

Delaware Recommended Curriculum

This unit has been created as an exemplary model for teachers in (re)design of course curricula. An exemplary model unit has undergone a rigorous peer review and jurying process to ensure alignment to selected Delaware Content Standards.

Unit Title: Purposes of Government

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Content Area: Social Studies

Grade Level: 4

Summary of Unit

This unit's main objectives are to promote an understanding of the *general* purposes of governments and to imprint a sort of mental map of the structures of government at our federal and state (Delaware) levels.

The purposes of government are the reasons why people around the world create governments. The purposes for creating the United States government are outlined in the Preamble to our federal Constitution. They include: to form a more perfect Union, insure domestic tranquility, provide for the common defense, promote the general welfare, and secure the blessings of liberty.

The overarching reason why Delawareans created their government – “to advance [our] happiness” - is described in the Preamble to our *state* constitution.

Our federal and state constitutions alone offer evidence of unique reasons why governments exist. But one can look at governments around the world and find common reasons why any government exists. While this unit exposes students to the specific purposes for which governments in the U.S. and Delaware were created, the understanding targeted expects students to learn the *general* reasons [or purposes] why virtually *any* government exists. The *general* reasons or purposes that command attention here are: to establish justice, manage conflicts, provide national security, provide public services, manage resources, and to maintain order.

Once students demonstrate their understanding of the purposes of governments, attention will shift to the structures of our federal and state governments. While, in theory and in part, governments are designed (or "structured") to fulfill their purposes in efficient and effective ways, the expectation that students understand the relationships between purposes and structures is postponed until later grades. This unit lays the important foundation for the deeper, relational understanding by previewing and providing students with a mental image of how governments are arranged at the federal and state levels. Students who leave this unit being able to diagram the structure of both their state and federal governments are well prepared for learning later how structure serves purpose.

Stage 1 – Desired Results

What students will know, do, and understand

Delaware Content Standards

- **Civics Standard One 4-5a:** Students will understand that governments have a variety of structures and exist for many purposes and that in America these are explained in the United States and State constitutions.

Common Core State Standards Integrated in Instruction

Grade 4 Reading Standards for Informational Text

- Explain events, procedures, ideas, or concepts in a historical text, including what happened and why, based on specific information in the text.
- Determine the meaning of general academic and domain-specific words or phrases in a text relevant to grade 4 Social Studies.

Grade 4 Writing Standards

- Produce clear and coherent writing in which the development, organization, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience.

Grade 4 Speaking and Listening Standards

- Report on a topic or text, tell a story, or recount an experience in an organized manner, using appropriate facts and relevant, descriptive details to support main ideas or themes; speak clearly at an understandable pace.

Big Idea

- Purposes of Government

Unit Enduring Understanding

- Governments are created then structured to address the basic needs of the people living in a society.

Unit Essential Questions

- Why do governments exist?
- How are governments in the United States and Delaware structured?

Knowledge and Skills

Students will know...

- the general purposes for which governments are created;
- the basic structures of governments in the United States: 3 branches (legislative, executive, judicial) and federalism (diffusion of authority/power between national and state levels of governments);

- that purposes and structures of government are outlined in constitutions;
- specific purposes of the United States government are in the Preamble to the Constitution;
- vocabulary: purpose, structure, legislative, executive, judicial, federal government.

Students will be able to...

- explain why societies have government;
- identify the needs within a fictitious community that lacks a government;
- recommend ways in which the needs of a community lacking government can be addressed.

Stage 2 – Assessment Evidence

Evidence that will be collected to determine whether or not Desired Results are achieved

Important: The benchmark for which this unit is written highlights two aspects of government: purposes and structure. Attention to these aspects is weighted heavily toward purposes in this benchmark. The purposes of government should be “mastered,” the structures of governments need only be introduced or previewed.

Consequently, the purposes of government are treated first in this unit and the Transfer Task described below should be completed before moving on to Lesson 2 which introduces students to structure.

