

## Objectives

- Describe local, state, and federal officeholders, their duties, and how to contact them.
- Understand what services are provided by different branches and levels of government.
- Contrast the civil and criminal court systems and track a federal court case.
- Learn how a bill becomes a law.
- Study a constitutional amendment.

### Quest Project-Based Learning: Prepare to Be President

	Description	Duration	Materials	Participants
<b>STEP 1</b> Set the Stage	Read a blackline master as an introduction to the project.	15 minutes	<b>Blackline Master:</b> Quest Kick Off, Student Activity Mat 4B Quest	Whole Class
<b>STEP 2</b> Launch the Activities		5 minutes	<b>Leveled Readers:</b> <i>We Are America; Being American; Our America</i>	Whole Class
<b>Activity 1</b> Who's in Charge?	Collect information about government officials.	35 minutes	<b>Blackline Master:</b> Who's in Charge?, classroom or Library Media Center resources	Small Groups
<b>Activity 2</b> Where Do I Go to Get Things Done?	Look up government services.	20 minutes	<b>Blackline Master:</b> Where Do I Go to Get Things Done?, classroom or Library Media Center resources, completed Quest materials from Activity 1	Small Groups
<b>Activity 3</b> What Can They Do for Me?	Contact an elected representative.	30 minutes	Completed Quest materials from Activity 1, computers with e-mail access or paper letter-writing materials	Small Groups
<b>Activity 4</b> How Do Courts Work?	Compare and contrast civil and criminal courts.	20 minutes	Compare and Contrast graphic organizer, classroom or Library Media Center resources	Small Groups
<b>Activity 5</b> Local Government Field Trip (optional)	Visit a local government office.	3 hours		Whole Class
<b>STEP 3</b> <b>ELL</b> Complete the Quest Make a Who's Who in Government Booklet	Compile information about federal, state, and local government officials.	1 hour 30 minutes	Completed Quest materials; computers, printers (for physical publication); class or school Web page (for electronic publication)	Small Groups
Answer the <b>Compelling Question</b>	Discuss the compelling question.	15 minutes		Whole Class

## Quick Activities

	Description	Duration	Materials	Participants
<b>What Government Can Do</b>	Look up what different levels of government can do.	20 minutes	Student Activity Mat 3A Graphic Organizer, classroom or Library Media Center resources	Individual
<b>Primary Source:</b> Law of the Land <b>ELL</b>	Discuss the Twenty-Sixth Amendment.	15 minutes	<b>Primary Source:</b> Law of the Land	Whole Class
<b>Complete an Infographic</b>	Research how a bill becomes a law.	30 minutes	<b>Blackline Master:</b> How a Bill Becomes a Law	Small Groups
<b>Free Speech and School</b>	Discuss <i>Tinker v. Des Moines Independent School District</i> .	20 minutes	<b>Blackline Master:</b> Tracking a Court Case	Whole Class
<b>Readers Theater:</b> Vote for School Board	Perform a short skit about the candidates for a district's school board.	30 minutes	<b>Readers Theater:</b> Vote for School Board	Small Groups

# Project-Based Learning: Prepare to Be President



## Who makes decisions that matter to your community?

Welcome to Quest 3, Prepare to Be President. Your students are planning to run for president in the 2060s. This Quest will help them get to know what local, state, and federal offices they could run for to prepare for the presidency. They will research different offices, find out who holds them, and prepare a Who’s Who in Government booklet. Their study of government will help them to discuss the compelling question at the end of this inquiry.

### Objectives

- Describe the local, state, and federal officeholders, their duties, and how to contact them.
- Understand what services are provided by different branches and levels of government.
- Contrast the civil and criminal court systems and track a federal court case.

### **STEP 1** Set the Stage 15 minutes

Begin the Quest by distributing the blackline master **Quest Kick Off**. It will bring the world of the Quest to life, introducing a story to interest students and a mission to motivate them. Also, use Student Activity Mat 4B Quest to have students track their learning as they complete their Quest. At this point, they should fill in the first box, “Quest Topic.”

