

# Unit 6 Chapter 2 Study Guide

## Structures, Powers, and Functions of the U.S. Government

### Key Principles of Government

- Popular Sovereignty → Power comes from the people
- Example: “We the People”
- Rule of Law → Everyone must follow the law (even leaders)
- Federalism → Power is shared between national and state governments
- Checks and Balances → Each branch can limit the power of the others

### The Three Branches of Government

#### 1. Legislative Branch (Congress)

- Makes laws
- Declares war
- Controls money (taxes/spending)
- Can impeach officials

#### 2. Executive Branch (President)

- Enforces laws
- Can veto bills
- Appoints judges and officials
- Leads the military

#### 3. Judicial Branch (Supreme Court)

- Interprets laws
- Declares laws unconstitutional
- Judges serve for life

### Checks and Balances (Important!)

Know these key examples:

- President → veto laws
- Congress → override veto & impeach
- Supreme Court → declare laws unconstitutional
- President → appoints judges
- Congress → approves appointments

Main idea: No branch gets too powerful



## **Separation of Powers**

- Power is divided into 3 branches
- Each branch has its own job
- This protects freedom and prevents abuse of power

## **How Laws Are Made**

1. Bill passes Congress
2. Goes to the President
3. President can:
  - Sign it → becomes law
  - Veto it → goes back to Congress
  - Do nothing → becomes law after 10 days

## **Electoral College**

- People vote for electors, not directly for president
- Electors vote for president
- Most states = winner-take-all

## **Amending the Constitution**

- 2/3 of Congress must approve
- 3/4 of states must ratify

## **Federal vs State Powers**

### Federal (National) Powers

- Coin money
- Declare war
- Regulate trade
- Called Enumerated Powers

### State Powers

- Education
- Health & safety
- Called Reserved Powers

### Shared Powers

- Tax
- Borrow money
- Called Concurrent Powers



## Key Vocabulary

- Appropriation → money set aside for a purpose
- Popular Vote → votes cast by citizens
- Appeal → asking a higher court to review a case
- Executive Order → law made by the president
- Concurrent Powers → shared powers



## Important Ideas from Sources

- James Madison (Federalist 47) → No one branch should have too much power
- Montesquieu → Separation of powers protects freedom

## Big Ideas to Remember

- Government power comes from the people
- Power is divided AND shared
- Each branch checks the others
- The Constitution can change, but it's difficult

**Essay: The U.S. Constitution created a republican government that was meant to balance the powers of federal and state governments and the rights of the people. To what extent is the U.S. government “of the people, by the people, and for the people”?**

The U.S. government is “of the people, by the people, and for the people” to a great extent because citizens have the power to choose their leaders and influence laws. The Constitution created a republican government where people vote for representatives to make decisions for them. For example, citizens elect members of Congress and the president, which shows the government is “by the people.” The government gets its power from the citizens (popular sovereignty). In addition, the Bill of Rights protects freedoms like speech and religion, which shows the government is “for the people.” The entire document which is the blueprint of our government begins with the Preamble “We the people of the United States of America . . .”

More Examples of “By the People”

- People can run for office themselves.
- Citizens can vote on local issues (like taxes or school matters in some areas).
- People serve on juries, helping make decisions in court.

More Examples of “For the People”

- The government provides public services like schools, roads, and safety.
- Laws are created to protect citizens’ rights and freedoms.
- Programs exist to help people in need (disaster relief, public health, etc.).