Recognizing Leaders - Branches of Government Posters

by Eve Parker

This is an introductory lesson, giving students a basic understanding of the branches of government and the people who work there. Working with the class, create posters for each branch of government. Make separate posters for the federal and state government. On each poster include photographs of leaders and buildings that are part of that department.

Objectives:

Students will:

* understand that there are 3 branches of government and be able to name them
* understand the basic functions of the 3 branches
* understand that the 3 branches exist on a federal level, and on a state level
* gain familiarity with individuals who are serving in government and representing student interests
* gain familiarity with landmark buildings that are associated with the branches of government

Preparation:

You will need a collection of photos of government officials and buildings. You can either use the Internet to print these photos yourself, or make a list of what you need printed and have students collect the pictures. You will want:

* The White House
* The United States Capitol
* The Supreme Court Building in Washington
* The President
* The Vice-President
* Either a group photo of the President’s cabinet, or photos of selected Executive Branch appointees (Sec. of State, Sec. of Education etc.)
* The 2 U. S. Senators from your state
* The U.S. Representative from your district
* The Supreme Court Justices
* Government buildings from your State, depending on where the executive, legislative and judicial branches are located. In some cases you may have a photo of an office or courtroom rather than a building.
* Your Governor
* The State Senator from your district
* The State Representative from your district
* The State Supreme Court Justices

You will also need to print the following words for captions to attach to the posters:

* Executive Branch (2 copies)
* Legislative Branch (2 copies)
* Judicial Branch (2 copies)
* Establish Laws (2 copies)
* Enforce (or Execute) Laws (2 copies)
* Explain Laws (2 copies)
* United States Federal Government (3 copies)
* Your State Name Government (3 copies)

You will need 6 large pieces of paper, tape and markers.

Start by hanging the 6 posters on the wall. Tape your label for United States Government on 3 posters. Tape your label for State Government on 3 posters.

Ask students if they know the names of the 3 branches of government. On each of the U.S. posters, put one label for each branch. Do the same with the State posters. Make sure students understand that the Federal and the State government each have 3 branches of government.

Start with the poster for the U.S. Executive Branch. What is the function of the branch? To Enforce or Execute laws – put that caption on the poster. Talk about what that means. Then go through the photos that are applicable to the Executive Branch. Give students a chance to identify people they know. Put the photos on the poster.

Continue in the same way with the Legislative and Judicial Branches for the Federal Government.

Then move on to the State Government posters, applying the captions and photos in the same fashion. Point out to students that the functions of the Branches of Government are the same on both levels. Explain that the State Government has control in situations that are within the state, while the Federal Government is involved in situations that involve more than one state.

If space in your room allows, keep the posters available for reference in future lessons about the Branches of Government.

A variation of this lesson would be to divide the class into small groups, and have each group create one of the posters.