The Executive Branch

What's Ahead in Chapter 9
In this chapter you will read about the responsibilities of the President. You will also learn about the responsibilities of the executive branch of the government that the President heads.

Section 1
The Roles of the President

Section 2
The Organization of the Executive Branch

Section 3
Presidents and Power

Target Reading Skill
In this chapter you will focus on clarifying meaning to help you better understand what you read. Clarifying meaning includes reading ahead, rereading, and paraphrasing.
Active Citizen

Civics in the Real World

Have you ever wondered what it would be like to be President of the United States? Here is what several Presidents have said about the job.

Though I occupy a very high position, I am the hardest working man in the country.

—James K. Polk (1845–1849)

I have thoroughly enjoyed being President. But I believe I can also say that I am thoroughly alive to the tremendous responsibilities of the position.

—Theodore Roosevelt (1901–1909)

Being a President is like riding a tiger. A man has to keep on riding or be swallowed.

—Harry S Truman (1945–1953)

No easy problems ever come to the President of the United States. If they are easy to solve, somebody else has solved them.


There is no experience you can get that can possibly prepare you adequately for the presidency.


Citizen’s Journal  When discussing their time in the White House, Presidents have often described the presidency as an extremely difficult job. Why do you think the presidency is such a demanding position? Write a paragraph explaining your opinion on this question.
As our highest elected official, the President of the United States represents all Americans, not just citizens of one state or congressional district. It is the President who usually meets with leaders of other nations, and whose daily activities are closely followed by the television networks, newspapers, and newsmagazines. Just about everyone knows who the President is.

How many Americans, though, have a clear picture of what the President does? The President is the head of the executive branch, the branch of government responsible for executing, or carrying out, the law. However, carrying out laws is only part of the President’s job. The most important duty is to set goals for the nation and to develop policies, which are methods for reaching those goals.

This heavy responsibility goes with an office that many think is the most powerful in the world. The office of President also has limits, though, which are set by the Constitution. To understand the powers and responsibilities of the presidency, as well as its limits, you need to look first at how the office was created.

Creating the Office of President

In creating the presidency, the Framers did not want a leader with unlimited powers. The memory of the tyranny of the British king was fresh in the minds of many Americans. To calm the people’s fears, the Framers gave very few specific powers to the President. They also included ways to prevent the abuse of power.
Term of Office  One limit on the President’s power is the term of office. The President is elected for a term of four years and must run for reelection in order to serve a second term. No President may hold office for more than two terms.

Limited Power  Another protection is the separation of powers among the three branches of government. The President cannot make laws but can only carry out those made by Congress. The Supreme Court has the power to decide whether a law is constitutional.

The system of checks and balances also limits the President’s power. Congress must approve many presidential decisions. In cases of serious wrongdoing, Congress may remove the President from office. Furthermore, the Supreme Court can decide whether actions taken by the President are allowed by the Constitution.

Qualifications and Salary  To be President, a person must be at least 35 years old and a natural-born citizen of the United States. Some people think immigrants should also be able to run for president. Many immigrants, such as former Secretary of State Madeleine Albright and California Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger, have served in important political offices, but cannot run for president. Anyone serving as president must have lived in the United States for at least 14 years. The President’s yearly salary is set by Congress.

✓ Reading Check  How many years is one term of office for the President?

Herbert Hoover (top left) was President when the country fell into the Great Depression. Jimmy Carter (top right, standing in the middle) helped to bring peace between Israel and Egypt. Woodrow Wilson (above) took the United States into World War I.
A Leader With Many Roles

The Framers knew that the nation needed a leader who could both carry out laws and represent the nation in meeting leaders of other countries. The office of President was new in a world of nations led by monarchs. Therefore, the Framers did not describe exactly how the President should fulfill the duties of this new office. Expecting that George Washington would be elected as the nation’s first leader, they trusted that he would become a model of what a President should be. As Washington himself noted:

“I walk on untrodden ground. There is scarcely any part of my conduct which may not hereafter be drawn into precedent [made an example of].”

Through the examples of Washington and the Presidents who followed him, the roles of the President have become more clearly defined over the years.

**Analyze Diagrams**

**Roles of the President**

As leader of the executive branch, the President has many important roles. The images on this page and the next illustrate some of the many functions of the office of the President.

a. Why do you think the role of chief diplomat is an important one for the President?

b. Which of the President’s roles do you think is the most difficult? Why?

**Legislative Leader**

One of the President’s duties as legislative leader is to give an annual State of the Union address to all Americans. Here, President George W. Bush delivers his address before officials from all three branches of government.