Essential Questions Measured by the Transfer Task

- Why do governments exist?

Prior Knowledge	Now that you understand the purposes for governments around the world, you are ready to tell more citizens about them.
Problem	<p>Legislators in the U.S. government are concerned that American citizens do not understand the reasons why a government acts like it does. For example, a local government might want to raise taxes in order to fund a new public school. But if all citizens hear is that they might have to pay more taxes, without understanding why the taxes are raised, they will not support it.</p> <p>The legislators decide to ask a local radio and TV station to create a public service announcement, or PSA. PSAs are messages in the public interest shown on TV, radio, or the internet by the media without charge, with the goal of raising awareness about an important issue in society. A typical PSA is part of a public awareness campaign to inform or educate the public about an issue.</p>
Role/ Perspective	You are part of a team that has been hired by the local radio and TV station to create a PSA that will teach other students about the general purposes of governments.
Product/ Performance	Write a script for a 1 minute public service announcement on the purposes of government.

Teachers may wish to use a speaking rubric such as [this](#) or use a shorter one composed of examples/non-examples, such as [this](#).

Stage 3 – Learning Plan

Design learning activities to align with Stage 1 and Stage 2 expectations

Essential Question

- Why do governments exist? Or, what are the purposes of government?

Background

Students are asked to examine life on a fictitious island where there is no government to learn about the general purposes of governments around the world.

Instructional Strategies

Strategy 1: Gathering Information

Quick-Write

Ask students what might happen if a class were left alone without a teacher for about half an hour or even an entire day. Or, what might happen if they showed up for sports practice and the coach was an hour late? Ask them to focus their answers on what the children in each situation might do. Tell them they are going to read a short story about a whole country where everyone does what they want to do.

Pass out [Resource 1, Frenzy Island](#).¹ Have students read alone, in partners, or in small groups as needed for reading support.

People living on Frenzy Island are having problems. The people do whatever they want. If one family likes the lawn furniture of another family, they just take it. The strong people push the weaker people around. People drive as fast as they want and are always running into each other. Many of the roads have large potholes which cause many accidents. Some people are homeless and do not have enough food to feed their family. Sometimes, a group of the weaker people join together to get even with one of the stronger people. Nobody feels safe on the island, especially since "outsiders" have been rowing close to the island. The "outsiders" have been identified as citizens of neighboring Meany Island. The many problems on Frenzy Island are beginning to frustrate the citizens.

¹ The lexile level of this reading is 790, within the range for fourth grade.

After the students have read the story, have them complete a quick write.² Have students write for 3 minutes in response to one of the following stems:

“I wonder why ...”

“I think that...”

Remind students that they are expected to write for the entire 3 minutes, without much concern over grammar and spelling. This is informal writing intended to frame their reactions to the text.

Have students independently answer the questions which follow [Resource 1](#). Set a timer for 5 minutes and allow the students to “browse” amongst their classmates in order to find one peer with the same answer as their own and one peer with an idea that is different from theirs. Have them jot down the names of these other students with similar or different answers on their papers.

Reconvene the class and ask students to share ideas that they found similar and some that were different from their own. Highlight and reiterate answers which support the understanding that there is a lack of authority on the island and that some form of authority, control, or government is needed.

² Quick writes are planned interludes during class for students to respond to learning and make personal connections to a text. Teachers provide a stem that students can use to frame their thinking.
Buehl, Doug. (2014). *Classroom Strategies for Interactive Learning, 4th Edition*. Newark, DE: International Reading Association. Pages 168-172.

Strategy 2: Extending and Refining Graphic Organizer

Pass out [Resource 2 Frenzy Island Analysis](#)³ and read the directions aloud to the class. In small groups, have students fill out the first two columns. Reconvene and share answers to be sure that everyone has a complete chart (*the third column will be used later in the lesson*). At this point the chart should look similar to this:

Problem	Solution (sample responses)	Purpose of Government
Stealing furniture	Punish thieves	
Strong push weak, gang up on others	Settle arguments	
Drive fast and crash	Make traffic laws	
Potholes	Fix potholes	
Homeless, not enough food	Build shelter, pass out food	
Outsiders threaten	Make an army	

Ask the students for examples of laws with which they are familiar, and the problems they address.

