

# Summary: National Government

## Government Structure

Our national government has three branches. The legislature, or Congress, makes the laws for the whole country. It has two parts, the House of Representatives and the Senate. The executive branch carries out the laws. The President heads this branch and can approve or stop laws made by Congress. The judicial branch decides what the laws mean and if they obey the Constitution. The Supreme Court heads this branch. All three branches protect the rights of citizens. Citizens pay taxes to support each branch. Taxes also pay for our country's military and other services.

## Government Leaders

Voters choose a President every four years. The President may serve two four-year terms. Voters choose senators and representatives in Congress. Each state has two senators. States with more people have more representatives. The President chooses judges on the Supreme Court.

A nation's constitution tells how its government works. In Great Britain, a prime minister heads the executive branch, and some lawmakers are chosen by other leaders. In some countries, soldiers run the government. Citizens have few freedoms and may not be allowed to vote.

## Governments Work Together

The U.S. government has agencies that create public policy. These plans provide services and programs to solve problems. Some agencies help protect the environment. The Environmental Protection Agency works with the Tennessee Department of Environment and Conservation to protect the air and water and to fight pollution.



### Before You Read

Find and underline each vocabulary word.

**legislature** *noun*, the branch of the U.S. government, also called Congress, that makes the nation's laws

**executive branch** *noun*, the branch of the U.S. government headed by the President

**judicial branch** *noun*, the branch of the U.S. government also known as the courts

**public policy** *noun*, a government's plan for solving problems or providing services to people



### After You Read

**REVIEW** What are the three branches of government? Circle the answer.

**REVIEW** How is Great Britain's government different from the governments of Tennessee and the United States? Highlight the answer.

**REVIEW** How can public policy help solve environmental problems? Draw a box around the answer.