**Chief Diplomat**

Acting as chief diplomat, President Richard Nixon made a historic trip to the People’s Republic of China in 1972. Nixon’s visit to China was hailed as a diplomatic triumph during the Cold War.

**Commander in Chief**

In this photo, Franklin Delano Roosevelt (center) meets with Richard Byrd (left), an admiral in the U.S. Navy.
**Chief Executive** The President serves as chief executive, or head of the executive branch. The Constitution states that the President must “take care that the laws be faithfully executed.” To execute laws means to make sure that they are carried out. Although Congress makes the laws, it is up to executive branch officials to decide just how to carry out laws and other policies.

As leader of the executive branch, the President usually makes only the broadest decisions, leaving the details to other officials. One way in which the President gives orders is through executive orders, which are rules and regulations that governments must follow. The power to make executive orders, however, is limited. The President’s orders may not violate the Constitution or laws passed by Congress.

As chief executive, the President also has the power to appoint about 4,000 executive branch officials. As a check on that power, Congress must confirm, or approve, many top appointments.

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**Judicial Powers**

The President chooses justices for the Supreme Court and other federal courts. In 1993, President Bill Clinton appointed Ruth Bader Ginsburg as a justice to the Supreme Court. As leader of the executive branch, the President has many important roles.
**Commander in Chief** The Constitution says that “The President shall be commander in chief of the army and navy of the United States.” This statement points to the President’s important role as leader of the armed forces. This role was given to the President because the Framers of the Constitution wanted to maintain civilian authority over the military.

While the President is expected to set military goals and approve military tactics, military leaders and specialists often discourage the commander in chief from getting involved in daily operations. Yet when the nation is at war, the President makes the most important decisions.

To protect American interests, the President may send troops to a foreign country even if Congress has not declared war. However, the War Powers Resolution, passed after the Vietnam War, says that such troops may not remain for more than 60 days without the approval of Congress.

The President’s role as head of the armed forces has grown dramatically since the days of George Washington. It carries an awesome power that can weigh heavily on the President. Besides affecting American soldiers who are sent to fight on foreign soil, the President’s decisions can also alter the lives of other nations and change the course of history. One example of the sober nature of this responsibility is the dropping of the atomic bomb on Japan in World War II. Even though there was much consultation between the executive branch, the armed forces, and the members of Congress, the plan to end the war with Japan with this action could not have proceeded without the authorization of President Harry S Truman.

**Chief Diplomat** The President is also our chief diplomat, the most important representative of the United States in relations with other nations. The President leads in making foreign policy, the set of plans for guiding our nation’s relationships with other countries. Although they usually seek advice on foreign policy, Presidents must make the final decisions. As President Truman put it, “I make foreign policy.”

Foreign policy is clearly the President’s “territory,” but Congress may set limits. For instance, the President may make treaties, or formal agreements, with other countries, but the Senate may reject any treaty.

The Senate must also approve the President’s appointments of ambassadors. Ambassadors are the official representatives to foreign governments.
The President does have freedom, though, to make executive agreements, agreements with other countries that do not need Senate approval. Executive agreements may have a wide range of purposes. They may set goals for trade or make promises to give aid to other countries.

**Legislative Leader** Congress makes our nation’s laws. The President, however, has a good deal of power to influence what those laws will be and how they are enforced. The Constitution states that the President may recommend to Congress “such measures as he shall judge necessary and expedient.” This means that Congress is expected to consider the President’s ideas and not act alone in making laws.

Early each year, the President gives a speech to both houses of Congress. In this State of the Union Address, the President sets forth ideas about what America’s foreign policy should be. The President also talks about problems at home, such as taxes and health care. By describing these problems and presenting ideas for solving them, the President helps to set domestic policy, a set of plans for dealing with national problems.

How does a President persuade Congress to turn foreign and domestic policies into laws? One way is by getting members of Congress to write bills. Another is by calling and meeting with members of Congress, urging them to support the President’s programs. Speeches to interest groups and to the public also help gain support for bills the President wants passed.

A powerful tool for influencing Congress to take action is the veto. The threat of a veto is often enough to get Congress to change a bill to make it more to the President’s liking. Congress has overridden only about 4 percent of the more than 2,500 vetoes in our nation’s history.
President Franklin Delano Roosevelt, known as FDR, was the President who brought the United States out of the Great Depression. He did so by pressuring Congress to enact a sweeping series of programs known as the New Deal.

1. What does the snail represent? Why do you think the cartoonist chose to use a snail?

2. What point does the cartoon make about the President’s power as legislative leader?

Another way in which the President acts as legislative leader is in making the budget. To put policy ideas into action costs money. Every year, the President consults committees and advisers, and then prepares a budget, a plan for how to raise and spend money to carry out the President’s programs.