³ Adapted from ["From Disorder To Order,"](#) by Dawn Freebery & Jill Szymanski, Social Studies Coalition of Delaware

Strategy 3: Extending and Refining Close Reading

Remind the class of the suggestions they made for solving the problems on Frenzy Island in Strategy 1 included creating an authority or a government that would make laws and look out for the citizens.

Explain that the Constitution of the United States was written to form a new government in the United States. Ask the students why the people on Frenzy Island might want to form a government.

Provide students with the text of [Resource 3 Preamble](#). Then, follow these steps:

Preamble to the United States Constitution

We the People of the United States, in Order to form a more perfect Union, establish Justice, insure domestic Tranquility, provide for the common defense, promote the general Welfare, and secure the Blessings of Liberty to ourselves and our Posterity, do ordain and establish this Constitution for the United States of America.

First, the teacher will read the text aloud. Then, the teacher will read the text aloud again and stop to discuss some of the key vocabulary. Tell students that the words in **bold** are words that they might be able to figure out from the reading and words underlined have a short definition to help them.

On the second reading, students should make notes on the vocabulary in the margin, and write any thoughts that they feel may be important. Emphasize that students are not expected to know all the words or understand everything in the text right away. The text will be read closely several times to uncover what it means.

Note to the Teacher:

Different governments in different places may list unique purposes or describe them using different words, but the purposes on Resource 4 **generalize** reasons why ANY government exists, not just the one established for the United States.

Use the following method to address each of the questions on [Resource 3 Preamble](#).

- **Re-read** the section of the text in the left column.
- **Take notes** to help you respond to the questions.
- **Discuss** the questions in groups of 2 – 3.
- **Write** what you think is the *best* answer to each question.

Show the [Schoolhouse Rock video about the Preamble](#) to provide a visual and audio reinforcement of the vocabulary and meaning of the Preamble.

*NOTE: An advertisement covers the video when the webpage loads.
Look for the "x" in the upper right-hand corner to close it and reveal
the video underneath.*

Strategy 4: Extending and Refining Student Friendly Vocabulary Explanations⁴

This strategy is used for constructing word knowledge as networks of personal connections and useful associations. **We will use one of the root words from the Preamble as an example.**

Model for students how to explain a word rather than seeking a definition. The explanation should include:

- The word is described in everyday language;
- The word is explained in connected language;
- The explanation exemplifies multiple contexts that feature the word in action;
- The explanation includes *you*, *something*, or *someone* to help students ground the new word in familiar situations.

For example, a teacher modeling an explanation of the word *tranquility* might say,

If something is tranquil, it is peaceful and calm. Someone who is tranquil is probably happy and peaceful. A place that is tranquil would be calm and orderly.

Solicit students to give their own examples of the word in action. Students need guided opportunities to experiment with contexts that might feature the new word.

For example, students experimenting with the meaning of tranquil or tranquility might say, "The ocean is tranquil today. The waves are very small."

This is a time to clear up misconceptions about a word's usage. For example, a student who offers, "The countries were tranquil with one another" has overgeneralized the connection between *tranquil* and *peaceful*.


Have students consider the question, who would use this word? Ask them to imagine the kinds of people who would likely be regular users of this word and to create sentences that reflect what these people might say, such as:

- A business owner in a beach town: "Visitors would enjoy the tranquil beaches and warm sunshine."
- A student on a Friday afternoon: "I just need someplace tranquil to rest from this busy week!"
- A teacher on a Friday afternoon: "I just need someplace tranquil to rest from this busy week!"

⁴ Buehl, Doug. (2014). *Classroom Strategies for Interactive Learning, 4th Edition*. Newark, DE: International Reading Association. Pages 206-209.

