

Summary: National Government

The Three Branches

The national government has three branches. One branch, Congress, is the legislature. It has two parts, the House of Representatives and the Senate. Citizens elect representatives to serve in Congress. They make laws for the whole country.

The President is head of the executive branch. Citizens vote to decide who will be President. The President can approve or stop laws made by Congress. The executive branch of government makes sure laws are carried out.

The third branch of government is the judicial branch. The Supreme Court is the head of the judicial branch. The courts decide what laws mean and if they obey the Constitution.

Citizens pay taxes to support each branch of the government. Taxes also pay for the armed services that protect the country.

Symbols and Monuments

American symbols remind people of values they share. The symbol of the United States is a bald eagle. It represents freedom. The American flag is another national symbol. It has 50 stars. Each star stands for a state. It has 13 stripes for the first 13 colonies.

Monuments help people remember important people or events in history. The Lincoln Memorial honors Abraham Lincoln. He worked for freedom and equality. The Washington Monument was built to honor the first President, George Washington. The monument reminds people of his leadership and courage.

Before You Read

Find and underline each vocabulary word.

legislature *noun*,
branch of
government that
makes laws for the
country

executive branch *noun*,
branch of
government that
carries out the laws

judicial branch *noun*,
branch of
government that
decides what laws
mean and whether
they obey the
Constitution

monument *noun*, a
building or statue
that helps people
remember a person
or event

After You Read

REVIEW In what ways do citizens take part in national government? Highlight three sentences that tell what role citizens play in national government.

REVIEW What is the purpose of our national symbols and monuments? Underline the sentence that tells what symbols remind us of. Highlight the sentence that tells what monuments do.