What Are the Powers of the President?

Executive Branch

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Grade Level	9th – 12th Grade	**Time Frame**	2-3 class period(s)
Subject	Social Studies	**Duration**	150 minutes
Course	U.S. Government		

Essential Question

What are the qualifications to be president of the United States? What are the powers of the president?

Summary

Students will identify the qualifications of the presidency and determine what powers the president can exercise, as delineated by the constitution. Students will read about how presidents in the past have used executive orders to further a goal or ideal. Students will demonstrate their understanding of the qualifications and powers of the executive branch through a Color, Symbol, Image activity.

Snapshot

Engage

Students discuss what they believe should be the qualifications of a president and compare these to the constitutional qualifications.

Explore

Students guess what might be the powers of the president.

Explain

Students determine what the powers of the president are by checking the constitution through a Justified List activity.

Extend

Students read about how executive orders by the president can override the approval of Congress.

Evaluate

Students complete a Color, Symbol, Image activity to demonstrate their understanding of the qualifications and powers of the executive branch.

Standards

Oklahoma Academic Standards (Social Studies: United States Government (9th through 12th grade))

USG.4.2A: Identify the constitutional qualifications for holding public office and the terms of office, including the composition of Congress, the Supreme Court, and the executive branch.
USG.4.2C: Explain the role of the executive branch, including the function of the bureaucracy in implementing public policy.

Attachments

- Article II of the Constitution - Spanish.docx
- Article II of the Constitution - Spanish.pdf
- Article II of the Constitution.docx
- Article II of the Constitution.pdf
- Color Symbol Image Activity Sheet powers of president - Spanish.docx
- Color Symbol Image Activity Sheet powers of president - Spanish.pdf
- Color Symbol Image Activity Sheet powers of president.docx
- Color Symbol Image Activity Sheet powers of president.pdf
- Magnetic Statements - Spanish.docx
- Magnetic Statements - Spanish.pdf
- Magnetic Statements.docx
- Magnetic Statements.pdf
- What are the Powers of the President Justified List - Spanish.docx
- What are the Powers of the President Justified List - Spanish.pdf
- What are the Powers of the President Justified List.docx
- What are the Powers of the President Justified List.pdf
- What are the Powers of the President Teacher Answer Key.docx
- What are the Powers of the President Teacher Answer Key.pdf
- What are the Powers of the President teacher slides.pptx

Materials

- Teacher PowerPoint
- Justified List for each student
- Class set of Article II of The Constitution
- Class set: A Reading about Executive Orders (linked in-text)
- 8x11 sheets of computer paper for Magnetic Statements
- Color, Symbol, Image activity sheet for each student

Engage

Class discussion: Show PowerPoint slide 1 (title) that discusses the essential questions. Tell students that these are the questions that this lesson will address. Next, show PowerPoint slide 2. Ask students to share any qualifications that would make a good president. List any ideas that students discuss on the board. Show PowerPoint slide 3, which lists the qualifications of the president as stated in the constitution. Ask students to discuss the following questions about the qualifications of the presidency (PowerPoint slide 4).

1. Why do you believe the framers chose these particular qualifications for the presidency?
2. In looking at the qualifications, what seemed most important to the framers?
3. In comparing these constitutional qualifications with those listed on the board, what is different?
4. Why do you think the framers did not include certain qualifications?

Teacher's Note: Class Discussion

During the general discussion, students may answer with qualifications such as honesty, integrity, being tough, having good leadership skills, etc. The purpose of this discussion, and the subsequent questions, are to show the limits of the framers in making too many qualifications for the executive branch. While the framers wanted someone of a mature age who was a citizen of the United States, the other qualities of a president were up to the vote of the American people. This ensured a democratic process and allowed the voters (electorate) to determine what constituted a "good" president.

Explore

Justified List Activity: Pass out the handout titled "What Are the Powers of the President Justified List" to students and explain the directions (slide 5). Read both the directions and the statements on the handout aloud. Tell students that campaign promises made by presidents may not all be written in or supported by the articles of the constitution and presidents do take the oath of office to uphold the constitution.

Teacher's Note: Justified List

A teacher's copy is provided if you wish to use this list as a class grade. A slide is provided in the PowerPoint with the answers as well. If you choose to have students turn in the Justified List activity for a grade, you should still go over the answers with the students on PowerPoint slide 6 to ensure understanding. For more information about https://learn.k20center.ou.edu/strategy/d9908066f654727934df7bf4f5074d76" target="_blank">Justified Lists, follow this link or use the URL in the Resources section to access a quick overview of the strategy.

Have students check any campaign promises of President Donald Trump that they **think** are probably supported by the articles of the constitution.

Allow time for students to choose what they believe are the president's constitutional powers.

Teacher's Note: Keep It Relevant

At the time of the construction of this lesson, Donald Trump is president. However, in the future you will want to update this lesson to reflect the current president or president-elect and his or her title to ensure this activity is relevant to your students and to give them the best chance of knowing the campaign promises in question here. Using President Trump as an example with a class in 2026 will not have the desired effect that it would in 2017 since students are unlikely to know what his campaign promises were at that time in the future. To keep things up-to-date for your students, be sure to change PowerPoint slides 5-10 to reflect the current administration as well as the "Powers of the President" and the Magnetic Statements handouts.

