

# Leaders and Government

KIDS  
DISCOVER



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# CITIZENS EVERYWHERE

Welcome to Any Town, USA! It's a lot like your town. It is a community where people live and work. The people who belong to the community are its citizens.

Citizens have certain rights, or freedoms. They can live where they

want and do what they want, as long as they do not break any laws, or rules.

Look at the citizens in Any Town, USA. Read about their responsibilities, or the things they must do, and learn about the rules they follow every day.



← **Students have** responsibilities at school. These students are learning and working hard. Teachers and principals make rules to help students learn and work together.

→ **Communities have** rules that must be followed. The crossing guard says STOP, so the cars stop. This keeps everyone safe.



Are you  
a good  
citizen?

GO!  
→



→ **This coach is a** good citizen! He is volunteering to help kids in his community.



Cleaned  
your  
room?  
Move ahead.

# Follow the Rules!

You know all about rules because you have them at home and at school. They keep you safe and help you do what is right. Laws are rules that all citizens must follow. There are consequences, or effects, if you break a rule or a law.

- If you break a rule at home or in school, you might make something unsafe or unfair for your family or classmates.
- If you break a law in your community, someone might get hurt, or you might cause disorder for other citizens.

Rules and laws help us solve problems. They provide fair solutions.

↓ **Communities have** consequences when rules and laws are not followed. This police officer is writing a parking ticket. That is because a driver broke the law.



↓ **Family members** have responsibilities at home. This man is mowing the lawn.



← **These people are** on the sidewalk. They have a right to enjoy their community.



## Classroom Rules

- Be Kind
- Raise Your Hand
- Do Your Best!

Volunteered  
at an animal  
shelter?  
Move ahead.



Followed  
classroom rules?  
Go to the  
next page.



# FOR THE PEOPLE

Now that we've talked about rules and laws, think about this: Who makes all these laws? Who made the law that you have to go to school, and who made the law that you must stop at a red light in the street? The people in government did, that's who.

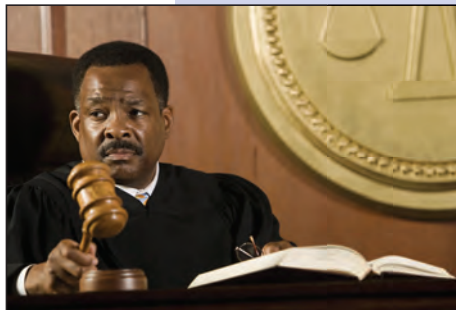
What is a government?

It is a group of citizens that works together to run a community. The government's job is to take care of citizens. It is there to help YOU, but exactly how does it do that?

## What Does the Government Do For You?

The government provides services to help citizens and their communities. Government services help to keep everyone safe and happy.

➔ **The government** provides fire departments that keep communities safe. They put out fires and rescue citizens in need. They also teach citizens about fire safety.



⬆ **Courts are an** important part of government. People do not always agree on things. Courts make sure that people are treated fairly. Judges are in charge of courts. Courts and judges protect the rights of citizens.

Do you know government services?



• Police  
Move ahead.

• Firefighters  
Move ahead.



• Hospitals  
Move ahead.



← **The government** provides police departments that serve and protect communities. They also take part in community activities.



← **The government** provides workers that build and fix roads. This allows citizens to travel safely in vehicles. They can move in and between their communities.



↑ **The government** provides education. This allows citizens to learn about the world and improve their own communities.



↑ **The government** protects and cares for park land. This allows citizens to enjoy parks in their community. The government protects state and national parks, too.

### Taxes help the government take care of its citizens!

How does the government pay for all of the services it provides? A lot of its money comes from taxes. Citizens pay taxes, or money to the government. The government decides the best way to use the taxes to provide services.



• Courts  
Move ahead.



• Garbage Pick-up  
Move ahead.



• Roads  
and Bridges  
Move ahead.



• National Parks  
Enjoy, then  
move ahead.



# FOLLOW THE LEADER

You can usually pick out a leader right away. That person may make important decisions. He or she may give tasks or jobs to other people. A leader is in charge of a group of people, but a

▼ **Citizens vote for,** or choose, government leaders. They do this through an election. During this event, they may fill out ballots in

secret. A ballot is a piece of paper that tells who a citizen chooses. Citizens cast their votes when they turn in their ballots.