Check for Understanding

Have students keep regular records of the new words you devote to explicit instruction. A word study guide features a graphic organizer that tracks facets of a word's meaning.

Word	Found in this sentence	Explanation	Examples	Visual Image
tranquil	Visitors would enjoy the tranquil beaches and warm sunshine.	When you are in a tranquil place, it is calm, quiet, orderly, and peaceful.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• My backyard is tranquil at sundown every summer evening.• Because my grandparents wanted a more tranquil environment, they moved to the mountains.	 A small, stylized illustration of a tropical island. It features a single palm tree with green fronds and a brown trunk, situated on a small patch of yellowish-brown land. The land is surrounded by white, foamy waves crashing against a light blue background.

Strategy 5: Extending and Refining Graphic Organizer

Display [Resource 4 - Purposes of Government](#). Present and explain the purposes of government listed on the visual. Ask students if they detect connections between the “general” purposes of government on [Resource 4](#) and the purposes found in the Preamble.

Work with the whole class to create a Venn diagram that compares the purposes of the United States government outlined in the Preamble and the general purposes presented on [Resource 4](#).

- Which purposes show up in both documents?

Return to Columns 1 and 3 on the chart, “Frenzy Island Analysis.” Ask the students how each of the problems on Frenzy Island helps to explain why people have created governments. Tell them that you want them to be thinking about the general purposes of government listed on [Resource 4](#). Model how to complete the chart by walking students through the first row on the chart. For example,

Model Response for Row 1: “People would want a government to establish justice in case people steal from others.”

Write “establish justice” in Column 3.

Have students complete the rest of their charts as you guide the discussion.

Problem	Solution	Purpose of Government
Stealing furniture	Punish thieves	Establish justice
Strong push weak, gang up on others	Settle arguments	Manage conflicts
Drive fast and crash	Make traffic laws	Maintain order
Potholes	Fix potholes	Provide public services
Homeless, not enough food	Build shelter, pass out food	Manage resources
Outsiders threaten	Make an army	Provide national security

Preparation for Summative Task: Ask students to think back to the Schoolhouse Rock video and notice how the *general* purposes of government that they just learned about are somewhat different from the purposes found in the Preamble. Suggest that it may be time for a new Schoolhouse Rock video.

Check for Understanding

- Why are people who do not have a government likely to create one? Explain your answer.

Rubric

2- This response gives a valid purpose of government and an accurate and relevant explanation.

1- This response gives a valid purpose of government and an inaccurate, irrelevant, or no explanation.

Strategy 6: Application

Photo Analysis⁵

See [Resource 5 slide presentation](#). Hand out [Resource 6](#).

Ask students what they see in the photo. Next, ask which purpose of government appears to be illustrated in the photo. Have students pair together to write explanations for how each photo shows a purpose of government in action. For example, "The photo shows government providing public services. The government is installing handicapped access to a public beach."

Check for Understanding

- Have students work individually or in pairs to draw visual representations of each "purpose" in the Preamble. Be sure to tell them that each group will have to explain their representations. You may wish to jigsaw, i.e. assign one purpose of government to each group then have them present their representations and explanations to the rest of the class.

Transfer Task: [have the students complete the transfer task on page 5 at this point.](#)

⁵ Adapted from *I See, We Do Need Government*. Lisa Giobbe, Christina School District, Democracy Project Participant.

Lesson Two

Essential Question

- How are the United States and Delaware governments structured?

Background

Students will learn the basic structure of the U.S. and Delaware governments by examining our federal and state constitutions. They will compare the two to determine differences and similarities.

This section of the unit offers an introduction to structures of government, and informs students that the structures of government in the United States are outlined in the federal and state constitutions. They will not be engaging in an in-depth study of the three branches of government; a companion 4th grade unit in the Delaware Recommended Curriculum, [Branches of Government](#), addresses that information.

