



# The Cabinet of the U.S. | Lesson Plan

What is the history, purpose, and role of the United States Cabinet?

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Students will understand the origin and history of the Cabinet of the United States. They will explore the group's purpose and role within the executive branch of government.

## Learning Objectives:

- Explore the history and origin of the Cabinet of the U.S.
- Recognize the group's purpose and role within the executive branch of government.
- Examine the concept of presidential succession among members of the United States Cabinet.
- Investigate the process by which United States Cabinet members are chosen and approved.

## Key Vocabulary:

- **Succession:** People or things that share a characteristic and follow one after the other.
- **Executive Branch:** The president, vice president, and all their advisors, departments, and agencies.
- **Legislative Branch (Congress):** The branch of government that makes the laws, controls the money, and has the power to declare war.
- **Senate:** One of the two groups (called "houses") of lawmakers (Congress) of the United States. Each state elects two senators for six-year terms.

**Educational Standards:** CCRA.L.1, CCRA.L.2, CCRA.L.4, CCRA.L.5, CCRA.SL.1, CCRA.SL.2, CCRA.R.4, CCRA.R.6, CCRA.W.2, CCRA.W.4

**Academic Subject Areas:** Civics, U.S. History, Western Civilization

## What You'll Need

- Video: *Street Smarts: The Cabinet of the U.S.* (Watch [Here](#))
- Worksheet: *Street Smarts: The Cabinet of the U.S.* (Click [Here](#))
- Titles of the members of the Cabinet of the United States (shown below), each written on a slip of paper.

## Lesson Plan (45 minutes)

Warm Up: (15 minutes)

1. Briefly explain the role of the Cabinet. As a class, discuss the Key Vocabulary.
2. Have the class arrange their desks in a large circle, as the Cabinet would likely sit for an important discussion. Before class, write each of these titles on a separate slip of paper: president (1), vice president (1), secretary of state (1), and "other secretary" on the remaining slips of paper (prepare as many slips as you have students). Invite each student to draw one slip of paper from a hat or other container.

Scan to watch episode:



3. Give each student a copy of the *Street Smarts: The Cabinet of the U.S.* worksheet and display it on a screen.
4. Have the students work collaboratively as a large group (as a cabinet might) to discuss the questions and fill in the answers they might already know in the spaces provided. The president should act as the leader, the vice president as second in command, and the secretaries as advisors.

Watch and Complete: (20 minutes)

1. Watch the video as a class, confirming or correcting answers on the worksheet as each question is addressed in the video.
2. Pause the video after the presentation of each key question and concept. Encourage students to share their answers to check for accuracy.

Wrap-Up: (10 minutes)

1. After the video, allow students to ask questions or express their opinions about what they learned about the Cabinet of the U.S.
2. Collect the completed worksheet as a formative assessment or participation credit.

Extension Activity:

If desired and preparation time allows, consider listing specific secretary titles on the slips of paper and discussing the role and responsibility of each. For example: secretary of agriculture, secretary of commerce, secretary of defense, secretary of education, secretary of energy, secretary of health and human services, secretary of homeland security, secretary of housing and urban development, secretary of the interior, secretary of labor, secretary of state, secretary of transportation, secretary of the treasury, secretary of veterans affairs, and the attorney general. Also, explain that there are ten additional cabinet-level officials, including the chief of staff and ambassador to the United Nations, who advise the president as a part of the cabinet.

**Don't have time for the full lesson? Quick Activity (15 minutes)**

Distribute the worksheet and allow students to complete it while they follow along with the video.