Congress does not pass all the laws the President requests, and it almost always makes changes in the President’s budget. However, Congress cannot ignore the President’s power as legislative leader.

Finally, the President has the power to call special sessions of Congress if Congress is not meeting. Today, however, Congress meets for almost the whole year, so this power is not much used.

**Judicial Powers** As part of the system of checks and balances, the President chooses Supreme Court justices and other federal judges. Of course, the President’s power is balanced by the Senate, which must confirm these appointments.

The President may limit the power of the judicial branch by putting off or reducing the punishment of someone convicted of a crime in federal courts. The President may even do away with the punishment by granting a pardon, or a release from punishment.

✅ Reading Check How does the President influence the making of laws?
Roles Created by Tradition

Over the years, the President has taken on two other roles: party leader and chief of state. Neither role is mentioned explicitly in the Constitution, yet both are natural results of the President’s position and power.

The President is a member of a political party, typically either the Democratic party or the Republican party. As our highest elected official, the President is seen as the leader of that party. The President’s power and prestige can be used to support party goals or candidates. During election years, the President will frequently give speeches and attend fundraisers throughout the country to help support members of the party who are running for important offices.

As chief of state, the President is expected to speak for the whole nation, expressing the values and goals of the American people. The President carries out many ceremonial duties, such as greeting visiting leaders and giving medals to citizens. In this role, the President is very much like a monarch, who traditionally carries out ceremonial duties. As chief of state, the President stands for a national unity that overshadows differences between the political parties. The President also stands as a symbol of the United States of America.

✔ Reading Check

What other two roles has the President taken on over the years that are not mentioned in the Constitution?

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Section 1

Assessment

Key Terms

Use each of the key terms in a sentence that explains its meaning:

- executive branch
- foreign policy
- ambassadors
- executive agreements
- domestic policy

Target Reading Skill

1. Read Ahead Turn back to page 245. How did reading ahead help you better understand how the President sets domestic policy?

Comprehension and Critical Thinking

2. a. Recall For how many terms may a President hold office?

b. Demonstrate Reasoned Judgment Why do you think Congress, rather than the Constitution, sets the President’s salary?

3. a. Describe What is the military role of the President?

b. Draw Inferences How do the actions of Presidents help define the office of President?

4. a. Describe What does the President do as head of a political party?

b. Check Consistency How do the President’s two roles as party leader and chief of state conflict?

Writing Activity

Write a letter to James Madison, the “Father of the Constitution.” Tell Madison how the office of the President has evolved since his lifetime. In your letter, explain the different responsibilities and powers of the presidency today.

TIP Write an outline using the heads of each subsection in Section 1. Find a detail or two that you can use to illustrate the main idea of each paragraph.
As our nation has grown, the President’s duties have grown, too. Each year, hundreds of laws must be carried out. Decisions must be made on a wide range of foreign and domestic policy issues. To fulfill their many duties, Presidents have needed more and more help. The executive branch has grown from a few hundred officials in George Washington’s time to about 3 million employees today. It is now the largest branch of government.

As it has grown, the executive branch has become a huge bureaucracy. A **bureaucracy** (byoo RAH kruh see) is an organization of government departments, agencies, and offices. Most people who work in the bureaucracy are not chosen to work just for one President. They are hired as permanent employees.

To help direct the bureaucracy, the President appoints a **team of executive branch officials, or an administration**. The nearly 2,000 members of the administration lead the three main parts of the executive branch: (1) the Executive Office of the President, (2) the executive departments, and (3) the independent agencies.

**The Executive Office of the President**
The Executive Office of the President (EOP) is largely made up of people the President chooses to help make foreign and domestic policy. Unlike the other parts of the executive branch, the main job of the Executive Office is not to carry out laws directly, but to advise the President on important matters.
**The White House Staff** At the center of an administration is the White House staff. It includes the President’s most trusted advisers and assistants. They give the President advice and information about national security, the economy, and other subjects. The White House staff also helps guide the bureaucracy toward meeting the President’s goals.

Some Presidents prefer to have several staff people report directly to them on issues relating to the executive departments. Other Presidents have depended on one powerful chief of staff to whom other staff members report.

The staff includes a chief of staff, key advisers, press secretaries, legal experts, speechwriters, office workers, and researchers. All members of the White House staff are appointed or hired by the President, without the need for Senate approval.

**The Vice President** The Constitution gives the Vice President no duties aside from presiding over the Senate. It is the President who decides what the Vice President will do. Some Presidents ask the Vice President to play an active role. This role might include heading special commissions, making trips to other countries, and working with Congress. Historically, however, the Vice President has been almost invisible. Fearing this fate, some leaders have refused to run for Vice President. Daniel Webster, for instance, said in 1848 that “I do not propose to be buried until I am dead.”