Note to Teacher: Recall that the key understanding for this benchmark involves the purposes of government, so it is important that the instructional emphases be placed on helping students understand the **general purposes** of government.

Once that mastery is achieved, a secondary expectation is that students gain an overall sense of the structures of the United States and Delaware governments, and know that the structures are outlined respectively in the federal and state constitutions.

Civics benchmarks for upper grades will expand and deepen students' understandings of the structure of government (e.g., separation of powers in grade 5, federalism or diffusion of power between the federal and local governments in grade 8, and the structures of governments around the world in high school). The goal at this grade level is for students to be able to outline the structures of our federal and state governments and they will learn this by reading excerpts from the U.S. and Delaware constitutions.

Instructional Strategies

Strategy 1: Gathering Information

Determining Text Structures

Tell students that the goal of this part of the unit is to help them understand the structures of governments in the U.S. and Delaware. Note that the word “structure” refers to how something (or things) is arranged or designed.

Ask students to describe the structure of your school. Prod their thinking with questions such as:

- Does our school have a classroom? How many (approximately)?
- Does our school have a main office? How many?
- Does our school have a cafeteria? How many?
- Does our school have a library? How many?
- Does our school have a gym? How many?
- Does our school have a bathroom? How many (approximately)?

Explain that that they are developing a description of the “structure” of your school as they answer these questions. Ask the students to use the details they just discussed to draw the “structure” of your school.

Tell the students that can describe the structure of the school because they are in it almost every day. But they are not in government every day. Ask, *so how can we find out how our governments are structured?* The answers are found in the United States and Delaware constitutions.

Distribute copies of [Resource 7 \(excerpts from U.S. Constitution\)](#). Ask students to scan the text with the goal of being able to explain to how it is structured (e.g. it is broken down into Articles and sections that are numbered sequentially). Repeat this for [Resource 8 \(excerpts from Delaware Constitution\)](#).

Strategy 2: Extending and Refining Semantic Feature Analysis

Distribute and project copies of [Resource 9: Semantic Feature Analysis \(SFA\)](#). Walk students through the Analysis tool. Draw attention to the features of government structures across the first row on the SFA so that they read with a very clear purpose. Have students work in groups of 2-3 for this strategy.

Tell students that they are now going to read through sections of the U.S. and DE constitutions in search of details about the structures of our federal and state governments.

Model for students by reading Article 1, Section 1 of the United States Constitution from [Resource 7](#), then placing a check (✓) in the first empty box at the intersection of "United States Government" and "Structure Includes a Legislative Branch."

Do the same for each Article and then have students complete the chart using the DE Constitution.

Strategy 3: Application Summary Writing

Present students with the following prompt and ask them to respond in writing:

How are the governments of the United States and Delaware structured? Support your answer with details from the United States and Delaware constitutions.

Have student draw the visual representation of the structure of either the United States or Delaware government.

Check for Understanding

- Project a copy of [Resource 10](#) and have students explain...
 - first, the structure of the federal level of government.
 - second, the structure of the Delaware or state "level" of government.
- Then have the students revise their own structure drawings.

Tip for the Teacher:

Students are more likely to visualize the 3 branches of government - legislative, judicial, executive - but may not have picked up on the different "levels" (federal, state, and local) of government presented more subtly by the fact that there are both federal and state constitutions.

Guide revisions of their visual representations if the levels are not included.

Resource 2

Frenzy Island Analysis

Directions: Identify the problems that exist on Frenzy Island in Column 1 and propose a solution for each one in Column 2.