Explain

Pair students into partners. Pass out the class handout of article II (a copy of which can be found under Attachments). Ask partners to reread each campaign promise and see if they can justify each activity with executive powers enumerated in the constitution. Students should write down the article, section number, and phrase that supports each campaign promise as they find it listed. Partners may wish to divide up the 10 statements where each partner does five statements and shares their answers with their partner. Make sure that students understand that they might not necessarily find constitutional support for every promise on their list.

Extend

Pass out the reading "Executive Orders coming? Here's How They Work" to all students. The CNBC article can be found on the news outlet's website at the link provided or by using the URL found in the Resources section. Explain that there are times when a president believes strongly in pursuing a goal but may not be able to win approval from Congress for this action. In this case, presidents can use the power of executive orders without Congressional approval. An example of this would be that during World War II, President Franklin D. Roosevelt signed Executive Order 9066, which created internment camps for Japanese-Americans. Roosevelt feared that, although these people were Americans, they might be persuaded to spy for the Japanese.

Have students read the article that explains executive orders. If students struggle with reading, the teacher can read the article aloud as students read silently along.

Have students look at the chart titled, "Executive Orders over the Years," (PowerPoint slide 7). Using this chart and the reading, have students discuss the following questions (PowerPoint slide 8):

1. What are some of the reasons that past presidents chose to use executive orders? Several presidents have used executive orders to enforce Civil Rights laws in the United States.
2. Who has issued the most executive orders? Why do you think this president has the most orders? *Franklin D. Roosevelt. He used executive orders during the Great Depression and World War II, two major crises in American history. He also served almost four terms in office, which also added to the high number.*
3. When would an executive order be rescinded or eliminated? *When another president comes into power and wants to rescind the executive order of a previous president; when the executive order violates the constitution; and when an executive order violates the law, an order may be rescinded or eliminated.*

Teacher's Note: Preparation For Magnetic Statements Activity

To complete this next part of the Extend, you will need to prepare ahead of time. Place each of the statements from the Justified List of Donald Trump that are not supported by the constitution on its own 8x11 piece of paper. This list consists of: stripping U.S. citizens of their citizenship if they burn the American flag; building a wall between Mexico and the United States to stop illegal immigration; banning foreign Muslims from entering the United States; and shutting down parts of the Internet that recruit Americans to ISIS. You will also need a "None" piece of paper. Post these statements around the room. For more of an explanation of this activity, see K20 Magnetic Statements overview located at this link or by using the URL under Resources.

Introduce the Justified List again (PowerPoint slide 9) of the campaign promises of Donald Trump. Of those not supported by article II of the constitution (already posted around the room), have students "vote" with their feet on any statements that they believe might merit an executive order (or they can choose to vote "None").

Once students are standing by the statement they believe justifies an executive order, have students explain their reasoning. If more than one student is standing by the same statement, the group should discuss their reasoning and come up with one answer as to why it warrants an executive order. Students should also be able to express their reasons for voting "None" as well.

During the discussion of the statements, share with students that presidents may issue an executive order, but it may be overturned by the Supreme Court if the executive order violates the constitution. Do any of these statements interfere with the other articles or amendments to the U.S. Constitution? Have students identify or brainstorm what the potential conflicts with the constitution might be.

Show PowerPoint slide 10, which poses the question: Would these promises violate the constitution? Further information is provided on the slide.

Evaluate

Review the qualifications of the president and remind students of some of the powers of the executive branch along with its limitations. These are shown on PowerPoint slide 11.

Pass out the Color, Symbol, Image activity (more information on this activity can be found by clicking on the link or using the URL, which can be found under Resources). Ask students to think of a color, symbol, and an image for the presidency of the United States. These directions are provided on PowerPoint slide 12. In their explanations of the color, symbol, and image, have students use reasoning that demonstrates their understanding of both the qualifications and powers of the executive branch. They may need to look at the article II handout for help.

Optional

Display the presidential seal on PowerPoint slide 13. Explain that the presidential seal goes on all official documents from the president. Compare and contrast the presidential seal to some of the student ideas from the Color, Symbol, Image activity.

Resources

- List of Trump Campaign Promises: Johnson, J. (2016). Here are 76 of Donald Trump's many campaign promises. Washington Post. Retrieved from https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/post-politics/wp/2016/01/22/here-are-76-of-donald-trumps-many-campaign-promises/?utm_term=.39bf45824eb0
- Color, Symbol, Image Instructional Strategy: K20 Center. (n.d.). Color, symbol, image. Instructional Strategies. Retrieved from https://learn.k20center.ou.edu/strategy/d9908066f654727934df7bf4f50733b1
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- Magnetic Statements Instructional Strategy: K20 Center. (n.d.). Magnetic statements. Instructional Strategies. Retrieved from https://learn.k20center.ou.edu/strategy/d9908066f654727934df7bf4f50761bf
- CNBC Article: Koba, M. (2014). Executive orders coming? Here's how they work. CNBC. Retrieved from http://www.cnbc.com/2014/01/28/executive-orders-what-they-are-and-how-they-work.html
- U.S. Const. art. II. Retrieved from http://constitutioncenter.org/interactive-constitution/articles/article-ii