

Lesson Plan:

Article II: Powers of the Presidency

Class: U.S. Government

Unit: Executive Branch

Unit Essential Question:

What is the role of the Executive Branch in the Government of the United States of America?

Guiding Question(s):

- What are the roles and responsibilities of the President?
- How did the Presidency change over time?

Objective(s):

- Students will be able to define the roles and responsibilities of the President of the United States.
- Students will be able to analyze the changing role of the Presidency over time.
- Students will be able to interpret a primary source document to gather information.

Teacher Background information:

Article II of the United States Constitution defines the roles and responsibilities of the President of the United States. Defined roughly, these roles are: Chief Executive, Commander in Chief, Ceremonial head of State, and Chief Diplomat. Chief Executive contains activities such as delivering the State of the Union Address, appointing Supreme Court Judges, appointing ambassadors, appointing the cabinet, and giving executive orders to executive agencies. Commander in Chief consists of activities such as ordering the military into action or the national guard in time of activation. Ceremonial Head of State includes receiving ambassadors, attending state events as a representative of the nation, and receiving other public officials. Chief Diplomat consists of the power to negotiate treaties with other nations. As a note, Ceremonial Head of State and Chief Diplomat often work hand in hand.

Materials needed:

- [Google Slides presentation](#)
- [Jigsaw Organizer worksheets](#) (one per student)
- Projector
- Device capable of casting slideshow to projector
- Timer

“Do Now” / Hook/ Opening activity:

- Ask students what they want to be when they grow up. Take some answers, put them on the board.
- Next, ask students to independently reflect on their choice and write four responsibilities or roles that they may fill in that job in the future. Ask the students to be specific. Call on several students and ask them what they found.
- Direct students to consider the President of the United States, introduce the lesson and ask “What are the roles and responsibilities of the President?”. Take down answers on the board and divide into columns. After student input, title the columns with Chief Executive, Commander in Chief, Ceremonial head of State, and Chief Diplomat
- Transition to activity with short discussion (5-7 minutes) of why the founding fathers established an Office of the President and where the roles and responsibilities of the President come from- Article II of the Constitution.

Activities:

- 1) Split students into four, equally sized groups. Assign each group one of the following Presidential roles to consider: Chief Executive, Commander in Chief, Ceremonial Head of State, Chief Diplomat.
- 2) Have students engage in a jigsaw activity in which four groups consider a role and Article II and complete their assigned worksheet. (10 minutes) Use this time to ensure accuracy of group findings.
 - a) Instructions for worksheet: Working as a group and using the text on the second page, find the roles and responsibilities that fit within your group’s category. Highlight the text that refers to specific roles or responsibilities.
- 3) Shuffle the groups so that each new group has at least one member from each of the original four groups. Allow two minutes for each group member(s) to explain the findings from their previous group (10 minutes). Students not presenting will take notes on their worksheet.

Add on Activity (time permitting) or Homework Assignment:

Ask students to find examples in the National Archives website that show Presidents of the past or present engaging in these roles. Ask students to write a short paragraph explaining their choice.

If teaching students in an asynchronous online format:

Ask each student to identify all of the roles and responsibilities of the President on their own, without group work. Students should highlight the text from the Constitution in which they discover responsibilities in four colors corresponding to the four roles.

Closing:

Return to the board and the previously compiled columns. Remind students of the guiding question “What are the roles and responsibilities of the President?” and ask students to shout out some of the missing roles and responsibilities of the President until all columns are properly filled.

Look forward and explain to the class the direction for the next four units, each focused on one of the roles and responsibilities of the President.

Assessment:

Use the worksheet the students completed during the jigsaw activity and score for participation.

Modifications:

- Ensure that students are grouped heterogeneously by skill with at least one strong reader per group.
- Use easy-to-read and enlarged fonts on the jigsaw worksheet.

Resources:

[Constitution of the United States](#)

[Powers of the Presidency Portal](#)