

Justice John Marshall | Lesson Plan

What is the role of the judicial branch in the United States government?

Students will understand the importance and function of the judicial branch. They will learn about Chief Justice John Marshall's influence and how the judicial branch works with the other branches to maintain balance in the government.

Learning Objectives:

- Understand the role and function of the judicial branch in the U.S. government.
- Analyze the impact of John Marshall's leadership on the development of the judicial branch.
- Evaluate the Supreme Court's role in interpreting the Constitution and its impact on American society.
- Explain the concept of checks and balances among the three branches of the U.S. government.
- Contrast comparisons between judicial roles and other decision-making roles.

Key Vocabulary:

- **Judicial Branch:** The judicial branch is one of the three branches of the United States government (made up of the Supreme Court, the highest court in the land). It is a governing body responsible for interpreting and determining the law's constitutionality and neutrally settling legal disputes.
- **Chief Justice:** A chief justice is the highest-ranking judge who presides over the United States Supreme Court.
- **Constitution:** The supreme law of the United States that outlines the nation's fundamental principles and government structure.
- **Unconstitutional:** Something that goes against what is stated in the Constitution.
- **Checks and Balances:** A system that ensures no one branch of government becomes too powerful.

Educational Standards: CCRA.R.1, CCRA.R.7, CCRA.R.10, CCRA.SL.1, CCRA.SL.2, CCRA.L.6

Academic Subject Areas: Biography, America, Judicial Branch

What You'll Need

- Video: Justice John Marshall: The Great Chief Justice (Watch [Here](#))
- Worksheet: Justice John Marshall (Click [Here](#))

Lesson Plan (45 minutes)

Warm-Up: (10-15 minutes)



1. Start by explaining that the U.S. government is like a team, with each part playing an important but different role. Introduce the three branches of the government, briefly describe each branch, and write their function on the whiteboard.
 - Legislative: Makes the laws (Congress, comprising the Senate and the House of Representatives).
 - Executive: Carries out the laws (President, Vice President, Cabinet).
 - Judicial: Interprets the laws (Supreme Court and other courts).
2. Divide the class into three groups, each representing one of the branches. Provide each group with a simple scenario to act out. For instance:
 - Legislative: Deciding on a new rule for the classroom.
 - Executive: Finding ways to implement and enforce the new rule.
 - Judicial: Checking if the rule is fair and respects everyone's rights.
3. Have each group present their scenario and actions briefly.
4. Conclude the activity by discussing how each branch works to ensure the government runs smoothly.
5. Transition to the lesson's main topic by highlighting the judicial branch, mentioning that the students will learn about a very important judge, Chief Justice John Marshall.

Watch & Complete: (20 minutes)

1. Hand out the worksheets to the students. Quickly review the worksheet with the students so they know what to listen for.
2. Play the video for the class.
3. Pause after key sections to ensure comprehension and help students answer pertinent questions as they watch.
4. After watching the video, have students complete the Making Connections section in small groups. Invite students to share their results with the class.

Wrap-Up: (10 minutes)

1. Conclude with a brief recap of the three branches, emphasizing the day's focus on the judicial branch and John Marshall.
2. Ask reflective questions to assess understanding:
 - Explain one thing the judicial branch does.
 - What is Justice John Marshall known for?
3. Collect the worksheets for assessment or use them to guide further discussion.
4. Closing Thought: Just like our scenario about the playground, the judicial branch is responsible for making sure laws are fair and constitutional. The judicial branch is crucial in making our country a better place.

Don't have time for the full lesson? Quick Activity (15-20 minutes)

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