

# **“We the People”: Civics and Government Today**

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**Year 1**  
**History Unit 5**  
Workbook

# Lesson 1: The Legislative Branch



*The Capitol building, home of the legislative branch of the federal government (Wikimedia)*

## How does the legislative branch pass laws?

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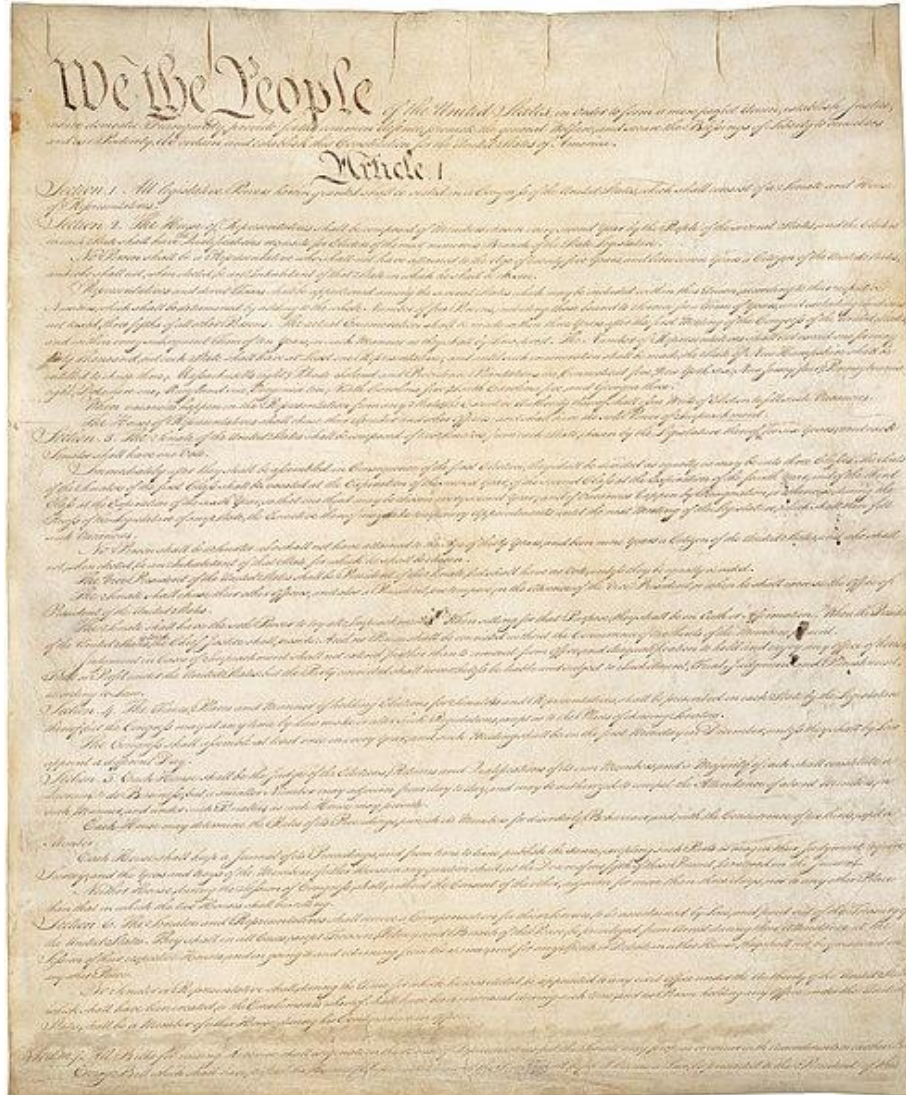
**Lesson 1**  
**Do Now**



*The Capitol building, home of the legislative branch of the federal government (Wikimedia)*

1. What are **two** things you notice about the image above?
  
2. What are **two** questions you have about the image above?

# Lessons 7–8: Rights and Responsibilities of Citizenship



The first page of the Constitution (Wikimedia)

## What is the role of a citizen in the American political system?

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**Lessons 7–8**  
**Oral Presentation Planning Guide**

**DIRECTIONS:** Answer the following questions to map out the argument and evidence for your oral presentation. Your presentation should address how citizens can take action regarding the key issue you studied yesterday. Be as specific and as thorough as possible!

