

Lesson 2: Levels of Government

Focus Question: What are the three levels of government?

Activity # 1 Levels of Government

Materials needed: For each group of 3-4 students and for each individual student, a copy of *Three Levels of Government Sort Cards* (Handout #2.1); scissors; glue

Procedure:

Step 1: Provide each group of 3-4 students a set of *Three Levels of Government Sort Cards* (Handout #2.1). The cards contain vocabulary and phrases related to the levels of government. Have each group cut and sort the cards into three categories: national government, state government, and local government. Note: Some of the categories overlap and may vary according to your local community. For example, “Builds and Maintain Prisons” is listed as a state level function but may be categorized as “Federal” if there is a federal prison in your area. A suggested answer key follows:

National Level	State Level	Local Level
Makes laws for the nation	Makes laws for the state	Makes laws for counties, cities and towns
Prints and coins money	Builds and maintains prisons	Provides roads, parks, hospitals
Runs the armed forces and provides national defense	Meets in the state capitol	Provides law enforcement, fire protection
Deals with other nations	Issues drivers licenses	Meets at City Hall
Meets in Washington D.C.	Governor	Mayor
President		

Step 2: Conduct a gallery walk where students walk around the room to observe how the other groups sorted their cards. Upon return to their seats, students may rearrange any of their cards. Discuss the similarities and differences of the various classification systems.

Step 3: Using a document camera or an overhead transparency, display the *Three Levels of Government Sort Cards* (Handout #2.1). Lead a discussion about the responsibilities of each level. As a teacher-directed activity, help students compare and contrast the similarities and differences of the responsibilities of each level of government. Place each card on a 3-column table with one column for each level of government. Begin with the national level. Ask, “What does the national level government do that no one else does?” Continue with each separate level of government.

Step 4: To identify and describe the relationships among national, state and local governments, read pages 266 to 273 in Harcourt’s *Reflections* or any state-adopted social studies textbook.

Step 5: The next day, provide each student with his or her own copy of the government vocabulary phrases, *Three Levels of Government Sort Cards* (Handout #2.1). Have individual students cut and sort the cards into the different levels of government, glue the cards into place, and label each level.

Assessment

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

Three Levels of Government Sort Cards

Meets in the state capitol	Meets in Washington D.C.
Meets at City Hall	President
Provides roads, parks, water, hospitals	Runs the armed forces and provides national defense
Issues drivers licenses	Provides law enforcement, fire protection

Governor	Mayor
Builds and maintains prisons	Makes laws for the nation
Makes laws for the state	Makes laws for counties, cities and towns
Prints and coins money	Deals with other nations