Problem	Solution	Purpose of Government

Resource 3

Preamble to the United States Constitution

We the People of the United States,
in Order to form a more perfect
Union,
establish Justice,
insure domestic Tranquility,
provide for the **common defense**,
promote the general Welfare, and
secure the Blessings of Liberty
to ourselves and our **Posterity**,
do ordain and establish this
Constitution
for the United States of America.

establish - set up
justice - rewards and penalties, fairness
insure - guarantee, promise
domestic - in our country
tranquility - peace
defense - protection
promote - further, advance
posterity - future generations
welfare - well-being, health and
happiness
ordain - to order

**Preamble to the United States
Constitution**

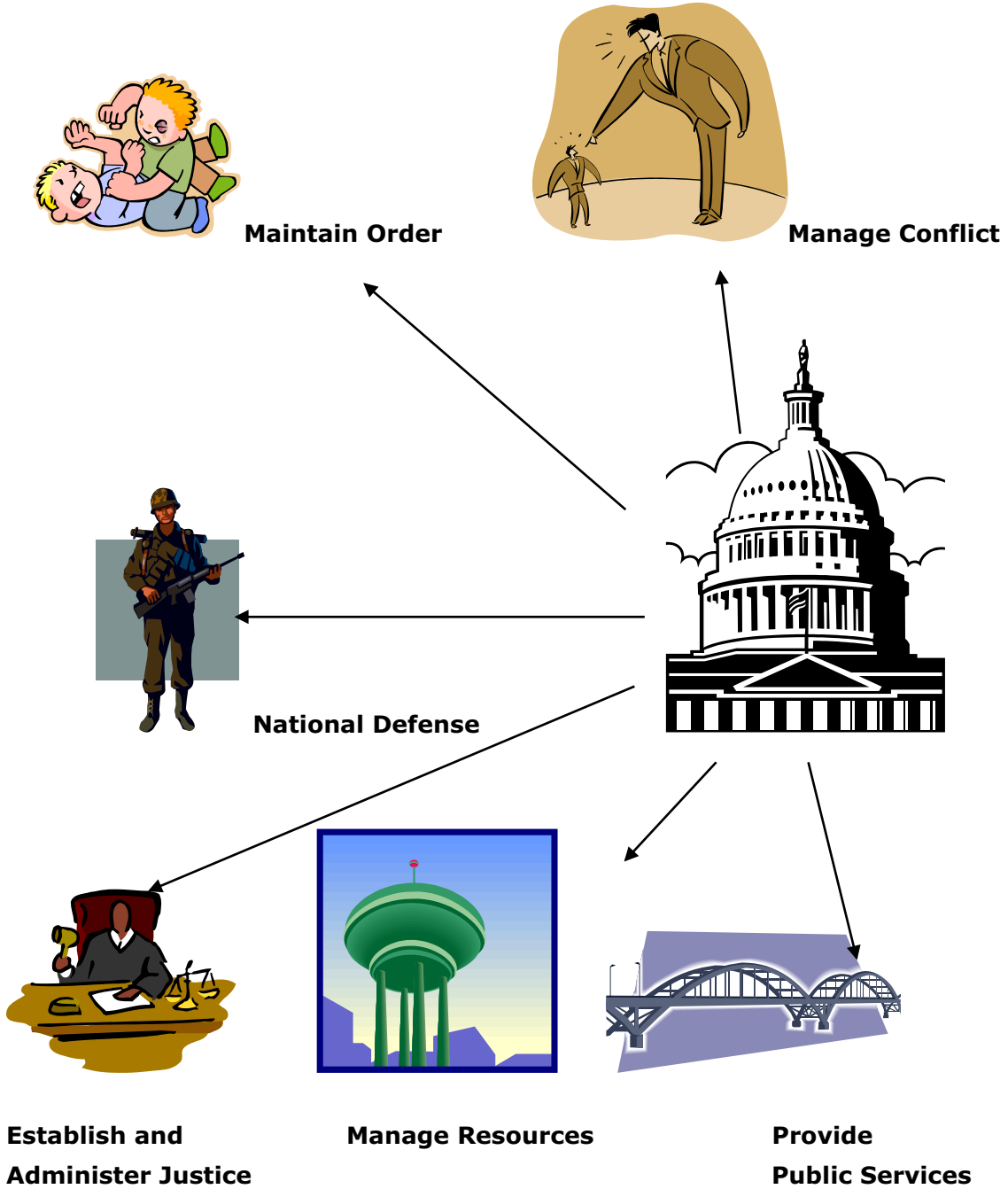
We the People of the United States,
in Order to form a more perfect
Union,
establish Justice,
insure domestic Tranquility,
provide for the **common defense**,
promote the general Welfare, and
secure the Blessings of Liberty
to ourselves and our **Posterity**,
do ordain and establish this
Constitution
for the United States of America.