Argument:
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**Explaining the Problem:** Describe the issue and its negative consequences.

- **Issue and why it is a problem:**
  - **Piece of Evidence 1:**
  - **Piece of Evidence 2:**

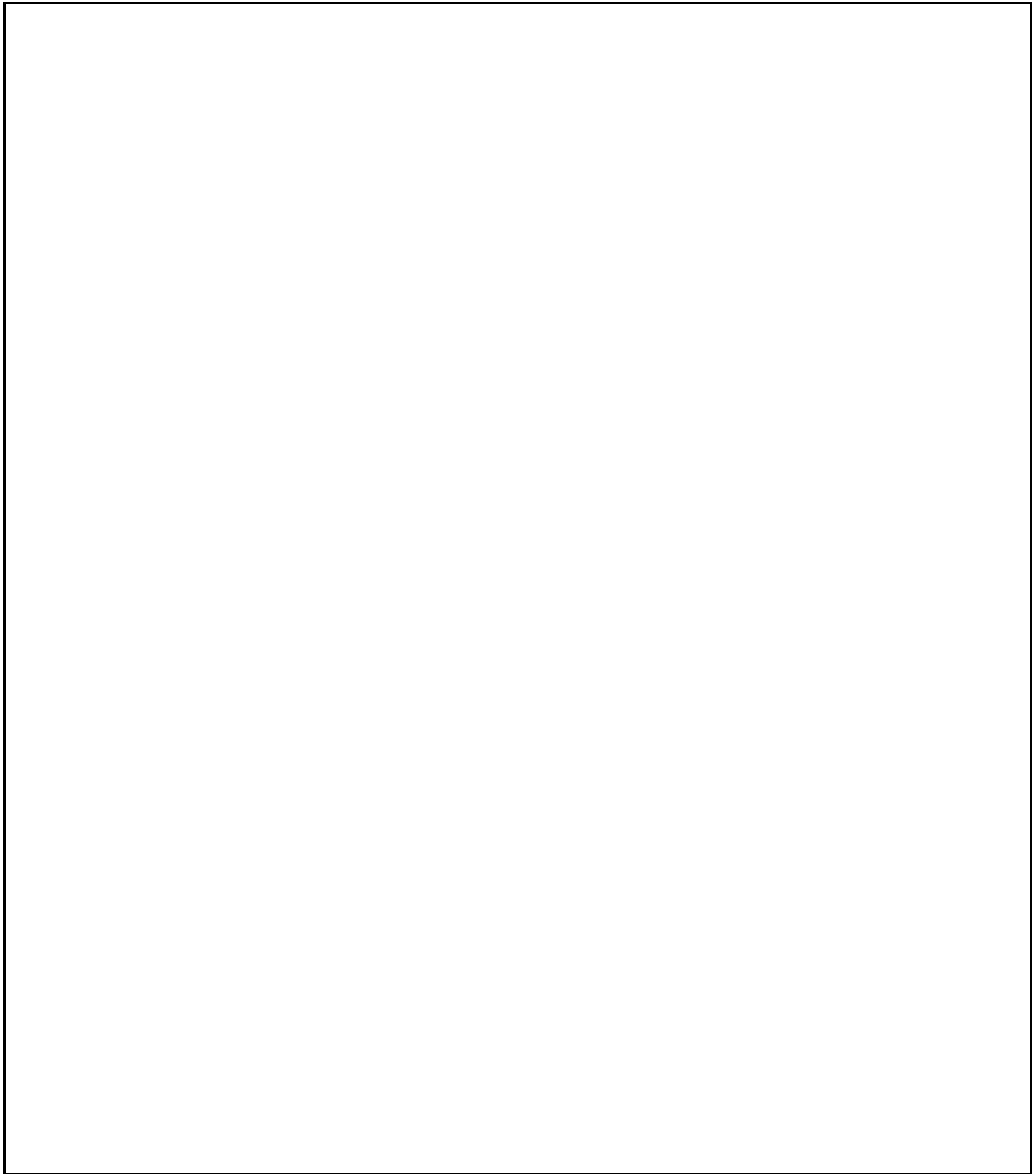
**Whom Does the Problem Affect:** Explain which groups or communities are most affected by this issue and how.

