



*Constitutional Principles and
Structures: SS.7.CG.3.3*
Articles I, II, and III
READING #1

Name: _____

Date: _____



SS.7.CG.3.3 Benchmark Clarification 1: Students will recognize the structure of the legislative, executive, and judicial branches.

The U. S. government is made up of three separate branches: the legislative, the executive, and the judicial. Each branch is organized very differently.

The **legislative branch** includes the **House of Representatives** and the **Senate**. Together they are the lawmaking body of the United States called **Congress**. Article I of the Constitution discusses the powers and organization of Congress. The main job of the legislative branch is to make laws. The major items in Article I include:

- The United States will have a two-house **legislature**.
- There is a list of specific powers given to Congress.

The second branch of the U.S. government is the **executive branch**. The executive branch includes the **president** and vice president. The main job of the executive branch is to enforce the laws. Article II of the Constitution outlines the powers of the president.

The third branch of the U.S. government is the **judicial branch**. The judicial branch includes the **U.S. Supreme Court** and all lower courts, including federal, state, and local courts.

Article III of the Constitution states that there is “one supreme Court” and “inferior Courts as the Congress may from time to time ordain and establish.” Article III names only the Supreme Court and allows Congress to create all other federal, state, and local court systems.

Congress - the national legislative body of the U.S., consisting of the Senate, or upper house, and the House of Representatives, or lower house

executive branch - the branch of government that enforces the laws made by the legislative branch

judicial branch - the branch of government that interprets the laws made by the legislative branch

legislative branch - the branch of government that creates laws

legislature - governing body responsible for making laws

president - the head of the executive branch

U.S. House of Representatives - the lower house of the U.S. Congress

U.S. Senate - the upper house of the U.S. Congress

U.S. Supreme Court - the highest court of the United States; it sits at the top of the federal court system