## YOUR MAYOR



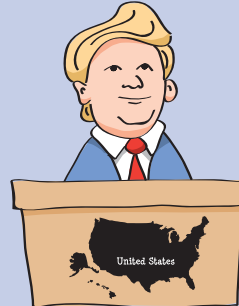
**A mayor leads a city** or a town. The mayor makes sure that citizens follow community laws.

## YOUR GOVERNOR

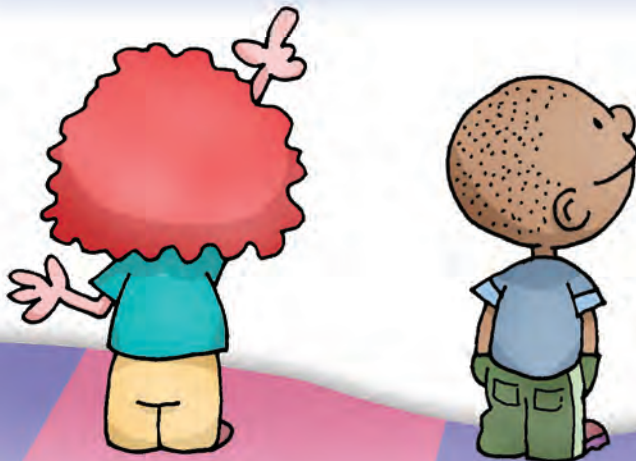


**A governor leads a state.** The governor makes sure that citizens follow state laws.

## YOUR PRESIDENT



**The president leads our country.** The president makes sure that citizens follow the country's laws.



## Cast Your Vote!



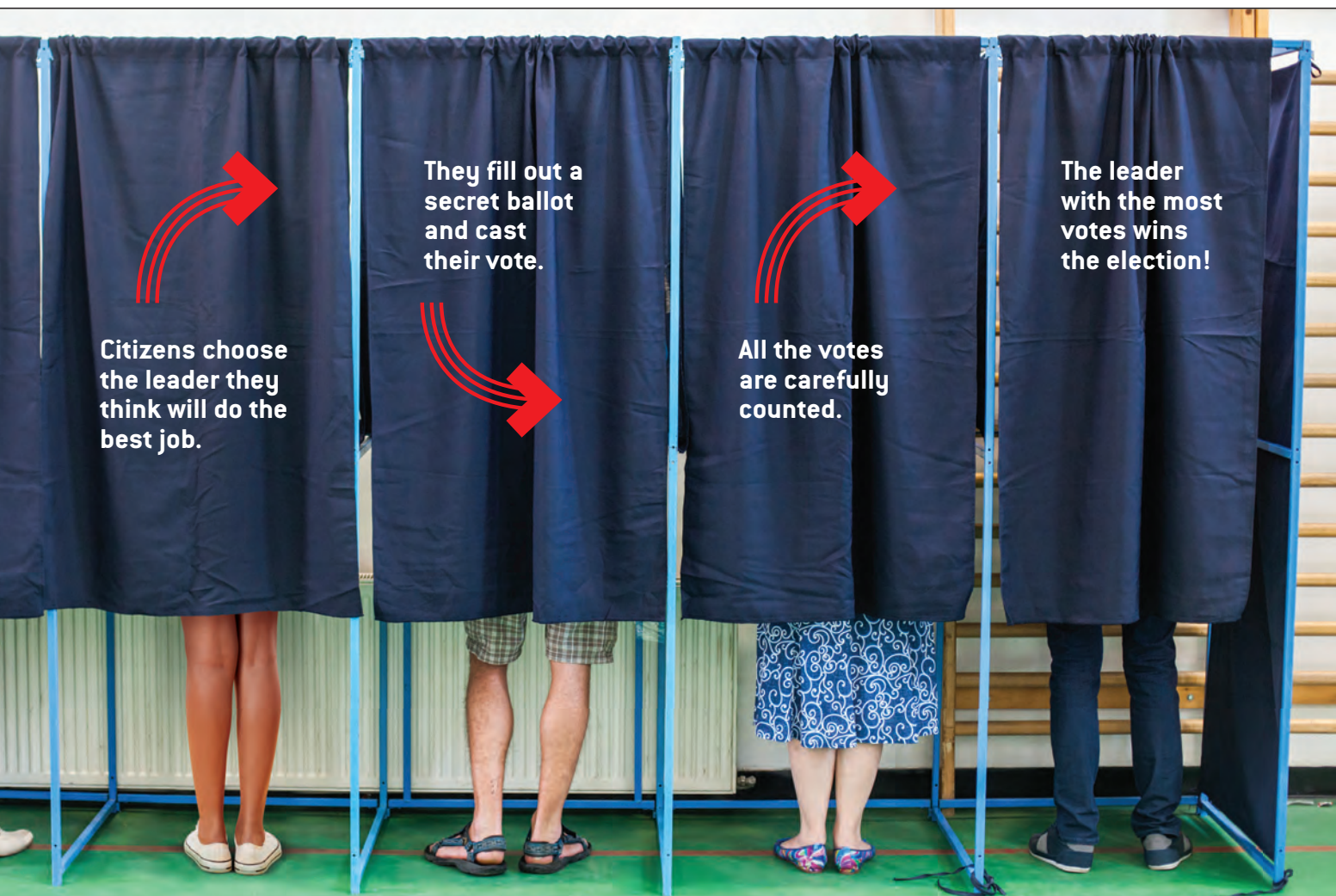
## Do you know who citizens vote for?

