

SS.7.C.3.8

Analyze the structure, functions, and processes of the legislative, executive, and judicial branches.

Legislative: Constitution Article I

Purpose - to make laws.

Bicameral (two Houses)

- Senate - each state has two Senators (Total = 100)
 - Senators serve Six-Year terms, with no term limits.
- House of Representatives - the number of US Representatives (aka "Congressmen") depends on the state's population. The smallest states have just one each. Florida has 27. California (the largest) has 53. Total = 435
- Tax bills must start in the House; all others can start in either chamber.
- Representatives serve Two-Year terms with no limit on number of terms.

Executive: Constitution Article II

Purpose - to execute (carry out) the laws

- Headed by the President
 - Four-Year terms, limited to two terms
- Some powers of the president:
 - Nominate judges to federal courts, including the Supreme Court
 - Nominate Cabinet Members, Ambassadors, and many other officials
 - Put out Executive Orders - within the limits of the laws
 - Example - President Truman used an Executive Order in 1947 to racially integrate the armed forces
 - Conduct foreign policy
 - Grant pardons, reprieves, and amnesty to those convicted in federal court (but not in state courts)
- Many agencies help the president
 - regulatory commissions have the power to make and enforce certain rules
 - example - Federal Communications Commission makes rules for broadcasters

Judicial: Constitution Article III

Federal judges are appointed by the president, and are approved (or rejected) by the Senate
Serve for life, but can be impeached and removed from office by Congress

- Judges cannot be fired by the president
- **District Courts**
 - 94 Districts, each state has at least one, Florida has 3
conduct trials, use juries
 - District courts are "original jurisdiction" (where cases start)
- **Circuit Courts** (aka Appeals Courts)
 - 12 circuits - Florida, Alabama, Georgia make up the 11th Circuit
 - Circuit Courts review decisions appealed from the District Courts
do not conduct trials, do not use juries
- **US Supreme Court (has 9 Justices, never uses a jury)**
 - The highest court - no further appeal is possible
 - The only court that gets to pick which cases it will consider
 - about 7,000 cases ask for "certiorari" each year; about 100 - 150 get accepted