



Federal Government: SS.7.CG.3.8
**Structure, Powers & Processes of the
Executive Branch**
VIDEO SCRIPT



Executive Branch Overview

1. The executive branch has an important role in making the government of the United States work. But, just what does the executive branch do in order to make it work? Let's take a look.

2. After watching this video, you will understand some of the main powers of the executive branch, such as

- ✓ creating executive orders,
- ✓ veto power, and
- ✓ making presidential appointments.

Sometimes it's said that the President is the most powerful person in the world, so let's put on our capes, jump in, and take a look at the executive branch.

3. The powers of the executive branch are found in Article II of the U.S. Constitution.

The executive branch is made up of the President, Vice President and the executive agencies.

4. The main job of the executive branch is to implement the laws passed by the legislative branch. This happens through the federal agencies of the executive branch. For example, a law about highways, passed by Congress, will be put into place by the Department of Transportation, which is part of the executive branch of government as a federal agency.

5. Let's check in, and try to answer each of the following questions.

6. What is the structure of the executive branch?

7. ANSWER TO QUESTION

8. Let's do one more. What is the main job of the executive branch?

ANSWER TO QUESTION

9. One of the most commonly used powers of the executive branch is executive orders. Many presidents have used executive orders. An executive order is an order from the President that provides information on how the executive branch will function and must be followed like laws.

10. Most executive orders are created so that a President can make decisions without working with Congress. Congress does not approve executive orders and cannot overturn them. If Congress doesn't like an executive order, it can pass a law to cut funding for the order's implementation.

11. Executive orders aren't all powerful though. They can be challenged in court by Congress, the people, or the states. And the court can decide whether or not it goes against the U.S. Constitution.

12. Let's do a quick check in. Think about your answer to the following question: What options does Congress have if they don't like a President's executive order?

13. ANSWER TO QUESTION

14. Of course the President is involved in the lawmaking process as well. The U.S. Constitution states that every bill passed by Congress must be presented to the President for approval in order to become a law. The President can approve the bill, sign in and it becomes law or the President can veto, or reject, the bill.

15. According to the US Constitution, the President has ten days, not counting Sundays, to consider legislation presented for approval. **He's got three options. He can:**

1. **sign the bill, which makes it a law;**
2. **veto the bill;** or
3. **take no action** on the bill during the ten-day period.

16. The President's constitutional veto power gives the executive branch a huge role in the lawmaking process. But 2/3rds of both Houses of Congress can overturn a veto and make a bill a law.

17. Didn't we say something about ten days? We sure did. If the President takes no action during those ten days, a bill becomes law. BUT if he takes no action on a bill in those ten days and the Congressional session ends, the bill dies because Congress can't override the veto. This is called a pocket veto.

18. Time for another check in. What role does the President play in the lawmaking process?

19. ANSWER TO QUESTION

20. We'll we've learned a lot so far so let's take a quick break and summarize what we've learned. Remember that the executive branch is made up of the President, vice President, and executive agencies, and the job of the executive branch is to enforce and put in place (or implement) the laws passed by Congress.

21. Executive orders are orders issued by the President that say how the executive branch will function. These can be challenged in court or not funded by Congress if Congress thinks they are illegal, wrong, or unconstitutional.

22. Remember as well that the President plays a big role in the lawmaking process. He can sign, veto, or not do anything with the bills sent to him by Congress. But if he vetoes a bill, Congress can overturn a veto with a 2/3rds vote. The President has ten days to make a decision about a bill, and no decision after ten days means the bill becomes law. UNLESS Congress is not in sessions when those ten days are up, then the bill is automatically vetoed, and this is called a pocket veto. These cannot be overturned.

23. Wow, that's a lot of the powers of the President, but there's one more we haven't talked about. One more? Yeah! Let's take a look at the appointment power.

24. One of the most important powers of the President is his ability to appoint people to government positions. Some of these positions are: ambassadors, who represent the United States when working with other countries, cabinet members, who head executive departments of government and official advisers to the President, and federal judges, including U.S. Supreme Court justices.

25. Presidential appointments are a pretty significant power. The ability of the President to appoint federal court judges to a life-long position means the influence of the President is going to be felt long after he leaves office.

26. Remember though, we have checks and balances, so even though the President appoints someone, the Senate must still decide whether or not that person can serve in office, if they even choose to give them a hearing. It takes a majority vote of 51 senators for that person to be approved, and that person must take the oath of office to serve.

27. Well, we certainly learned a lot about one of the most powerful branches and positions in the world, so let's recap our learning. Try to answer each of the following questions.

28. What are the three powers of the President of the United States described in this video?

29. ANSWER TO QUESTION

30. Let's try one more, and this is an important one. What are two ways that the power of the President can be checked by Congress?

31. ANSWER TO QUESTION