

Name:

Executive Branch

Date:

Background

Of the three parts of the United States Constitution, the section known as the articles is the longest because it describes how the government works. There are seven articles in the Constitution, and the first three focus on the three branches of government. Article 1 is about the legislative branch (Congress), article 2 is about the executive branch (the President), and article 3 is about the judicial branch (Supreme Court). No one branch is more powerful than the other, although often people tend to think the executive branch, described in article 2, is more powerful than the others.

The executive branch refers to the office of the President. It's main job it is to execute and enforce the laws that are created by Congress. The Vice-President is also part of the executive branch, even though he presides over the Senate. The Vice-President must be ready to take on the responsibilities of the President if something should happen to him. The FBI, CIA, and other government agencies are also part of the executive branch, but the President is the leader of this branch, thus he has the powers given to the executive branch in the Constitution.

Some of the powers the Constitution gives to the executive branch are the power to:

- Enforce the law
- Veto laws proposed by Congress
- Appoint Supreme Court judges
- Appoint people to high ranking federal positions (leaders of government agencies, etc.)
- Grant pardons for federal criminals
- Negotiate foreign treaties
- Be commander in chief of the military

The President also has the power of executive order. Executive orders are commands given, by the President as the leader of the executive branch, to federal agencies. Federal agencies refer to groups that are part of the national government – FBI, Department of Education, Department of Homeland Security, etc. Usually these orders are to tell these agencies how to carry out the laws that Congress makes, but sometimes they go against what Congress would like the President to do.

In order to become President, a candidate must meet certain qualifications. Also, the President serves a different term length and is elected in a different way than members of the legislative branch. Below is an outline of the basic facts about the executive branch and President.

Executive Branch

- Is led by the President of the United States
- Serves a 4 year term
- Can only serve a maximum of 2 full terms
- Elected by the electoral college
- Must be 35 years old
- Must be a U.S. citizen for 14 years
- Must be born in the United States of America