1. Why would some words be capitalized in the middle of the Preamble, such as Union, Justice, and Tranquility? Use one word as an example when explaining your answer.

2. Make a list *in your own words* of the purposes of government found in the Preamble.

Resource 4

Purposes of Government



Resource 6

Directions: View each photograph. Discuss with your group what purpose of government each page represents.

- Write a brief description of the photo (for example, *fire truck* or *soldiers*).
- Then explain how each photo shows a purpose of government.

Photo _____

Photo _____

Photo _____

Photo _____

Photo _____

Photo _____

Photo _____

Photo _____

Photo _____

Resource 7
Excerpts from the United States Constitution

ARTICLE I

SECTION 1

All legislative Powers shall be vested in a Congress of the United States, which shall consist of a Senate and House of Representatives.

SECTION 2

The House of Representatives shall be composed of Members chosen every second Year by the People of the States.

SECTION 3

The Senate of the United States shall be composed of two Senators from each State, for six Years; and each Senator shall have one Vote.

ARTICLE II

SECTION 1

The executive Power shall be vested in a President of the United States of America. He shall hold his Office during the Term of four Years.

ARTICLE III

SECTION 1

The judicial Power of the United States shall be vested in one supreme Court, and in such inferior Courts as the Congress may from time to time ordain and establish.

Resource 8
Excerpts from the Delaware Constitution

ARTICLE II. LEGISLATURE

Section 1. The legislative power of this State shall be vested in a General Assembly, which shall consist of a Senate and House of Representatives.

Section 2. The House of Representatives shall be composed of thirty-five members, who shall be chosen for two years. The Senate shall be composed of twenty-one members, who shall be chosen for four years.

ARTICLE III. EXECUTIVE

Section 1. The supreme executive powers of the State shall be vested in a Governor.

Section 2. The Governor shall be chosen by the qualified electors of the State, once in every four years, at the general election.

ARTICLE IV. JUDICIARY

Section 1. The judicial power of this State shall be vested in a Supreme Court, a Superior Court, a Court of Chancery, a Family Court, a Court of Common Pleas, a Register's Court, Justices of the Peace, and such other courts as the General Assembly...



Section 2. There shall be five Justices of the Supreme Court who shall be citizens of the State and learned in the law. One of them shall be the Chief Justice who shall be designated as such by his or her appointment and who when present shall preside at all sittings of the Court.

Resource 9

Semantic Feature Analysis Structures of Government

Directions:

1. **Read** Resource 13 - United States Constitution. Look at the descriptions across the top of the chart below. **Place a check** under each box ONLY IF the description is what you read in the text.
2. **Read** Resource - 14: State of Delaware's Constitution. Look at the descriptions across the top of the chart below. **Place a check** under each box ONLY IF the description is what you read in the text.

