

# Unit Overview: The Structure of Government

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## California History-Social Science, Grade 3, Standard 4

Students understand the role of rules and laws in our daily lives, and the basic structure of the United States Government, in terms of:

1. Determine the reasons for rules, laws, and the U.S. Constitution; the role of citizenship in promoting rules and laws; and the consequences for people who violate rules and laws.
2. Discuss the importance of public virtue and the role of citizens, including how to participate in a classroom, community and in civic life
3. Understand the three branches of government, with an emphasis on local government.
  
6. Describe the lives of American heroes who took risks to secure our freedoms (e.g., Anne Hutchinson, Benjamin Franklin, Thomas Jefferson, Abraham Lincoln, Frederick Douglass, Harriet Tubman, Martin Luther King, Jr.).

## Description of the Unit

The study of government begins by having students look at the governance of the family and the school as analogous to the governance of the local community and the nation. Students learn the basic structure of the United States government and the functions of local government. Job descriptions of local government positions are matched with their title. The focus in Lesson 4 is specifically on the city of San Diego. In addition, students participate in a service learning project. In Lesson 5, students write a research report describing the life of an American hero who took risks to secure our freedoms.

## Focus Questions

Lesson 1	What is a law and why do laws exist? Who makes our laws?
Lesson 2	What are the three levels of government?
Lesson 3	What is the structure of a city government? What does a local government do?
Lesson 4	What form of government does San Diego have? Who are our elected officials? How can we help solve a problem at our school or in our community?
Lesson 5	Who were some of the American heroes who took risks to secure our freedoms?

## Correlation

This History-Social Science unit is correlated with San Diego Unified School District's Grade 3 Literacy Unit # 7

## Assessment: Prompts and Rubrics

Standard	Lesson	Title	Teacher Directions	Handout for students with the prompt and rubric
3.4	Lesson 3	Summary Writing: The Structure of Government	Page 9	Page 12, Handout #3.2
3.4	Lesson 5	Writing a Research Report	Page 23	Page 24, Handout # 5.1

### Additional Assessments for the Unit 3.4 include:

#### Lesson 1

- Complete the chart, *Who Makes the Rules? Who Makes the Laws?* (Handout #1.1)

#### Lesson 2

- Sort phrases related to government into local, state, and national levels of government.

#### Lesson 3

- Match job titles for city government with the appropriate job descriptions (Handout #3.1a)

#### Lesson 4:

- Complete the *Our City* (Handout # 4.1).
- Participate in an interview of a local City Council person (Activity 3).
- Participate and vote in the class election for mayor and for the selection of the member of the city council who represents each group.
- Participate in identifying a local problem and creating a service learning project to address the problem. Complete a *Service learning Planning Sheet* (Handout #4.2), have a city council meeting with hearings on the different proposals; develop an action plan, and participate in the project.

**Three Branches of Government:** In 1787 leaders of the states gathered to write the Constitution - a set of principles that told how the new nation would be governed. The leaders of the states wanted a strong and fair national government. But they also wanted to protect individual freedoms and prevent the government from abusing its power. They believed they could do this by having three separate branches of government: the executive, the legislative and the judicial. This separation is described in the first three articles, or sections, of the Constitution.