**THE UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT**

* The U.S. government is divided into three parts. These three parts are called the *three branches*.
* The three branches of government are: (1) legislative, (2) executive, and (3) judicial.
* Congress is the head of the legislative branch.
* The President is the head of the executive branch.
* The Supreme Court is the head of the judicial branch.
* The U.S. Constitution grants powers to each of the three branches of government.
* A system of "checks and balances" limits the powers of each branch.
* The powers given to each branch of government overlap.
* The Press (newspapers, radio, TV, and the Internet) is often called the *fourth branch* of government. This is an unofficial title and it isn't mentioned in the U.S. Constitution.
* Congress meets in the Capitol Building. Congress includes both the Senate and the House of Representatives. It is *bicameral*, which means it has two parts.
* The President works in the White House.
* The Supreme Court meets in the Supreme Court Building.

The Capitol, the White House, and the Supreme Court Building are all located in Washington, D.C.

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| The Legislative Branch – Congres – House of Representatives and The Senate | The Executive Branch – The Presidency | The Judicial Branch – The Supreme Court |

**CIVICS FACTS**

1. Most democracies in the world are divided into two or more branches.

2. Article I, Section I, of the U.S. Constitution gives Congress those "legislative powers herein granted". These powers are listed in Article I, Section 8.

3. The Constitution does not mention Congressional Committees, but they are a powerful part of Congress.

4. The White House is both the president's home and office.

5. The Supreme Court met in many different locations until 1935 when the Supreme Court Building was built.

**Civics Quiz Questions**

1. Name the three branches of the U.S. Government.

2. Who is the head of the executive branch?

3. What group is the head of the judicial branch?

4. What legislative body is the head of the legislative branch?

5. What does "checks and balances" mean?

In Your Groups, discuss:

1. How is the government of your country organized?
2. What are the similarities and differences between the government of your country and that of the United States?
3. Do you think that the U.S. Government does a good job in running the country?
4. If you could change one thing about the government in either your country or in the U.S., what would it be?
5. Would you like to be President of the United States? Why? Why not?