

**Topic:**

Shh! We're Writing the Constitution by Jean Fritz

**Time:**

Two 45-minute sessions

**Grade:**

2-6

**Core:**

5: 6050-0501

**Objectives:** Students will:

1. Read the book, Shh! We're Writing the Constitution.
2. Understand the book's two main themes:
  - a. Unity vs. States' Rights, and
  - b. The Great Compromise
3. Enjoy some fun activities centered around the Constitutional Convention.

**Procedure:**

While reading the book orally to the students or while they read it silently, the following activities can be used to extend the themes in the objectives and to make the book come alive for the reader.

**“Unity vs. States’ Rights”**

1. Have the children draw a monster with 13 heads. Each head will be the shape of a state (Use Handout 1).
2. Ask students to make up a name for each head of the monster. As an example, see the first page of the book. The Pennsylvanians were called “Lousy Buckskins.”
3. Display the pictures and have the children explain the names they chose for each state.

**“Great Compromise”**

1. Discuss the main points of the Virginia plan with the students. Have them construct a tree of the branches of government similar to the picture on Handout 2. With younger children, use Handout 2 - a.
2. Have the children divide into three groups (1) Virginia Plan, (2) New Jersey Plan, and (3) Great Compromise.
3. Using the pictures in Handout 3, or their own similar ideas, students will make posters describing the main points of each proposal.
4. Each group should have a spokesperson to report on their findings and the posters describing the main points of each proposal.

**Additional Resources:****Author:**

Gloria Skanchy

(Procedure continued)

5. Problems with each plan could be discussed if the teacher wishes to extend the learning. For example, under the Virginia Plan, what would the problems be with having a President for life?

**“Valley Forge Look”**

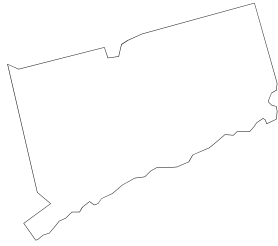
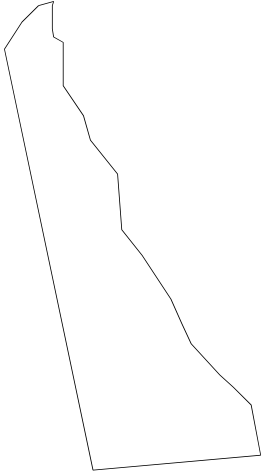
6. In Shh! We’re Writing the Constitution on page 29, it says that George Washington had the “Valley Forge look.” Discuss what the Valley Forge look would be.
7. Have the children come to school with costumes that represent the Valley Forge look.

**“Celebration”**

1. When the Constitution was ratified, a grand celebration was planned.
2. Have the students work in groups to plan a celebration, using the planning in Handout 4. You may want to carry out the best plan for celebration.

HANDOUT 1

ORIGINAL 13 STATES FOR THE MONSTER'S HEADS

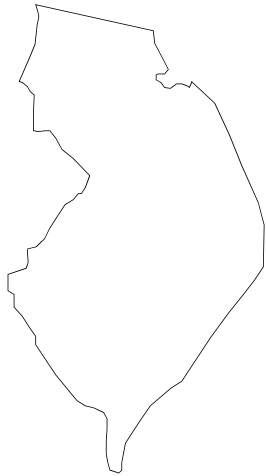


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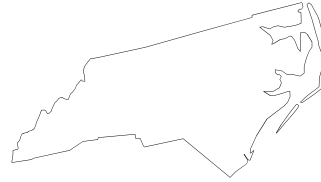
**GEORGIA**

**DELAWARE**

**H**



**CAROLINA**



**NORT**

**NEW**

**NEW JERSEY**

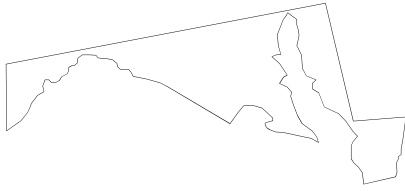


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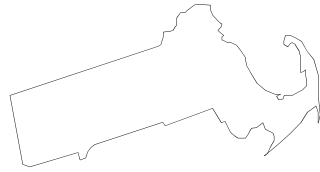
**RK**



**VIRGINIA**

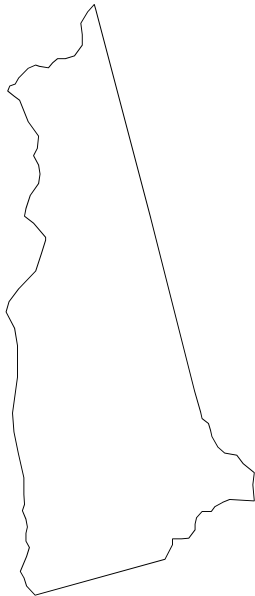


**MARYLAND**

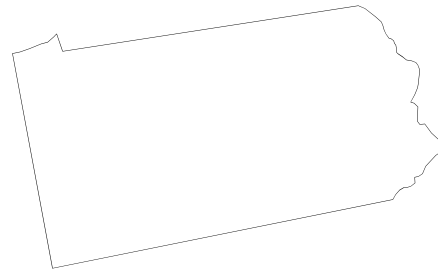


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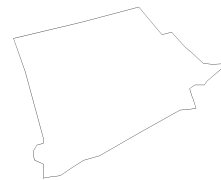
**ETTS**