If the President dies, though, the Vice President may become President. This transition has taken place eight times in our nation’s history. The Vice President may also be asked to serve as “acting President” if the President falls seriously ill.

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**Vice Presidents Who Succeeded the President**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Vice President</th>
<th>Year of Succession</th>
<th>Reason</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>John Tyler</td>
<td>1841</td>
<td>Death of William Henry Harrison</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Millard Fillmore</td>
<td>1850</td>
<td>Death of William Zachary Taylor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Andrew Johnson</td>
<td>1865</td>
<td>Assassination of Abraham Lincoln</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chester A. Arthur</td>
<td>1881</td>
<td>Assassination of James A. Garfield</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Theodore Roosevelt</td>
<td>1901</td>
<td>Assassination of William McKinley</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Calvin Coolidge</td>
<td>1923</td>
<td>Death of Warren G. Harding</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Harry S Truman</td>
<td>1945</td>
<td>Death of Franklin D. Roosevelt</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lyndon B. Johnson</td>
<td>1963</td>
<td>Assassination of John F. Kennedy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gerald R. Ford</td>
<td>1974</td>
<td>Resignation of Richard Nixon</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: *Encyclopedia Britannica Almanac, 2003*

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The Vice President succeeds the President if the President dies or leaves office by resignation or impeachment.

1. **Analyze** How many Vice Presidents have become President due to the assassination of the elected President?
2. **Apply** Which Vice President succeeded Warren G. Harding?
Special Advisory Groups The Executive Office of the President also includes several special groups that help the President make decisions on domestic and foreign policy. Two important groups are the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) and the National Security Council (NSC).

The OMB decides how much the President’s policy goals will cost. The President may change the goals in light of the price tags provided by the OMB. Then, the OMB prepares the budget that is sent to Congress.

The National Security Council plays a major role in helping the President make foreign policy. The NSC includes top military officers and advisers from other government agencies and departments concerned with foreign affairs and national defense.

What three groups make up the Executive Office of the President?

The Executive Departments

Over the years, the number of executive departments has grown. Today, they number 15 and form the largest part of the executive branch. They do much of the work connected with carrying out the nation’s laws and running government programs.

Each executive department helps fulfill one or more of the President’s duties. The Department of State, for example, handles relations with other countries and helps put the President’s foreign policy decisions into action. The Department of Defense helps the President fulfill the duty of commander in chief by running the armed forces.

The Office of Management and Budget

The Office of Management and Budget was created in 1970. It has several responsibilities. Its primary duty is to prepare the President’s annual budget for Congress.

The OMB also helps the President manage the executive branch by promoting good management practices throughout the executive branch and reviewing the regulatory acts of federal agencies.

Analyzing Economics

1. What is the primary responsibility of the Office of Management and Budget?
2. Go online and find the OMB’s Web page. Find out more about the OMB’s history and responsibilities. Write a brief report on what you find there.

President Advisers

President George W. Bush meets with the National Security Council, one of the advisory groups in the Executive Office of the President.

Demonstrate Reasoned Judgment Why is it important for the President to have groups of advisers such as the NSC?
### Executive Departments

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Department</th>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Functions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Department of the Treasury (1789)</td>
<td></td>
<td>Collects federal taxes through the Internal Revenue Service (IRS). Prints money and postage stamps; makes coins.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Department of Interior (1849)</td>
<td></td>
<td>Manages national parks and other federal lands. Protects fish, wildlife, and other natural resources.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Department of Agriculture (1862)</td>
<td></td>
<td>Provides assistance to farmers. Inspects food-processing plants. Runs the food stamp and school lunch programs. Works to control animal and plant diseases.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Department of Justice (1870)</td>
<td></td>
<td>Investigates and prosecutes violations of federal laws. Operates federal prisons. Runs the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI). Represents the federal government in lawsuits.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Department of Commerce (1903)</td>
<td></td>
<td>Provides assistance to American businesses. Conducts the national census. Issues patents and trademarks for inventions. Maintains official weights and measures.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Department of Labor (1903)</td>
<td></td>
<td>Enforces laws on minimum wage, job discrimination, and working conditions. Helps run job training and unemployment programs. Provides statistics on changes in prices and levels of employment.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Department of Education (1953)</td>
<td></td>
<td>Provides assistance to elementary, high school, and college education programs. Conducts research and provides statistics on education. Promotes equal access to educational opportunities.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Department of Housing &amp; Urban Development (1965)</td>
<td></td>
<td>Helps provide housing for low-income citizens. Assists state and local governments in financing community development and housing projects.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Department of Transportation (1966)</td>
<td></td>
<td>Helps state and local governments maintain highways. Enforces transportation safety standards.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Department of Energy (1977)</td>
<td></td>
<td>Conducts research on sources of energy. Promotes the conservation of fuel and electricity, and directs programs to deal with possible shortages.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Department of Veteran's Affairs (1989)</td>
<td></td>
<td>Gives medical, educational, and financial help to people who have served in the armed forces.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: U.S. Office of Personnel Management

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Much of the work of running the government is done by the executive departments.