Citizens vote for leaders at all levels of government. They vote at the local, state, and national levels.

leader also works hard to help others get a job done.

Do you have a class president at school? Think about your student leaders. They work with adults and other students to reach goals. That's

because a good leader wants to succeed. You try to choose good student leaders. Citizens try to choose good government leaders, too!



## LOCAL

Mayor  
County Clerk  
Councilperson

## STATE

Governor  
Senator  
Representative

## NATIONAL

President  
Vice President  
Representative  
Senator



Move ahead to  
parts of the  
government.



# THREE EQUAL PARTS

Do you have brothers and sisters? Does each family member have a chore at home? Maybe your older brother has to take out the garbage, and your younger sister has to set the table. Meanwhile, you have to wash the dishes. You all check on each other to make sure you did your chores correctly, right? After all, it's only fair!

Government works a lot like this. It has different groups, called branches, with different jobs to do. Each branch watches over the others to make sure their jobs are done correctly—just like brothers and sisters!

## Checks and Balances

The U.S. government is made up of three branches that all have equal power. One branch of government can stop the actions of another branch. The government was set up this way on purpose. It is called “checks and balances.” In this way, none of the branches can become more powerful than the others.

### Executive

The executive branch carries out the laws and makes sure that everyone obeys them. The president is the leader of the executive branch. The president can suggest new laws to Congress.

Do you know  
how different  
parts of the  
government  
work?





## Judicial

The judicial branch makes sure that the laws are fair. Courts make decisions about laws. Sometimes courts say that laws need to be changed because they are not fair to everyone. The Supreme Court is the highest court in the United States. Its justices have an important job. They decide on laws for the entire country!



## The U.S. Constitution

The U.S. Constitution is a set of rules for our government. It was signed in 1787, when the U.S. created the government we have today. The Constitution describes the branches of government and the rights that citizens have. Through the years, our government has added new laws and rights to this document.

## Legislative

The legislative branch is made up of members of Congress. The members are elected by citizens from their states. Congress makes the laws that citizens must follow. It also decides on which taxes citizens must pay.



Move ahead to  
state and local  
governments.



# WASHINGTON, D.C.

The president lives and works in the White House. The White House is in Washington, D.C., the capital of the United States. The capital is where the country's government meets and works. State governments are in the capital of each state. You can take a tour of the White House if you visit Washington, D.C.!





# LOCAL, STATE, AND NATIONAL

Think about the people in your school. Students, teachers, and principals have different jobs and responsibilities, but they are alike in some ways. They are all there to do their best work.

Government is like school in some ways. It has three levels: local, state, and national. Each level has different powers, jobs, and responsibilities.

➔ **Who looks out for the people in your community?** That's the job of the local government. The local government runs the police and fire departments. It also makes sure its citizens have schools and garbage collection.



⬇ **The state** government takes care of projects that run across the state. They build or repair state highways. They also run railroads and bus services. State governments take care of state parks, too, so that people can enjoy them!

Do you know  
what state  
and local  
governments  
do?



• Police  
Move ahead.

• Firefighters  
Move ahead.