#### Story

Your students are planning to run for the presidency in the 2060s. They will need to hold various state, local, and federal offices to get to the top. They can start now by researching these offices.

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#### Mission

Students will make a Who’s Who in Government booklet showing the names and job descriptions of state, local, and federal officials in all three branches of government.

## STEP 2 Launch the Activities

The following five activities will help students prepare to publish their booklet by guiding them through a process of learning about government roles and offices. Note that Activity 5: Local Government Field Trip, is optional. It is not counted towards the total time for the Quest and does not appear on the students' **Quest Kick Off** blackline master. However, it is recommended that this activity be included in the Quest if possible.

You may assign the appropriate Leveled Reader for this chapter.

### Activity 1 Who's in Charge? 35 minutes

**Materials:** Blackline Master: Who's in Charge?, classroom or Library Media Center resources

Copy and distribute the blackline master **Who's in Charge?** You will probably need to give two or more copies to each student. Alternatively, each member of a group may record a different portion of the information.

Have students use classroom or Library Media Center resources to look up the names of people elected from your area. First, help students look up a variety of elected officials in your town, city, or county. These may include city councilors, a mayor or town manager, county commissioners, or judges. Then, have students research their state representative and state senator. Finally, have students research their representative in Congress and your state's two federal senators.

Have students record the information they collect on their blackline master.

If students are using Internet resources, encourage them to look for Web sites ending in .gov Some examples are:

- [www.senate.gov](http://www.senate.gov)
- [www.house.gov](http://www.house.gov)

If Internet resources are not available, have students refer to the government services section of the local phone book.

After students have gathered the information, review the job titles with them. Ask about the responsibilities of the people in each of the listed jobs. Correct any misconceptions, and explain the functions of jobs that are new to the students.

## Activity 2 Where Do I Go to Get Things Done? 20 minutes

**Materials:** Blackline Master: Where Do I Go to Get Things Done?, classroom or Library Media Center resources, completed Quest materials from Activity 1

Distribute the blackline master **Where Do I Go to Get Things Done?** Read the instructions with students and check that they understand the task.

Students may have collected some of the information needed to answer the questions in Activity 1. Suggest places where they can look up answers to the questions. In each case, point out the level of government involved: federal, state, or local. Some of the government Web sites where students can find information are as follows:

Driver's license: Find the Web site for your state's Department of Motor Vehicles. (Note that your state may delegate DMV duties to your local government.)

Downed-tree-branch removal: phone book (local level)

Register a new business: Find the Web site for registering a new business in your state.

Get a United States passport: [www.travel.state.gov](http://www.travel.state.gov) (federal level)

## Activity 3 What Can They Do for Me? 30 minutes

**Materials:** Completed Quest materials from Activity 1, computers with e-mail access or paper letter-writing materials

In this activity, students will investigate the services provided to constituents by their state and federal legislative representatives. Define the term *constituent* as "any person who lives in the representative's district." Point out that although students are too young to be voters, they are constituents.

Divide students into two groups. Have one group contact the office of your local state representative. Have the other group contact the U.S. congressional representative's office. Instruct students to use e-mail or write a letter asking what services the office provides to citizens and constituents.

#### Activity 4 How Do Courts Work? 20 minutes

**Materials:** Compare and Contrast graphic organizer, classroom or Library Media Center resources

Explain that courts apply the laws in two kinds of cases: criminal cases, in which a crime has been committed, and civil cases, in which there may not be a crime, but there is a disagreement that cannot be resolved by the people involved.

Distribute the Compare and Contrast graphic organizer. Have students look up ways in which the two court systems are alike (e.g., both use judges and juries) and different (e.g., criminal courts can set prison sentences, civil courts can make people pay damages).

Internet resource on this topic include:

- [judiciallearningcenter.org/student-center](http://judiciallearningcenter.org/student-center)

#### Activity 5 Local Government Field Trip 3 hours

This activity is optional and is not included on the student Quest Kick Off page or included in the number of sessions or total time for the Quest.

