

Branching Out

Americans learn about government for Constitution Week.



senate.gov

The Capitol Building is the home of Congress.

Constitution Week begins on September 17. The U.S. Constitution was signed on that day in 1787. The National Constitution Center in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, celebrates the anniversary with "We the People Stories." For this event, a group of Americans share their stories about how the Constitution plays a part in our everyday lives.

Although the Constitution is 219 years old, it is still important today. It sets up the structure for our government and divides it into three branches: legislative, executive, and judicial.

Legislative Branch

Makes The Laws

This branch is made up of Congress. Congress is divided into two parts-the Senate and the House of Representatives. Members meet in the Capitol in Washington, D.C.

Executive Branch



whitehouse.gov

The White House is the home of the executive branch.

Enforces The Laws

The executive branch enforces the laws. The branch is headed by the president, who is elected every four years by U.S. citizens. The president also leads the U.S. armed forces.

Other members of this branch include the vice president (who is president of the Senate) and advisers, who make up the Cabinet.

Judicial Branch



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The Supreme Court building.

Interprets The Laws

The judicial branch is the system of courts. It is headed by the U.S. Supreme Court, which is made up of nine justices. They are appointed by the president with the advice and approval of the Senate.

Checks and Balances

A system of checks and balances ensures that one branch does not become more powerful than the others.