1. **Analyze** Which executive department is in charge of managing our public parks?
2. **Apply** Do you think any of the responsibilities of these departments overlap? Which ones do you think might overlap? Why?
The Department of Homeland Security  President George W. Bush created the Department of Homeland Security in response to the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001. The duty of the Department of Homeland Security is to safeguard our country from terrorism. In this role, the Department coordinates the antiterrorist activities of many federal agencies, including the Coast Guard, the Immigration and Naturalization Service, and the Federal Emergency Management Agency.

The Cabinet  The President appoints the head of each executive department. As a check on presidential power, the Senate must approve each appointment. The head of the Department of Justice is called the Attorney General. The other department heads are called secretaries, such as the Secretary of State and the Secretary of the Treasury. The department secretaries and the Attorney General form the core of the Cabinet, an important group of policy advisers to the President.

✅ Reading Check  What is the role of the executive departments in the President’s Cabinet?

The Independent Agencies

The executive departments do not carry out all the duties of today’s executive branch. Many tasks, from making rules about the environment to providing farm loans, are carried out by approximately 60 independent agencies. There are three types of agencies: executive agencies, regulatory commissions, and government corporations.

Executive Agencies  Executive agencies are under the direct control of the President, who can choose or remove their directors. Among the most important agencies are the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) and the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA).


The regulatory commissions are meant to be fairly free from political influences. The President chooses members of the boards that run the commissions. Each member serves a long term so that no single President can choose all of a board’s members.
Government Corporations  Government corporations are like private businesses in that they try to make a profit. However, most of them provide public services that may be too risky or expensive for a private business to undertake. The United States Postal Service is one example of a government corporation.

**Reading Check**  What are the three types of independent agencies?

### The Civil Service System

As you might imagine, the executive branch includes a wide variety of employees, from budget experts at the OMB to rocket engineers at NASA. The President chooses fewer than 1 percent of the workers in the executive branch. How do all the others get their jobs?

For many years, government jobs were likely to go to friends and supporters of the President. Loyalty to the President was more important than knowing how to do the job.

In 1883, however, Congress set up the civil service system. Under this system most government workers, called civil servants, are hired on the basis of merit. There are tests for most kinds of jobs, and workers are hired from among those with the highest scores. The civil service system provides for a group of trained workers who stay on the job from administration to administration.

**Reading Check**  On what basis are most federal government workers hired today?

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**Key Terms**

Use each of the key terms in a sentence that explains its meaning: 
- bureaucracy
- administration
- Cabinet

**Target Reading Skill**

1. **Paraphrase** Paraphrase the information about civil service on this page.

**Comprehension and Critical Thinking**

2. a. **Explain** What is the Vice President's most important role?
   b. **Draw Conclusions** Why doesn't the President need Senate approval to appoint members of the White House staff?

3. a. **Recall** What is the role of the Department of State?
   b. **Identify Cause and Effect** How did the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001, lead to the formation of the Department of Homeland Security?

4. a. **Recall** What type of independent agency is the Environmental Protection Agency?
   b. **Draw Inferences** Why were the regulatory commissions set up to be largely free from political influence?

5. a. **Recall** About how many workers in the executive branch are covered by the civil service system?

**Go Online**

For an activity on the Cabinet
Visit: PHSchool.com
Web Code: mpe-3092
As our first President, George Washington was the leader of a small nation of about four million people. Today, the President's actions affect our nation of about 281 million people. They also affect nations and peoples around the world.

In setting up the office of President, the Framers could not have known how much the power and duties of the office would grow. Today, many people fear that too much power is in the hands of one leader. How much power should a President have? How free should a President be from checks and balances by the legislative and judicial branches of government?

Freedom to Take Action

In fact, the President has a good deal of freedom to take action to meet goals. For example, the President and presidential advisers do not need permission from Congress to hold talks with representatives of other countries. Many talks result in executive agreements, agreements with other countries, which do not need Senate approval. Other talks lead to treaties, or formal agreements between nations. Even though the Senate has the power to reject any treaty, once the President has committed the United States to a treaty, it is hard for the Senate to say no.
A protection for the President's independence is **executive privilege**, the right to keep some information secret from Congress and the courts. Sometimes, for instance, the nation's safety depends on keeping certain information secret.