• Schools  
Move ahead.



• Garbage  
Pick-up  
Move ahead.



# More Branches

Local and state governments usually have three branches, like the national government. How are local and state governments alike?

**LOCAL GOVERNMENTS**  
work for their communities.

The **judicial branch** is made up of courts and judges. They make sure that local laws are carried out fairly.

The **executive branch** includes the mayor, who makes sure that community laws are obeyed.

The **legislative branch** is made up of a city or town council.

The **council** is an elected group that makes choices for the whole community. It may work with the mayor to make new town laws.

The **legislative branch** is made up of a state legislature.

The **legislature** is like a large town council. It is a group of elected citizens that makes choices for the state. The legislature meets in the state capital to make state laws.

**STATE GOVERNMENTS**  
work for their state.

The **judicial branch** is made up of courts and judges. They make sure that state laws are carried out fairly.

The **executive branch** includes the governor, who makes sure that state laws are obeyed.



• Highways  
Move ahead.



• Railroads  
Move ahead.

• State Parks  
Move ahead.



Move ahead.  
See how  
government  
is done in  
other countries.



# ONE WORLD, MANY NATIONS

“You’re allowed to stay up past nine o’clock on a school night? Whoa! I have to go to bed at eight.”

“Wow, your parents are really strict!”

How many times have you compared your family to your friends’ families? Sometimes your family does things in the same way as other families. Other times, your family is very different—for better or for worse.

Nations, or countries, are a lot like families. They have their own governments and laws. Their leaders may rule in very different ways. Some governments are a lot like the U.S. Other nations have a single ruler who makes all laws. That ruler may decide when a law has been broken or how someone should be punished. Then there are nations that fall somewhere between these two examples. A nation’s leader may be chosen in different ways, as well.

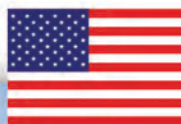


↑ **Some nations** choose their leaders through elections. The United States is one of those

nations. There are many other nations like this around the world. Citizens vote for the leaders they think will do the best job.



**How do other governments work?**



The United States elects its leaders.

↓ **Some nations** are ruled by a few leaders. Some are elected and some are not. The people of France elect their president and two

legislative groups. Then the president chooses a prime minister to be in charge of the government.



France has a president and a prime minister.



↑ **Some nations** have leaders that are born into families of leaders.

New leaders take the place of their parents when they get older. These

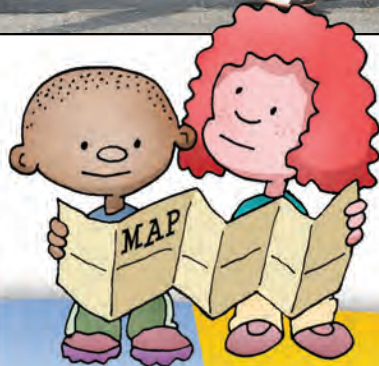
nations do not have elections to choose their leaders. Saudi Arabia's leaders

have been from the same family for over 100 years!

## Bhutan: A Nation of Change



← **Bhutan is a nation** that has been ruled by one family for many years, just like Saudi Arabia. Today, Bhutan has a young king who wants to change parts of the government. He wants the people of Bhutan to be more involved in their government. This king loves his people. The people of Bhutan love their young king, too!



Saudi Arabia's leaders are born into the family.



Bhutan's government is changing.

Move ahead.  
See the world  
at work.



# A PLAYGROUND OF NATIONS

How do you get along with others in the school playground? Do you play with everyone or only your close friends? What happens if you and your friends don't agree about something?

Believe it or not, these are questions that nations, and even groups of people, ask themselves every day. Picture the nations of the world in one

big playground. They all make and carry out laws in different ways, but they have to learn to get along!

Look at the children in this playground. They are like different countries, or different groups with their own separate ideas. They must find ways to work together.



↓ Nations might write a treaty to help them get along. This is a set of rules that nations agree to follow. Treaties keep nations from going to war, just like playground rules keep kids from fighting.

## Playground Rules

Take turns.  
No pushing or fighting.  
Share the equipment.

↑ Sometimes nations will disagree. It is important that they talk about the problem, instead of fighting. They need to come to a fair agreement so that they can get along, just like these two kids.



