

The Constitution:

THE EXECUTIVE BRANCH

1. The executive branch of government is given the job of seeing that the laws made by Congress are carried out. It can also recommend laws to Congress that it wants to be passed.
2. Article II of the Constitution sets up the executive branch of government.

SECTION 1: PRESIDENT AND VICE-PRESIDENT

3. The executive power of the government shall be given to the President of the United States of America. He shall hold his office for a term of four years.
4. The President must be born a United States citizen. He or she must be at least 35 years of age and have been living in the U.S. for at least fourteen years.
5. In case the President cannot serve for any reason, the Vice-President takes his or her place. If both the President and the Vice President cannot serve, Congress will pass a law appointing someone to fill the office until the next election.
6. The President shall be paid for his job.
7. The president must take the following oath before taking office: *I do solemnly swear that I will faithfully*

execute the Office of the President of the United States, and will, to the best of my ability, preserve, protect, and defend, the Constitution of the United States of America.

SECTION 2: POWERS OF THE PRESIDENT

8. The President shall be Commander-in-Chief of the army and navy of the United States. He can ask his advisors – the Cabinet – for ideas about any subject he wishes. He can pardon (excuse a person from an offense) criminals.
9. The President can, with the advice and approval of Congress, make treaties with other nations. He can appoint ambassadors (representatives to other nations), appoint Supreme Court justices, and appoint any other person necessary to carry out the work of the government.

SECTION 3: PRESIDENTIAL DUTIES

10. The President shall, from time to time, give a State of the Union address to Congress (how things are going in the country).
11. The President shall recommend any laws he thinks are necessary. He will also make sure any laws passed by Congress are carried out.

12. The President, Vice President, and all other officers of the United States can be removed from office by impeachment (to bring charges against an official in the House of Representatives. The Senate then acts as a court and tries the case). They may be impeached for treason, bribery, or other high crimes and misdemeanors (minor crimes).

HOW THE EXECUTIVE BRANCH WORKS

13. The President is head of the executive branch. His job is to make sure the laws of the United States are carried out.
14. There are many departments and offices in the executive branch. Each department is headed by a member of the president's Cabinet (group of advisors to the President). This person, called a Secretary, answers to the president and is also responsible for making sure the money Congress gives their department is spent correctly.

ELECTORAL COLLEGE

15. One part of the executive branch that is difficult to understand has to do with the election of the President and Vice President.

16. There are really two separate Presidential elections. The people vote for president every four years on the first Tuesday after the first Monday in November. Any U.S. citizen over the age of 18 can vote in that election.
17. The winner of the total vote in this election is said to be the winner of the popular vote.
18. However, the President is really elected by a group of people called Electors.
19. Each state appoints, as it sees fit, a number of Electors. This number is equal to the number of Senators and Representatives it may have in Congress. For example, California has two Senators and 53 Representatives. Therefore, California has 55 electors and thus 55 electoral votes. No Senator or Representative may serve as an Elector.
20. There are 538 total electors (one for each Representative and Senator in Congress plus three for Washington D.C.).
21. After the popular vote in November, the 538 electors vote. They give the electoral votes from their state to one candidate or the other. The one who has the most electoral votes wins the presidency.
22. In most cases, the electors vote for the same candidate as the people from their

- states voted for. But there is no law that says they have to vote that way. They can vote for anyone they want, no matter how the people of their state voted.
23. It might happen that no candidate gets more than one-half of the votes of the electors. The House of Representatives would then vote for President from the top three vote getters. The Senate would vote for Vice President.
24. There have been a few times in history when
- different candidates have won the popular and electoral votes. The most recent was the election of 2000, when Al Gore won the popular vote but George W. Bush became president with the most amount of electoral votes.
25. The Congress has tried many times to change the Electoral College system. So far, no changes have been made.

UNDERSTANDING THE EXECUTIVE BRANCH

1. The main purpose of the executive branch is to:
 - a. make new laws.
 - b. choose Supreme Court judges.
 - c. make sure the laws made by Congress are carried out.
 - d. choose the Electoral College.
2. The President and the Vice President are really elected by:
 - a. the Senate.
 - b. the House of Representatives.
 - c. the voters of America.
 - d. the 538 electors in the Electoral College.
3. The President serves for a term of _____ years.
4. Each state has a total of electors equaling their number of members in the _____ and _____.
5. If, for any reason, the President can't serve, he is replaced by the _____.
6. To become President a person must be born a _____, at least _____ years of age, and have been living in the U.S. for _____ years.
7. Some duties of the President are: a) _____, b) _____, c) _____.

8. If the President, Vice President, or any Cabinet members commit treason, bribery, or a crime, they can be removed from office by _____ in the House and a _____ in the Senate.

9. The advisors to the president are called his _____.

10. The president may appoint _____ and Supreme Court _____, but they must be approved by the _____.