**Reading Check**

What are two examples of a President's freedom to take action?

**Seeking a Balance**

Why should the President be able to act independently of the other branches of government? One reason is that the President can act quickly when necessary, such as in a crisis.

Suppose, however, that a President often made important decisions without asking Congress or thinking about the constitutionality of the decision. Clearly, the need for strong leadership must be balanced against the need to protect against the abuse of power.

**Reading Check**

Why should the President be able to act without the approval of Congress when necessary?

**Active Citizen**

**Students Make a Difference**

Cadet First Lieutenant Laquanda Leaven is a member of the JROTC and a junior at Marlboro County High School in Bennettsville, South Carolina. She has gained recognition in her community for her academic achievements and volunteer activities.

Because of her achievements, Laquanda was selected to be a chemical engineer intern for a program run by the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA). Among the many scientific interests pursued there, Laquanda studied different life forms found on Mars.

**Service Learning**

How can you use your education to benefit your community?

▲ Students can help make a difference by making good use of their education.
Presidential Power

The following examples show how three Presidents have used their powers at certain times. As you read, think about the effects of each President’s action. Was the President right to take that action?

**Jefferson and the Louisiana Purchase** President Thomas Jefferson had a great opportunity in 1803. Napoleon, the ruler of France, had offered to sell the huge Louisiana Territory for $15 million. By buying Louisiana, Jefferson could double the size of the United States.

Although Jefferson thought that the purchase would be good for the young nation, he was troubled because the Constitution did not say that the President or Congress could buy territory. Jefferson thought that a constitutional amendment might solve the problem, but time was short. Napoleon was showing signs of changing his mind.

Knowing that he had to act quickly, Jefferson turned to his advisers, especially James Madison, who was then Secretary of State. Madison believed that the President’s power to make treaties gave Jefferson the right to buy Louisiana. After carefully thinking about Madison’s advice, Jefferson accepted Napoleon’s offer. The Senate ratified the treaty, and Congress agreed to pay France for the territory.

**Truman and the Steel Mills** In 1952, during the Korean War, President Harry Truman faced a problem. The steelworkers said they would not work unless certain demands were met. The steel-mill owners would not agree to their demands.

President Truman knew that steel was needed to make weapons for the soldiers in Korea. He gave an executive order placing the Secretary of Commerce in control of the mills for the time being. The steel companies said that the President had no right to take control of private property. Truman said that he was acting as commander in chief to protect American troops.

The case came before the Supreme Court. The Court ruled that the President had no power to take private property, even in a national emergency. His duty, the Court said, was to carry out laws passed by Congress, not to use executive orders to make his own laws.

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**Primary Sources**

Robert Reich, who was President Clinton’s Secretary of Labor, noted the unique challenges facing the President:

“Unlike Britain and other democratic monarchies, we ask our country’s leader to do two jobs simultaneously, to act both as head of government and as the symbol of the nation. It’s a hard act. Governing involves tough compromises and gritty reality. Symbolism requires nobility and grandeur.”

**Analyzing History**

*In what ways is the President like a king in a democratic monarchy?*
Nixon and Watergate On August 9, 1974, President Richard Nixon left office as a result of the Watergate scandal. Nixon and members of his staff were accused of covering up White House involvement in a 1972 break-in at the Democratic National Committee Headquarters in the Watergate office building in Washington, D.C. The goal of the break-in was to help get Nixon reelected by finding out about the Democrats’ campaign plans.

After the burglars were caught in the act, newspaper reporters discovered that members of the White House staff had helped plan the burglary and later tried to cover up the crime. Later, FBI agents discovered that the Watergate break-in was part of a larger campaign of political spying on behalf of the effort to get President Nixon elected for a second term.

A special Senate committee and, later, the House Judiciary Committee began an investigation of the President. Investigators found that the President had taped all of his White House conversations. When they asked to examine the tapes, however, Nixon refused to release them, claiming executive privilege. In July 1974, the Supreme Court ordered Nixon to turn over the tapes, saying that executive privilege was not an unlimited power, particularly if used to hide possible criminal actions. Based on the tapes and other facts, the House Judiciary Committee recommended that Nixon be impeached, or put on trial. Nixon resigned before the full House could vote. In his resignation speech, Nixon explained why he felt he had to resign:

“From the discussions I have had with congressional and other leaders, I have concluded that because of the Watergate matter I might not have the support of the Congress that I would consider necessary to back the very difficult decisions and carry out the duties of this office in the way the interests of the nation would require.”

