

LESSON PLAN

Judicial Branch

Level: Literacy, Low Beginning

Suggested Length: 1 class period

Civics Test Questions

- #13—Name one branch or part of the government.
- #37—What does the judicial branch do?
- #38—What is the highest court in the United States?
- #39—How many justices are on the Supreme Court?
- #40—Who is the Chief Justice of the United States now?

Reading Test Vocabulary

- government
- United States, U.S.
- How, What, Who
- do/does, has, is/are
- for, of, the

Writing Test Vocabulary

- United States
- has, is
- for, in, of, the

Objectives:

Students will:

- identify the judicial branch as one branch of the government
- learn about the role of the judicial branch in the government
- identify the U.S. Supreme Court as the highest court in the United States
- identify the current Chief Justice of the United States
- state the number of justices on the Supreme Court

Materials:

USCIS Civics Flash Cards or prepared sets of Civics Test items on the judicial branch

Handouts: **The Judicial Branch** and **The U.S. Supreme Court**

Optional handout (Literacy Level Writing Practice): **Supreme Court**

Judicial Branch Lesson Answer Key



Lesson Overview and Notes to Teacher:

There are three separate lessons on the branches of government: executive, legislative, and judicial. We recommend teaching these lessons in that particular order, as some content builds on the previous lesson.

The judicial branch can probably be covered in one lesson. The handouts focus on items from the System of Government section of the test. Our students may not be familiar with the Supreme Court and the levels of court

in the U.S. system. It is not necessary for them to learn about all the levels for the test, but you should explain that there are many different kinds of courts, operating on the federal, state, and local levels. The focus of this lesson is on the judicial branch and the Supreme Court. The Literacy Level Writing Practice handout **Supreme Court** highlights an item from the Civics Test.

Introduction: Tell the class you will talk about the U.S. government. Review with the class the names of the three branches of government. At this point, a student may come to the board to draw and label a diagram of the three branches. Point out that **Name one branch or part**

of the government is an item on the Civics Test. Note that any of these words (**executive, President, legislative, Congress, judicial, or courts**) are acceptable answers for this test item.

Guided Practice: Tell the students **We are going to study the U.S. courts today.** Distribute the handout **The Judicial Branch.** Review the three branches (executive, legislative, and judicial). Note that the picture of the Supreme Court is highlighted to focus the students' attention on the judicial branch. Write **supreme** on the board. Ask **What does supreme mean? (# 1, most important, etc.)** Ask **Who works here? (court, Supreme Court, Supreme Court Justices), What's the name of the building? (Supreme Court), and Where is this building?**

(Washington, DC), while you write the answers on the board. Then read each sentence 2-3 times out loud for students to hear. Have the students repeat each line after you. Have the students examine the pictures and point out that **What does the judicial branch do?** and **What is the highest court in the United States?** are items on the Civics Test. The students need to supply only one of the possible acceptable answers to the first question (**reviews laws, explains laws, resolves disputes, or decides if a law goes against the Constitution**).

Practice: Continue the same method reviewing the handout **The U.S. Supreme Court.** This handout deals directly with information students need to know about the Supreme Court. Explain that **justice** means **judge** and help the students with the pronunciation. Have the

students fill in the answers to the test questions at the bottom of the handout. Point out that **How many justices are on the Supreme Court?,** and **Who is the Chief Justice of the United States now?** are Civics Test items.

Evaluation: There are several Civics Test items to practice in this lesson. Give the students time to practice the questions and answers in pairs or small groups. You could either use several sets of the Civics Flash Cards or download the Civics Flash Cards from the Citizenship Resource Center (visit www.uscis.gov/citizenship and search for "cutout reversed Civics Flash Cards" for a printer-friendly version). For this activity, separate out the specific questions listed at the beginning of the lesson

plan. Give a set of those questions to each pair or small group of students. Have the students take turns, picking a random card and reading the item aloud for the others to answer. As the students quiz each other, circulate and offer assistance as necessary. If some are ready, let more advanced students work in pairs or groups focusing on items about all three branches of government as a general review.

Additional Writing Practice for Literacy/Low Beginning Students: The handout **Supreme Court** is included for optional copy work highlighting words from

the Reading and Writing Vocabulary lists and a Civics Test item.