- **Who is most affected and how?**
  - **Piece of Evidence 1:**
  - **Piece of Evidence 2:**

**The Role of Government:** Explain which level(s) of government and officials are best equipped to address this problem and why, and how it can be addressed.

- **Best level of government and/or officials to address the issue:**
- **How government can address the issue:**
  - **Piece of Evidence 1:**
  - **Piece of Evidence 2:**

**Drafting:** Using the outline above, script out your group's oral presentation in the box below. Keep it clear and simple, and make sure each group member is assigned a speaking part.



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**Lesson 8**  
**Do Now**

1. How do the responsibilities of the legislative and executive branches differ?
  - a. The legislative branch interprets the laws, while the executive branch passes the laws.
  - b. The legislative branch signs the laws, while the executive branch interprets the laws.
  - c. The legislative branch passes the laws, while the executive branch signs the laws.
  - d. Both the legislative and executive branches can pass, sign, and interpret the laws.
  
2. Which of the following is the **best** example of federalism in the U.S. government?
  - a. The Supreme Court rules against a law passed by Congress.
  - b. Citizens have the right to vote for their elected officials.
  - c. Both the federal and state governments can enact taxes.
  - d. Lawmakers must compromise in order to turn a bill into a law.
  
3. All of the following are rights of citizenship **except**
  - a. passing laws
  - b. voting for representatives
  - c. running for office
  - d. petitioning your elected officials

## Lessons 9–11: Constitutional Interpretation



*The Preamble of the Constitution (Wikimedia)*

**To what extent is the Constitution  
a “living document”?**



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**Lessons 9–11**  
**DBQ**

**Historical Context:** In the early days of the American republic, there was relatively little disagreement about *how* to interpret the language of the Constitution and what the rules of interpretation were. Since then, however, constitutional interpretation has come to present difficulties for a vastly different America over 200 years later, raising enduring concerns about how to factor in the Framers’ original intentions and how to apply the Constitution to present-day circumstances and society.

**Task:** Using the information from the documents and your knowledge of history, answer the questions that follow each document. Your answers to the questions will help you complete the essay assignment that follows, in which you will be asked: *To what extent is the Constitution a “living document”?*

**As you read Documents A through D, answer the corresponding questions below:**

1. Why does Scalia believe the Constitution must be interpreted as the Framers originally intended? Be sure to think carefully about your claim and articulate it simply and clearly.

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2. Why does Strauss object to interpreting the Constitution based on what the Framers originally intended? Be sure to think carefully about your claim and articulate it simply and clearly.

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3. How does Whelan **challenge** the “living constitutionalist” approach? Be sure to think carefully about your claim and articulate it simply and clearly.

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4. According to Levingston, why should courts interpret the Constitution based on the values of society? Be sure to think carefully about your claim and articulate it simply and clearly.

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## DBQ Planning Page

**Directions:** Write a well-organized essay of no more than 200 words, which answers the following question: **To what extent is the Constitution a “living document”?**

**In your essay, be sure to:**

- Clearly answer the question being asked. **THINK before you write!**
- Use evidence from **at least** three of Documents A–D provided
- Include relevant outside information from your knowledge of U.S. history

**Thesis:**

**Piece of Evidence 1:**

**Analysis:**

**Piece of Evidence 2:**

**Analysis:**

**Piece of Evidence 3:**

**Analysis:**