

LESSON PLAN

Checks and Balances

Mr. Ashford · Cedar Hollow High School

Subject	Social Studies: U.S. Government
Grades	9-12
Time	50 minutes
Levels	Support, On Level, Challenge

OVERVIEW

Students learn how the Constitution divides federal power among three branches and how each branch checks the others. After a hook and a worked veto override, they run the Cedar Hollow Model Government at their level, practice on a matching worksheet, and finish with an exit ticket.

OBJECTIVES

- Students will be able to identify each branch, the article that creates it (I, II, III), and its main job.
- Students will be able to trace a bill through a veto and an override using two-thirds vote math.
- Students will be able to describe how each branch checks the other two and apply these rules to scenarios.

SUCCESS CRITERIA

- I can name each branch, its article, and its job.
- I can trace a bill through a veto and an override.
- I can tell if a vote reached two-thirds.
- I can name a check, who uses it, and whom it limits.

VOCABULARY

Separation of powers: power split among three branches.

Checks and balances: each branch can limit the others.

Federalism: power split between nation and states.

Veto: the President's rejection of a bill.

Override: two-thirds of each chamber pass a vetoed bill.

Impeach: the House formally charges an official.

Judicial review: courts strike down unconstitutional laws.

MATERIALS

- Game link (one device per student)
- Intro slide deck (10 slides)
- Level 1, 2, and 3 worksheets with answer keys
- Optional: printed Constitution, Articles I, II, III, and V

LESSON SEQUENCE

TIME	SEGMENT	WHAT HAPPENS
5 min	Hook	Slide 2: a student council with every power. Turn and talk, share two ideas.
10 min	Mini-lesson	Slides 3 to 7: target, branches, vocabulary, worked veto override, checks map.
15 min	Game	Slide 8: students enter their class code and play; circulate and discuss explanations.
12 min	Worksheet	Students complete their level's worksheet, then compare one answer with a partner.
8 min	Exit ticket	Slide 9 quick check, then slide 10: completion code and one check.
50 min	Total	

DELIVERING THE GAME

Example class codes (same code, same game for the whole class):

ASH-GOV-1 Support

ASH-GOV-2 On Level

ASH-GOV-3 Challenge

- Post the game link or HTML file on a Canvas page, or in a Google Site shared in Google Classroom.
- Give each group its class code (shown above); the same code always gives the same bills, tallies, and turns.
- Students submit their completion code in the LMS assignment; spot-check codes on the teacher screen.
- Teacher screen passphrase: **marble column** (tap the small "Made by GBG Education" credit 5 times to open the teacher screen and check completion codes).

DIFFERENTIATION

Level 1: Support

Game: 5 turns, branch labels, the two-thirds number shown, hints, a second try. Worksheet: 14 pt type, word banks, pictures.

Level 2: On Level

Game: 6 turns with override tallies, the 10-day rule, tax bills, and courts; hints on. Worksheet: tallies, sorting, explaining.

Level 3: Challenge

Game: 6 turns; students do the two-thirds math, pocket vetoes, treaties, a trial; no hints. Worksheet: vote math and reasoning.

ACCOMMODATIONS

- Read-aloud button in the game (where supported).
- Any student may use the Support worksheet.
- Allow spoken or partner-scribed answers.
- English learners may use a bilingual glossary.

ASSESSMENT

Formative. Completion codes give a score by level. Check Support items 5 and 9, On Level items 4 and 7, and Challenge items 2 and 7. Reteach impeachment versus removal if exit tickets show the mix-up.

OBSERVATION READY

DANIELSON FRAMEWORK FOR TEACHING (2022) ALIGNMENT

- **1c Setting Instructional Outcomes** (Domain 1: Planning and Preparation): Target and I can statements tied to D2.Civ.4.9-12 run through the game, worksheets, and exit ticket.
- **1f Designing and Analyzing Assessments** (Domain 1: Planning and Preparation): Game codes, a level worksheet with key, and an exit ticket measure the same outcomes.
- **3a Communicating About Purpose and Content** (Domain 3: Learning Experiences): The teacher models a veto override step by step from Article I, Section 7 with precise terms.
- **3c Engaging Students in Learning** (Domain 3: Learning Experiences): Students actively sort checks, sequence processes, and reason through scenarios.
- **3d Using Assessment for Learning** (Domain 3: Learning Experiences): The teacher monitors play, runs the slide 9 quick check, and uses exit tickets to plan a reteach.
- **3e Responding Flexibly to Student Needs** (Domain 3: Learning Experiences): Class code suffixes set each student's level, and the teacher can switch a student's code mid-lesson.

RESEARCH-BASED STRATEGIES

- **Teacher clarity:** The target and success criteria open the lesson (slide 3) and return at the exit ticket.
- **Worked examples:** Slide 6 walks a fictional bill through a veto and override before students sequence it.
- **Retrieval practice:** Students recall branches, checks, and thresholds in the game, worksheet, and exit ticket.
- **Feedback (Technology):** The game explains the correct answer right after each question.

STANDARDS ALIGNMENT

- **D2.Civ.4.9-12** (C3 Framework): Explain how the U.S. Constitution establishes a system of government that has powers, responsibilities, and limits that have changed over time and that are still contested.
- **D2.Civ.1.9-12** (C3 Framework): Distinguish the powers and responsibilities of local, state, tribal, national, and international civic and political institutions.

Observation Ready section: Danielson Framework for Teaching (2022). Other frameworks available on request.