Watergate
The Watergate scandal demonstrated that presidential power is not unlimited and that the President is not above the law.

**Draw Inferences** Why do you think President Nixon chose to resign rather than be impeached?
Sharing the Power  The stories you have just read show that the President does not govern alone. Instead, power is shared among the three branches of government—the “three-horse team” as President Franklin D. Roosevelt described them. The system of checks and balances helps to make sure that the government acts in the best interests of the people. In this way the “three-horse team” works together for the good of the nation.

✓ Reading Check  Of the three examples given, which is an example of an opportunity and which is an example of a crisis?

SECTION 3  Assessment

Key Terms
Use each of the key terms in a sentence that explains its meaning:
treaties, executive privilege

Target Reading Skill
1. Reread Reread the passage on page 244 entitled “Chief Diplomat.” What information provided later in the chapter helps you understand this passage better?

Comprehension and Critical Thinking
2. a. Recall  How are executive agreements an example of presidential freedom of action?
   b. Contrast  How do executive agreements and executive privilege contrast with the system of checks and balances?

3. a. Describe  What problem led President Truman to take control of the steel mills?
   b. Demonstrate Reasoned Judgment  Was Truman’s action a threat to the Constitution?

4. a. Explain  What is the “three-horse team” that Roosevelt described?
   b. Evaluate Information  Did the Framers of the Constitution do a good job in designing the federal government? Explain.

Writing Activity
Write a newspaper editorial in which you describe the problems Jefferson faced in completing the Louisiana Purchase. Conclude by explaining whether or not you think Jefferson made the correct decision.

TIPS
- Organize your essay into two parts: a presentation of the facts and then an evaluation of Jefferson’s action.
- Make an outline of Jefferson’s options and the consequences of each choice.
Drawing Inferences

Writers will sometimes imply meanings rather than stating them directly. When this happens, you need to infer the writer's meaning by using what you already know to interpret the writer's meaning.

Read this passage about President John F. Kennedy and the Cuban missile crisis. Then, answer the questions that follow.

On October 14, 1962, the Pentagon provided the White House with photographs proving that the Soviets were building nuclear military installations in Cuba. Because a previous attack on Cuba had been an embarrassing failure for the United States, President Kennedy took his time deciding on his response to this threat. After discussion with his Cabinet, the President ordered a naval blockade of the Gulf of Mexico.

On October 26, Soviet Premier Nikita Khrushchev offered to withdraw all the missiles from Cuba in exchange for an American pledge not to invade the island nation. The President and his Cabinet agreed to respond positively to this offer. On the following day, however, they were halted by a second letter from Moscow, which now asked for the removal of American missile bases in Turkey.

Attorney General Robert Kennedy, the President's brother and his most trusted adviser, suggested that the United States respond as planned to the first letter and ignore the existence of the second. Khrushchev accepted the United States pledge not to invade Cuba, and by November the missiles had been sent back to the Soviet Union and the naval blockade lifted.

Learn the Skill

Follow these steps to draw inferences:

1. Identify main ideas. What is the main idea of the passage?
2. Look for facts and opinions. What information is directly stated by the author?
3. Identify unstated ideas. What ideas or information are implied but not directly stated in the passage?
4. Identify the point of view. Based on the inferences you made, how do you think the writer feels about the topic?

Practice the Skill

Read the passage above, and answer the following questions:

1. What is the main idea of this passage about the Cuban missile crisis?
2. (a) Find two stated facts. (b) Find two stated opinions.
3. What are some advantages and disadvantages of each solution?
4. What is the best solution? Why?

Apply the Skill

Read a magazine article about a recent action taken by the President of the United States. What does the writer of the article imply about the President's action?
Chapter Summary

Section 1
The Roles of the President
(pages 240–247)

- The President heads the **executive branch** of the government.
- The Constitution spells out requirements, responsibilities, and powers of the presidency.
- The President serves as chief executive, commander in chief, chief diplomat, and legislative leader. The President also appoints judges and other officials, leads a political party, and serves as chief of state.
- As part of **foreign policy**, the President negotiates treaties, appoints **ambassadors**, and makes **executive agreements**.
- As legislative leader, the President sets **domestic policy**.

Section 2
The Organization of the Executive Branch
(pages 249–254)

- The executive branch is a **bureaucracy** of government departments and agencies.
- The President's **administration** heads an executive branch made up of three parts: the Executive Office of the President, which advises the President, and the executive departments and the independent agencies, which enforce laws and provide services.
- The President appoints the heads of the executive departments. With other executive officials, they make up the **Cabinet**.
- The civil service system fills the positions not appointed directly by the President. These executive department employees are hired on the basis of merit.