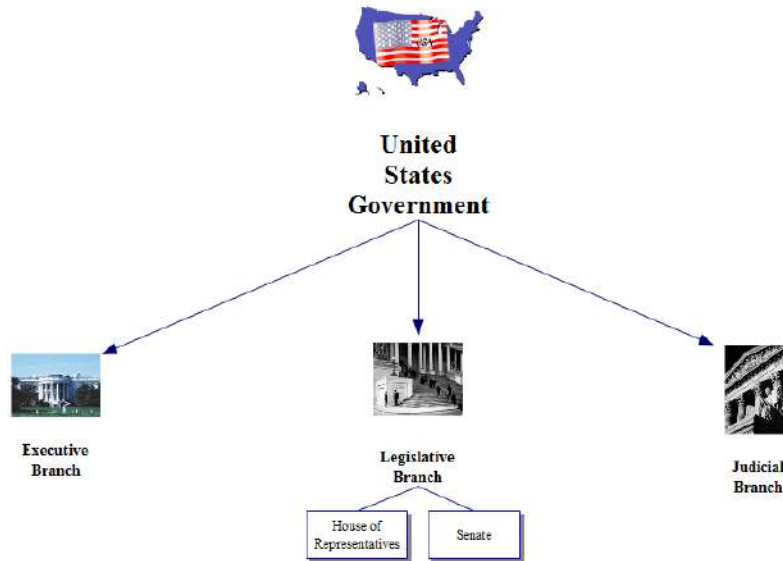
	Structure includes a legislative branch	Structure includes an executive branch	Structure includes a judicial branch	Structure includes 3 branches	Legislative branch has 2 parts (a house and a senate)	Structure includes a supreme court and other courts
United States Government 						
Delaware Government 						

Be prepared to use details from the United States and Delaware Constitutions, and the chart above, to describe the structures of our federal and state governments.

Structures of Governments in the United States

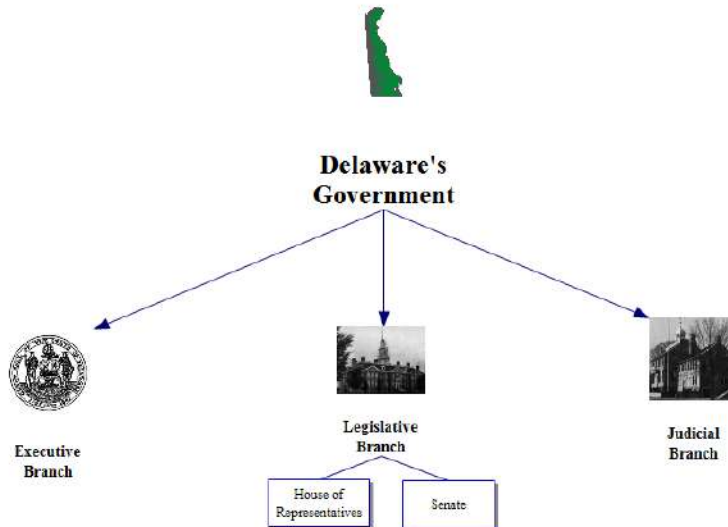
Federal Level

Three Branches =



State Level

Three Branches =



Purposes of Government

Transfer Task

Any good musician or actor knows you would never go on stage without rehearsing first, and it's no different with public speaking.

Helpful Tips:

Practice your PSA several times before practicing in front of another person.

Memorize as many of the details as possible.

Choose a member in your group that you feel safe practicing with.

Deliver your talk without stopping, even if you have a few stumbles along the way. The more you practice, the better you will get.

Once finished, critique yourself. Pick two things that you liked about the PSA and one thing you want to improve.

Listen with an open mind and ear for learning how to make your talk better when your partner gives you feedback on your delivery.

Speak to the other person instead of reading the information word for word. You can refer to your script.

Keep it short – no more than one minute.

As you practice, you'll discover where you need more practice or where you may want to change a part of it.

Sample Responses

	Example
Engage Your Audience Get your listener's attention with a dramatic fact or short statement.	"I know you share my concern about improving the quality of our local government."
State the Problem Present causes of the problem you introduced in the first section. How widespread or serious is the problem?	"Too few citizens understand that what they know about government has a powerful impact on how well government functions."
Informing about Solutions Inform the listener about a solution to the problem you just presented	"We need to ensure that every citizen has an understanding of why we have government. We could do this by ..."
Be specific about what you want the listener to do. This enables you to follow up to learn if they've taken this action. Present this action in the form of a yes or no question.	"Will you support the need for more education ... ?"