

Pillar: Life Skills

Topic: Civic Engagement

Patch: Democracy for Brownies

Suggested Supplies: Piece of Paper, Pen or Pencil, Envelope and Stamp; two stories related to U.S. presidents

Helpful websites:

3 Branches of Government

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mt5K4ZK0ILY>- 3 Branches Song

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HuFR5XBYLfU>- Additional Information

State Capitol Building Tour (Virtual)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Nu8NqYnRh58>

Townhall Meeting (Virtual)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JG78dyA8JNE>

Acts of Service- *What Can Happen after a Townhall Meeting*

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0tNQKWYEjrk>

Mock Trial- *Kids Put Principal on Trial for Too Much Homework*

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6sZ4-q6JE7g>

Contact Oklahoma Governor- Kevin Stitt

<https://www.governor.ok.gov/contact>

Contact U.S. Senators- Oklahoma

<https://www.inhofe.senate.gov/contact/email-jim>- Jim Inhofe

<https://www.lankford.senate.gov/contact/email>- James Lankford

Contact U.S. House Representatives- Oklahoma

<https://hern.house.gov/contact/>- Kevin Hern- District 1

<https://mullin.house.gov/contact/>- Markwayne Mullin- District 2

<https://lucas.house.gov/zip-code-lookup?form=/contact/email-me>- Frank Lucas- District 3

<https://cole.house.gov/contact/email>- Tom Cole- District 4

bice@oksenate.gov- Stephanie Bice District 5

Contact Oklahoma State Legislature- Senators

<https://oksenate.gov/contacts>

Contact Oklahoma State Legislature- House of Representatives

<https://www.okhouse.gov/Members/Default.aspx>

Overview

-What is Democracy?

- Democracy means rule by the people.
 - The name is used for different forms of government, where the people can take part in the decisions that affect the way their community is run.
 - The government is a group of people that have the power to rule in a territory according to the law. This territory may be a country, state, or a city or town.
- What does the government do?
 - Make laws, rules and regulations.
 - Have justice systems that list acts or activities that are against the law.
 - Has police to make sure people follow the law.
 - Has diplomats that talk with governments of other countries to help exchange knowledge and avoid wars.
 - Has a military force such as an army that protects the country if other countries attack or invade the country.



- Think of examples of laws you know.
- Roles of Government are shared between 3 levels:
 - National: Make Laws for whole country, National Parks, Post Office
 - State: Makes laws for state to follow, Colleges, Roads
 - Local: Makes laws for town or city, Schools, Police, Firefighters

-Step 1: Find Out About Local Government

- The people, or elected officials, who make the rules in our city or town are called the local government. Even the smallest towns have one!
 - There are 3 branches of local government:
 - Mayor: Enforces laws
 - City Council: makes laws
 - Court: explains laws
- Activity: Go to a City or Town Hall Meeting
 - Attend a meeting in your area or view the short clip of a townhall meeting to attend virtually.
 - The purpose of a town hall meeting is for government officials, like the mayor or city council, to have the chance to present ideas, voice their opinions, and hear and answer questions from citizens.
 - Talk about what you saw- what issues were brought up; how would you vote if you could?
 - To see what can happen in the community when citizen come together in a Town Hall Meeting, watch *Acts of Service* video linked above

-Step 2: Find Out About State Government

- Activity: Tour the State Capitol
 - Every state in the country has a state government. You may visit the Oklahoma State Capitol building or watch the virtual tour linked above. The tour video shows the inside of our state capitol building where the Senators meet, where the Oklahoma Supreme Court is held and discusses some of the history of our state.
 - The state government, like the local government, has 3 branches of state government:
 - Governor: state executive branch
 - Congress- Oklahoma Senators and Oklahoma House of Representatives: state legislative branch
 - Oklahoma Supreme Court- state judicial branch

-Step 3: Find Out About Our Country's Legislative Branch

- The legislative branch of government, or Congress, makes and decide the federal laws for the United States.
- Congress is divided into two houses:
 - Senate: Groups of elected people who decide the laws of the country.
 - Each state gets two representatives that may serve 6 years at a time.
 - The Vice President oversees the Senate.
 - House of Representatives: This is a group of elected people who make federal laws.

- There are 435 members of the U.S. House of Representatives.
 - The number of representatives a state has depends on how many people live in the state.
 - Each state, no matter how small, has at least 1 representative.
 - Oklahoma currently has 5 elected members in the U.S. House of Representatives.
- The United States Capitol is home to the United States Congress.
- Activity: Write a Letter to a United States Representative or Senator
 - You may find the contact information for both U.S. and State Legislature in the resource list above.

-Step 4: Find Out About Our Country's Executive Branch

- The president is part of the executive branch of the government.
 - The executive branch of the government is the part of the government that enforces the law.
 - The president is the leader of the executive branch, as well as the leader of the armed forces.
 - The president may veto a bill that Congress has passed, so it does not become a law.
 - The President may also make "executive orders" to ensure that people follow the law.
- Activity: Read two picture books about presidents from history (make sure they are politically balanced)
 - Girls listen to two short stories about presidents, then talk about them.
 - What did you think of the books? Did you learn anything new?
 - If you were president, what kinds of things would be important to you?
 - Are there changes you would want to make?

-Step 5: Find Out About Our Country's Judicial Branch

- The judicial branch is part of the government that interprets what the laws mean.
- It is made up of the Supreme Court and many lower courts.
 - The Supreme Court is made up of nine judges, called justices, who are nominated by the President and confirmed by the Senate.
 - A Supreme Court Justice serves until he or she dies or resigns (quits).
 - When that happens, the president nominates someone new to replace the justice who left.
 - The Senate approves or denies their choice.
- Activity: Interview a lawyer
 - Girls talk to a lawyer about the judicial branch of the government
 - Ask any questions you can think of! Some questions you might want to ask are:
 - How do lawyers help people understand laws?
 - What happens if people do not follow laws?
 - How do lawyers help people understand laws?
 - Alternative Virtual Option: Watch the video of a mock trial in the resource list above about a school principal being charged with being mean and giving too much homework to his students.

- What roles are being played by the kids/students?
- Do you think the judge's ruling was fair?
- If you were the judge, how would you have ruled after hearing both sides of the argument?

***Once completed, this badge can be purchased at the GSWESTOK Girl Scout shop for \$3.00 plus tax. This Brownie badge can be found in the Brownie badge section under the Life Skills category:**

<https://www.girlscoutshop.com/WESTERN-OKLAHOMA-COUNCIL>