Section 3
Presidents and Power
(pages 255–259)

- The President can use executive agreements and **executive privilege** to act without consulting with other branches of the government. Some executive agreements lead to **treaties** that need approval by the Senate.
- The President must seek a balance between the need for immediate action and the constitutional need to consult with Congress.
- Presidents may, rightly or wrongly, try to use executive powers during times of great opportunity or crisis. Presidents Jefferson, Truman, and Nixon are examples of Presidents who tried to use their powers, rightly or wrongly, during great opportunities or crises.
- Government works best when power is shared among the three branches of government.

Copy the chart below, and use it to help you summarize the chapter.

![Chart](chart.png)
Review and Assessment continued

Reviewing Key Terms

Fill in each blank with one of the key terms from the list below.

bureaucracy ambassadors executive agreements

domestic policy Cabinet foreign policy

evacutive branch treaties

1. Agreements with other countries that do not need Senate approval are called ________.
2. The branch of government charged with executing the laws is the ________.
3. The official representatives of foreign governments are called ________.
4. An organization of government departments, agencies, and offices is called ________.
5. The heads of the executive departments are members of the President's ________.
6. The set of plans that guides our nation's relationships with other countries is called ________.
7. Formal agreements with other countries are called ________.
8. The President's plan for dealing with such national issues as health care and taxes is called ________.

Comprehension and Critical Thinking

9. a. **Describe** What three roles does the President have in the government?
   b. **Make Generalizations** How is the President's power limited by the other branches of government?
   c. **Draw Inferences** Besides the veto, how can the President influence Congress?

10. a. **Recall** What are the duties of the Department of State?
    b. **Contrast** How do the duties of the Department of Defense differ from those of the Department of State?
    c. **Predict** How might the interests of the Department of State and the Department of Defense conflict?

11. a. **Recall** What countries and leaders were involved in the Louisiana Purchase?
    b. **Analyze Information** What constitutional issues were involved in the Louisiana Purchase?
    c. **Synthesize Information** How was the outcome of the Louisiana Purchase an example of the expanding power of the President?

Activities

12. **Skills** Read the text to the right. a. Why did Richardson and his deputy resign? b. Why did Bork fire Cox?

13. **Writing** Choose an issue facing the country right now. Write a short essay that explains the President's powers to deal with the issue, the forces of the executive branch that would deal with the issue, and the limits on presidential power that are in place.

A significant point of the Watergate crisis was an event the press called the “Saturday Night Massacre.” The Department of Justice had appointed a special prosecutor, Archibald Cox, to investigate the case. Cox asked the White House to turn over tapes made by the President. Nixon refused and ordered Attorney General Elliot Richardson to fire Cox. Richardson instead resigned, as did his deputy. The third most important official left at the Justice Department, Solicitor General Robert Bork, then fired Cox.
14. **Active Citizen** How could you let the President know your opinion on an issue of national importance?

15. **Math Practice** The United States paid France $15 million for the Louisiana Purchase, an area of 828,000 square miles. Which of the following is closest to the price of the Louisiana Purchase per square mile?
   a. $12  b. $18  c. $24

16. **Civics and Economics** If the President decided to increase funding for the teaching of math in the schools, which departments and branches of government would be involved in carrying out this decision?

17. **Analyzing Visuals** The map shows the area of the Louisiana Purchase. Identify all present-day states that made up the Louisiana Purchase.

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**Standardized Test Prep**

**Test-Taking Tips**

Most Presidents have retired from public life when they have left the presidency. There have been a few notable exceptions to this rule. President John Quincy Adams, who served from 1825 to 1829, was elected to Congress after leaving the White House. He served for many years as an early opponent of slavery. President William Howard Taft, who served from 1909 to 1913, was later appointed Chief Justice of the Supreme Court. President Jimmy Carter (1977–1981) has been active in international affairs as head of the Carter Center. In addition to their public service, all three former Presidents have something else in common. All were defeated in their quest for a second term of office.

**Choose the letter that best answers the question.**

1. What shared fact makes the three Presidents unusual?
   A. They all served in Congress after leaving the presidency.
   B. They all served on the Supreme Court.
   C. They have had careers in public life after serving single terms in office.
   D. They all served two terms as President.
   The correct answer is C. Note the main idea is inferred rather than directly stated.

2. Which statement below do you think is a correct assessment of all three Presidents?
   A. They needed to continue working because they needed the money.
   B. Having served two terms as President, they still had a desire to serve.
   C. Having been defeated for reelection, they still had a desire to serve.
   D. They were not qualified for any other line of work.