



*The Executive and Legislative  
Branches: SS.7.CG.3.8*  
**National Government:  
Executive Branch  
READING #1**

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_



**SS.7.CG.3.8 Benchmark Clarification 1:** Students will examine the processes of the executive branch (e.g., executive order, veto, appointments).

The second branch of government created by Article II of the U.S. Constitution 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 discusses the powers of the president.

If the president does not agree with a particular bill that Congress has passed, the Constitution gives the president the power to veto the **bill**. This is an important part of the system of **checks and balances** to ensure no branch of government has too much power over the others.

If a bill becomes law, the president, as chief executive of the nation, must make sure that laws passed by Congress are enforced.

The president also has the power to issue **executive orders**, which are decisions that have the force of law. For example, an executive order signed by President Franklin Roosevelt in 1942 allowed the **forced internment** of U.S. citizens of Japanese descent during **World War II**. Executive orders do not have to be approved by Congress, although the **U.S. Supreme Court** may find them **unconstitutional** and strike them down. This is another example of checks and balances.

The president has the power to nominate (choose) people to serve in different government positions. These are known as **presidential appointments**. Examples of presidential appointments include the president's **cabinet**, U.S. Supreme Court **justices**, and **ambassadors** to different countries. As a part of the checks and balances system, the Senate must approve presidential appointments. This is a check on the president's power to nominate people who may not be qualified for a certain position or who may have problems that would keep them from being effective in their position.

**ambassador** - a person sent as the chief representative of his or her own government to another country

**bill** - a proposal for a law

**cabinet** - people appointed by the president to head executive departments of government and act as official advisers to the president

**checks and balances** - a principle of the federal government, according to the U.S. Constitution, that allows each branch of government to limit the power of the other branches

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

**executive order** - an order that comes from the U.S. President or a government agency and must be obeyed like a law

**forced internment** - the confinement of a group of people, especially during a war

**justice** - the title given to judges of the U.S. Supreme Court

**president** - the head of the executive branch

**presidential appointments** - the power of the U.S. President to choose members of his or her cabinet, ambassadors to other nations, and other officials in his or her administration

**unconstitutional** - not in agreement with the U.S. Constitution

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

**veto** - a decision by an executive authority such as a president or governor to reject a law passed by the legislative branch

**World War II** - a war that began in 1937 in Asia, in 1939 in Europe, and in 1941 in the U.S.; it lasted until 1945 and involved most of the world's countries