↓ **This kid is in trouble and needs help.** Sometimes a nation is in trouble, too. Most nations try to be friendly and help each other in times of trouble. They also share ideas to find solutions to problems.

## Meet Some Ambassadors!



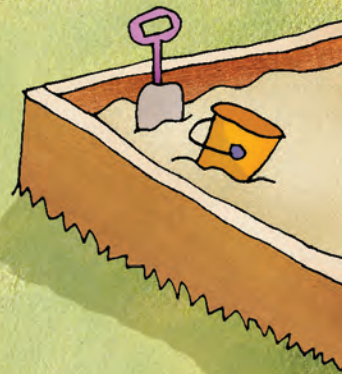
Nations have ambassadors. These are people who speak and act for their government while in another country. They live and work in an embassy there. Some ambassadors meet at the United Nations building in New York City. The flags of all the member nations fly there. The ambassadors come so that they can talk to other members and reach fair agreements. They do not want to go to war.



↑ **Nations trade things** the way that kids trade lunch. One nation might need something that the other one has. They agree to trade so that they both get what they need.



↑ **This kid is** showing a fan from her culture. Nations share their cultures with the world through art, music, and writing. This helps nations understand each other better.



# Activities

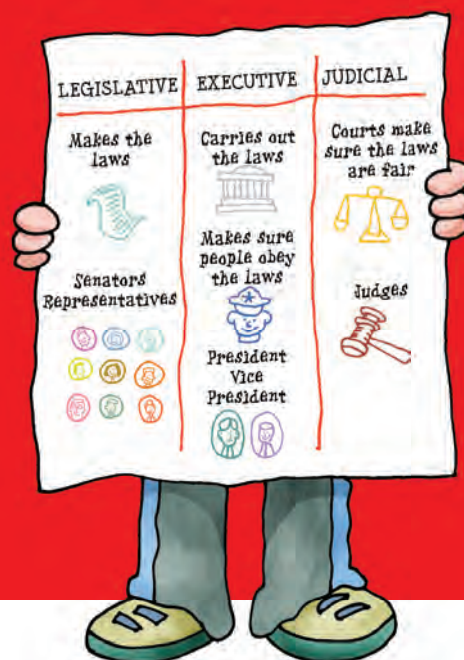


## A SKIT

What if you were a member of a city council? How would you be able to help people in your community? Think about the important jobs that you would do. Act out a skit to show how you would work with others to make laws and resolve problems in your city.

## MAKE A CHART

What does our government do? Our government is organized so important work is taken care of by people in different roles. Make a chart with three columns, one for each branch of government. Your chart should tell about the responsibilities of the executive, legislative, and judicial branches. Be sure to include the names of important positions for each branch of our government. Use color and pictures in your chart, too, to communicate your ideas.



## MAKE CONNECTIONS WITH THESE RELATED TITLES



### Heroes

What do Abraham Lincoln, Marie Curie, and Jackie Robinson have in common? They are all heroes. Learn how individuals help shape history and society through their action and character.



### Location

Your community. Your state. Your country. Your planet. Where in the world are you? You'll find the answer on a map, in a photograph, or on a globe. Discover the biggest areas of land. Read about the smallest bodies of water. Find cities, towns, and so much more.



### Communities and Resources

You live in a community with lots of other people. Everyone gets hungry, but food doesn't grow in stores. Everyone gets thirsty, but water doesn't start out in the faucet. Find out how people get these and many other resources.



## CALIFORNIA STANDARDS

**HSS 2.3 Students explain governmental institutions and practices in the United States and other countries.**

**2.3.1.** Explain how the United States and other countries make laws, carry out laws, determine whether laws have been violated, and punish wrongdoers. **2.3.2.** Describe the ways in which groups and nations interact with one another to try to resolve problems in such areas as trade, cultural contacts, treaties, diplomacy, and military force.

## LEARN MORE ONLINE!

- Citizens help neighbors complete tasks that are hard to do alone.
- What are some ways in which the government helps during a natural disaster?
- Why can't everyone at school discuss and vote on every decision?
- Thurgood Marshall (above) was a justice for the U.S. Supreme Court. What important court case did he win?
- Local governments are in villages, towns, cities, and counties.



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## GRADE 2 TITLES

Family Histories

Communities and Resources

Location

Why People Work

North America

Heroes

**Leaders and  
Government**

America: Heritage and  
Culture

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