

Topic:

Three Branches of
Government

Time:

1-2 hours

Grade:

4-5

Core:

4: 6040-0301
5: 6050-0502

Objectives:

Students will place public officials into three categories:

1. Rule Makers: The Legislative Branch
2. Rule Enforcers: The Executive Branch
3. Rule Appliers: The Judicial Branch

Procedure:

1. Distribute Handout 1: He Does It All! Read it as a role play with a student narrator and two other students reading the “officer” and “you.”
2. What did the officer do? (He **made** a new law, he **enforced** his new law, he **applied** his new law.) Could this happen in the United States? (Not legally.)
3. Explain about the separated powers of government. (See chart, Handout 2, for a brief explanation.)
4. Using the pictures gathered for the “Leaders: National, State, or Local” and the chalkboard, try to place the public officials into the legislative, executive, and judicial categories.
5. Summarize by stressing the names of the three branches, the functions, the concept of separation of powers and why this concept is essential to our form of government.

Additional Resources:**Author:**

Carol Lear

HANDOUT 1

HE DOES IT ALL!

It's a beautiful April afternoon. You've just arrived home from school. Even before you get through the front door, your mother meets you with an armload of books. "Take these books back to the library, would you please? We've got to get them back today, or they'll be overdue."

She then adds the magic words, "You may take the car, if you wish." Hey, that's all right! You just got your driver's license. Off you go.

When you come back to the car after dropping the books in the book drop, a police officer is standing by your car. Good grief, what could be wrong? He hands you a ticket! (With your new driver's license, you had been really careful. You were in a parallel parking place, just the right distance from the curb, and you had checked carefully for "No Parking" signs.)

You: What did I do wrong, Officer?
Officer: You can't park here.
You: But there isn't a "No Parking" sign.
Officer: I just made it no parking.
You: But you can't do that!
Officer: I can now. You're under arrest.
You: Arrest? How can I be under arrest when I didn't break a law?
Officer: You did break a law, my law. You are under arrest.
You: What happens now?
Officer: I try you.
You: Try me! You're not a judge!
Officer: I am now. You're guilty. I fine you \$25 and costs.
You: Twenty-five dollars and costs! How much are the costs?
Officer: Another \$25.
You: But I'm not guilty!
Officer: Pay me.

This make-believe officer did it all! What did he do?

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

Would this happen in the United States? _____ Explain: _____

HANDOUT 2

EACH BRANCH PLAYS A ROLE IN MAKING LAWS FOR THE COUNTRY

Branch	Who Works There	What they Do
Legislative	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ☆ Senators in the Senate ☆ Representatives in the House of Representatives ☆ The Senate and the House of Representatives make up Congress 	Make, change and repeal laws.
Executive	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ☆ President ☆ Vice President ☆ Cabinet members ☆ People who work in the Departments and Agencies 	Carry out laws. The Federal agencies and departments make federal regulations and see that laws are enforced.
Judicial	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ☆ Supreme Court Justices ☆ Federal judges 	Interpret and define what laws mean in specific cases. Determine if any laws go against the Constitution.