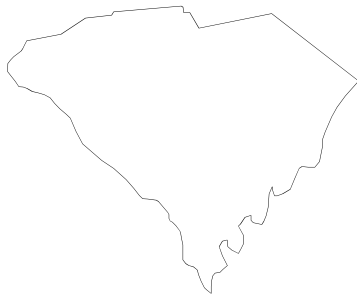
**VANIA**



**PENNSYL**



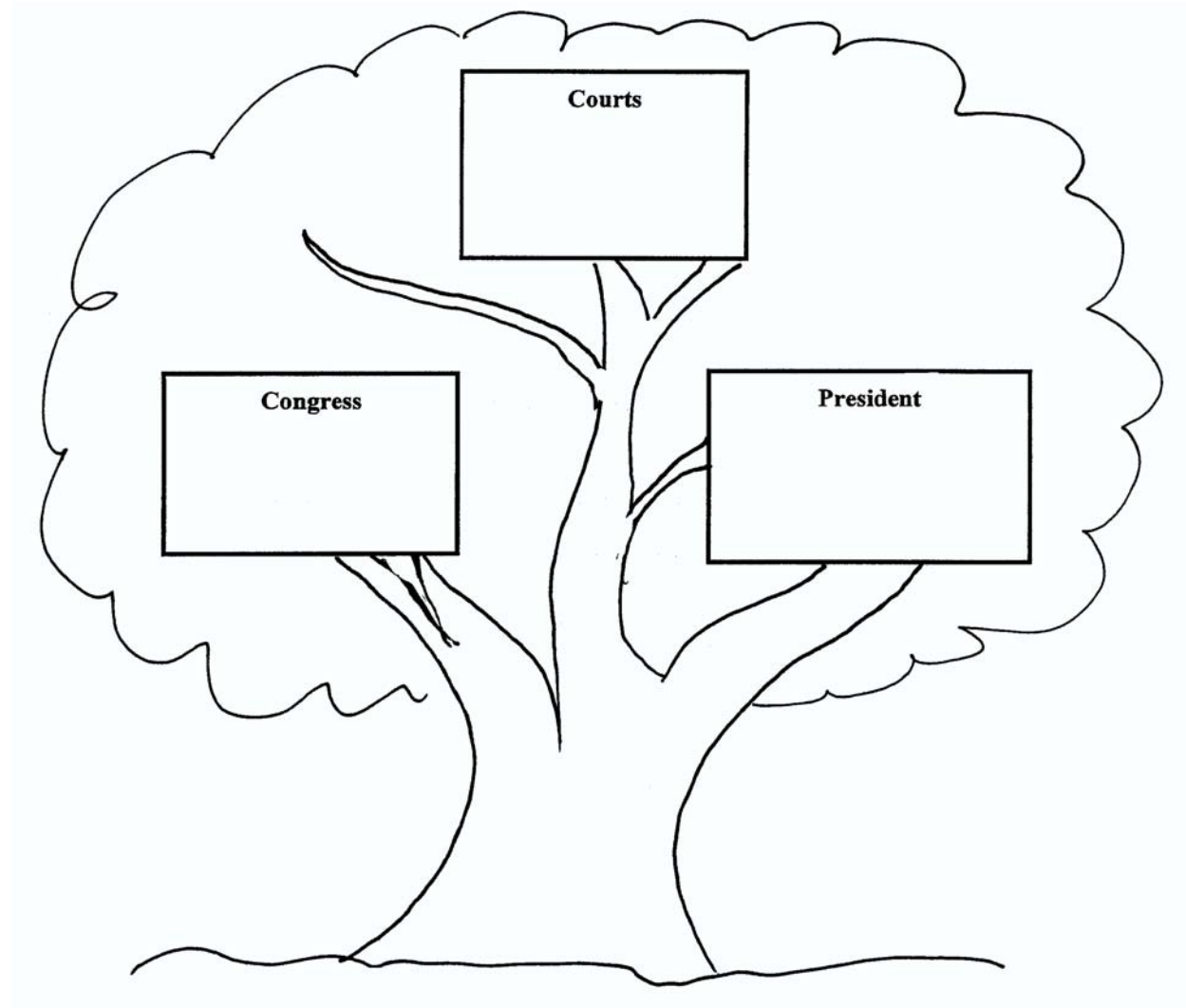
**NEW HAMPSHIRE**



**RHODE ISLAND**

## **SOUTH CAROLINA**

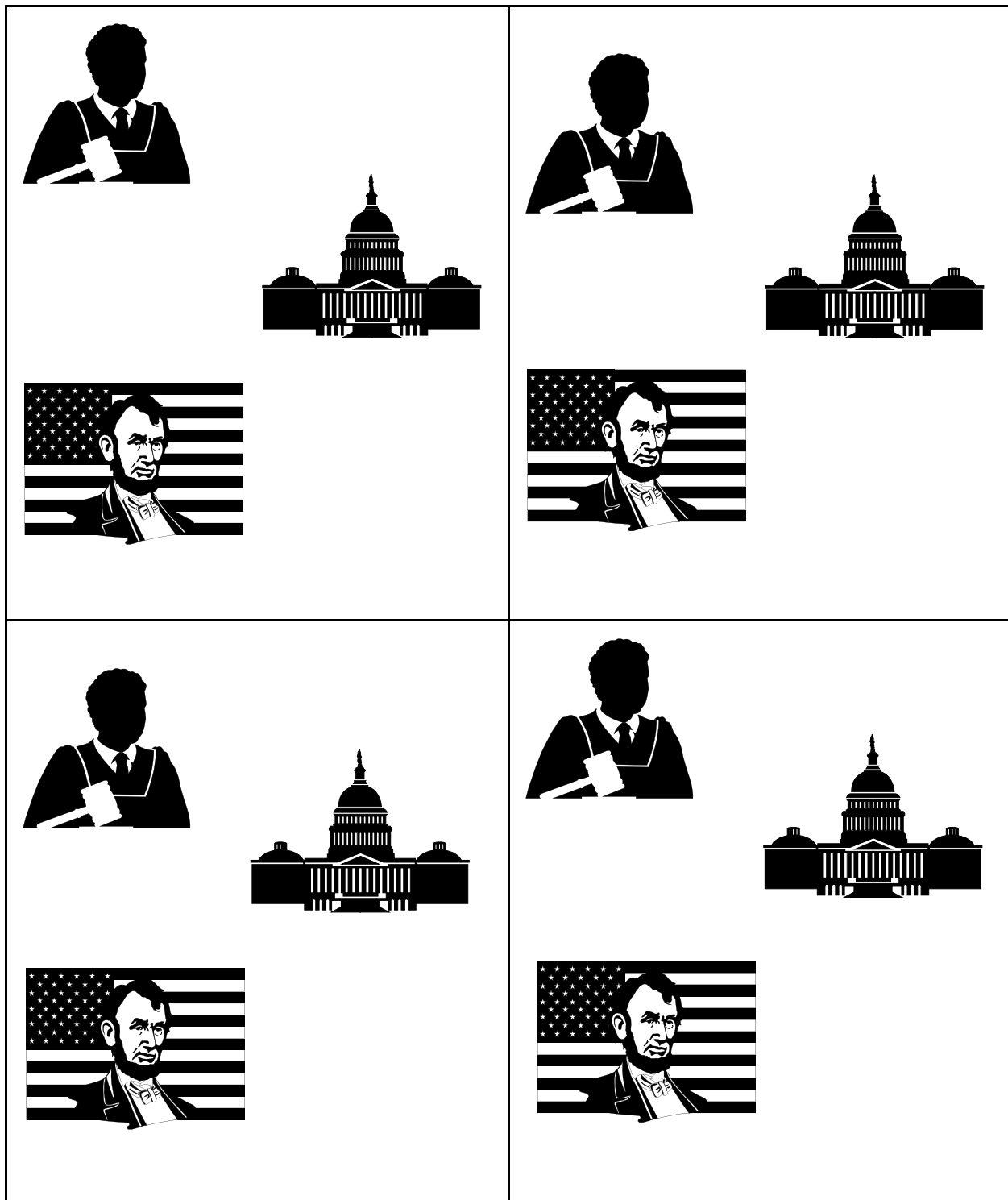
**BRANCHES OF GOVERNMENT**



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

HANDOUT 2 - a

These pictures can be used on the “Branches of Government” Tree for younger children.



**PRE-CONSTITUTIONAL PLANS OF GOVERNMENT**



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**EXECUTIVE BRANCH**

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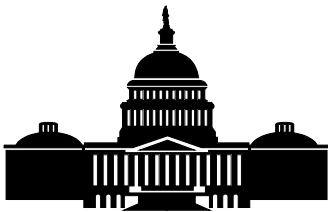
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(President and Enforcing the Laws)



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**LEGISLATIVE BRANCH**

(Law-making)

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**JUDICIAL BRANCH**  
(Courts and Interpreting the Law)

## HANDOUT 4

### PLANNING

The Planning Process includes the following steps:

- 1. Identification:** State what you want to do (problem or project) with enough additional information to explain what you plan to accomplish.  
*For example: What do you want to do?  
What else can you tell about your idea to make it clearer?*
- 2. Materials:** List the materials necessary to carry out the project.
- 3. Steps:** List the steps involved in actually carrying out the plan. Organization of materials, time, and resources should be included.  
*For example: Where are all the things you will have to do to complete the plan?  
Which is first, second, etc.?  
Step 1: Gathering materials.  
Step 2:  
Step 3:  
Last step: Putting materials away.  
Mark each step with a time showing when each step should be completed.*
- 4. Problems:** Consider problems one might encounter in carrying out the plan.  
*For example: What problems might you have in carrying out your plan?  
Will you have any problems with your materials?  
Think of as many different kinds of problems as you can.*

## PLANNING

**WHAT:**


**MATERIALS:**


**STEPS:**


**PROBLEMS:**