To prepare for this activity, make arrangements with your local officials to take students to visit a local government office, such as the mayor's office, city hall, a council meeting, or county or municipal court. If possible, have students meet with officials from one or more of the branches of government.

Have students prepare questions in advance. Coach them in how to address the officials they will meet. For example, introduce them to the custom of calling a mayor *Mr. Mayor* or *Madam Mayor*.

On the day of the trip, have students bring note-taking materials and take notes of the answers to their questions.

After the trip, have students write thank-you letters to the officials who met with them.

## STEP 3 Complete the *Quest*

### Part 1 Make a Who's Who in Government Booklet 1 hour 30 minutes

**Materials:** Completed Quest materials; computers, printers (for physical publication); class or school Web page (for electronic publication)

Guide students in compiling the information they have gathered into a Who's Who in Government booklet showing the names and job descriptions of federal, state, and local officials in all three branches of government.

Encourage and guide students to work collaboratively by dividing up the necessary tasks:

- Writing
- Fact checking
- Illustrating
- Proofreading
- Cover design for the booklet

Students can complete this portion in multiple sessions if necessary. Encourage students to send a copy with a thank-you note to anyone outside the classroom who helped with the Quest.

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### **Support for English Language Learners**

**Writing** Support students in organizing their Who's Who in Government booklets by offering support with categorizing the officials they researched. In addition, encourage interested and able students to use appropriate technology to communicate in writing the information they have collected.

**Entering:** Write the following category heads on the board: *Federal*, *State*, and *Local*. Say the name of one of the officials the students researched and have students come up and write an *F*, *S*, or *L* based on what category the official is in.

**Emerging:** Create a three-column chart on the board with the following category heads: *Federal*, *State*, and *Local*. Ask students to come up to the board and fill in the names of the officials they researched.

**Developing:** Hand out two copies of a three-column chart. On the first copy, ask students to write the category heads *Federal*, *State*, and *Local* and then fill in the names of the officials they researched. Then have them fill in the second copy by recategorizing the officials by their branch, using the following heads: *Executive*, *Legislative*, and *Judicial*.

**Expanding:** Ask students to work together in pairs and practice using technological tools. Have pairs create in a word processing program a three-column table with the headings *Federal*, *State*, and *Local* and have them type in the names of the officials they researched.

**Bridging:** Ask students to work individually and practice using technological tools. Have pairs create in a word processing program a three-column table with the heads *Federal*, *State*, and *Local* and have them type in the names of the officials they researched. Then have them create another three-column table with the heads *Executive*, *Legislative*, and *Judicial* and have them recategorize the names of the officials.

**Part 2 Answer the Compelling Question** 15 minutes

After students complete their booklets, encourage them to reflect on what they learned. As a class, discuss the compelling question for this Quest: “Who makes decisions that matter to your community?”

Remind students of what they learned about the three branches of government. Have them consider the influence that each branch has in their community. Remind them to think about what decisions are made at the federal, state, and local levels. They should use what they learned to answer the compelling question.

In addition, have students fill in the rest of the boxes on the Student Activity Mat 4B Quest.

# Quick Activities

## What Government Can Do

Individual  20 minutes

**Materials:** Student Activity Mat 3A Graphic Organizer, classroom or Library Media Center resources

Distribute the Student Activity Mat 3A Graphic Organizer. Have students write *What Government Can Do* at the top and then label the three boxes *Local*, *State*, and *Federal*.

Have students look up and record in the organizer actions that can be taken by the different levels of government. Encourage students to express these actions using verbs. Answers will vary and may include:

- Federal government: Declare war, make treaties, regulate interstate commerce, conduct foreign policy, issue passports
- State level: License drivers, license businesses, police highways
- Municipal, county, or local level: Issue building permits, tax property, oversee public health

Some answers are correct for more than one level of government. For example, all three levels may levy taxes, legislate, and have a police force.

## Primary Source: Law of the Land

Whole Class  15 minutes

**Materials:** Primary Source: Law of the Land

Distribute copies of **Primary Source: Law of the Land**, which includes the text of Article VI, Clause 2 of the United States Constitution (known as the Supremacy Clause) and the Twenty-Sixth Amendment.

