they can demonstrate an understanding of checks and balances.
- Opinion statement- student answers will vary.

US History 1877 to Present

- The US House of Representatives is using its power of impeachment to check the office of the President.
- The impeached President Clinton saying that President Clinton provided false and misleading information to a grand jury.
- President Clinton remained in office. The vote of the impeachment trial in the Senate was 55 (not guilty) to 45 (guilty) on the perjury charges.

Government

- This document is a veto of the War Powers Resolution, passed by Congress, by the President of the United States.
- The President chose to take this action because he felt that the President needed flexibility in responding to foreign affairs and that this resolution might be too rigid and hinder the cooperation that should be present between the two branches.