Read the Supremacy Clause aloud and help students to interpret it. Ask: *What does this clause say about the relationship between state governments and the national government?* (The Supremacy Clause gives the U.S. Constitution the final legal authority over the states.)

Next, read the Twenty-Sixth Amendment aloud with students and ask: *What would happen if our state decided to make a state law that only people over 25 could vote?*

## **ELL** Support for English Language Learners

**Reading** Distribute **Primary Source: Law of the Land** to students. Support their understanding of the basic meaning of the text and any unfamiliar words.

**Entering:** Write unfamiliar words from the text on the board, such as *pursuance*, *treaties*, *authority*, and *abridged*. Say the words aloud, point to them, and define them. Then have students read them aloud as you point to them.

**Emerging:** Write unfamiliar words from the text on the board, such as *pursuance*, *treaties*, *authority*, and *abridged*. Say the words aloud, point to them, and define them. Ask students to read the words with you and tell the words' definitions in their own words as you point to them.

**Developing:** Write unfamiliar words from the text on the board, such as *pursuance*, *treaties*, *authority*, and *abridged*. Say the words aloud, point to them, and define them. Then, as you point to each word, have students read the word and use it in a sentence.

**Expanding:** Write unfamiliar words from the text on the board, such as *pursuance*, *treaties*, *authority*, and *abridged*. Say the words aloud, point to them, and define them. Then, as you point to each word, have students read the word, tell its definition in their own words, and use it in a sentence.

**Bridging:** Ask students to take turns reading sections of the blackline master aloud. Have them paraphrase the meaning of what they read in their own words.

## Complete an Infographic

Small Groups  30 minutes

**Materials:** Blackline Master: How a Bill Becomes a Law

Explain that an infographic uses words, illustrations, and graphics to show information. Infographics are especially useful for showing the steps in a particular process, as in this example about how a bill becomes a law.

Distribute the blackline master **How a Bill Becomes a Law**. Explain that these steps describe how a bill can become a federal law.

Ask students to work in small groups and research how a bill becomes a law in the United States Congress. Then, they should cut out the steps at the bottom of the page and paste them into the correct boxes in the infographic. Tell students that each step will be used once and only once.

## Free Speech and School

Whole Class 20 minutes

**Materials:** Blackline Master: Tracking a Court Case

Begin with a basic introduction to the court system. Ask: *Why would someone need to go to court?* Listen to student answers, then explain that someone might need to go to court because he or she had been accused of a crime and had become a defendant in a criminal case. The person could have a disagreement with a neighbor or in a business transaction that could not be resolved. This would make the person either a plaintiff (the one who takes the case to court) or a defendant in a civil case.

Then explain that if someone who is involved in a court case has reason to believe the court did not hear the case fairly, he or she can appeal the decision to a higher court.

Distribute the blackline master **Tracking a Court Case**. Referring to the diagram, explain that a case can reach the United States Supreme Court either from state courts or from federal court. People appeal cases from lower courts all the way up to the Supreme Court.

Explain that the Supreme Court chooses what cases to hear. It does not have to hear every appeal.

Next, give an overview of the case *Tinker v. Des Moines Independent School District*. Tinker was one of a group of students who wore black armbands to school as a silent antiwar protest. She and the other students were suspended. The students' parents sued the school for violating their right to free speech. A United States district court sided with the school principal, but the Supreme Court reversed the district court's decision.

Read the quotation and ask students to consider its meaning. Ask: *How is being at school different from being in another public place, like a park?*

A Supreme Court Justice wrote about the Tinker case:

“The District Court recognized that the wearing of an armband for the purpose of expressing certain views is the type of symbolic act that is within the Free Speech Clause of the First Amendment. . . . First Amendment rights, applied in light of the special characteristics of the school environment, are available to teachers and students. It can hardly be argued that either students or teachers shed their constitutional rights to freedom of speech or expression at the schoolhouse gate.”