

# The Branches of the Federal Government

## Legislative

## Executive

## Judicial

### Congress

Comprised of the House of Representatives and the Senate.

### Presidency

- President.
- Vice-President.
- Executive Office of the President.
- Cabinet.
- Federal agencies, such as the CIA, FBI etc.

### Federal Courts

- Highest court is the Supreme Court, which consists of 9 justices (including a chief justice).
- Although other federal courts exist, the only one which is specifically required by the US Constitution is the Supreme Court.

House of Representatives  
435 (allocated to each state based on population).

Senate  
(100 senators – 2 from each state).  
Vice president presides (the only exception to the separation of powers).

- Law-making.
- Overseeing the executive branch.
- Overriding the president's veto.
- Initiating constitutional amendments.
- Impeaching and removing public officials.
- Declaring war.
- Determines the number of justices on the Supreme Court and can establish additional courts below the Supreme Court.

- Oversees the enforcement of federal legislation enacted by Congress.
- Is a singular executive, so ultimately decision-making rests with the president.
- The president has the following powers:
  - Is the commander-in-chief of the military.
  - Nominates individuals to fill various positions (e.g. federal courts, cabinet, federal agencies).
  - Is the chief diplomat and leads foreign policy.
  - Can veto bills from Congress.
  - Issue executive orders.

- Interprets federal law.
- Determines whether a law is constitutional.
- Lower courts have to apply the Supreme Court's interpretation of the law to particular cases.
- Decisions of the Supreme Court cannot be appealed to any other authority.
- The Supreme Court has original jurisdiction over specific cases, such as those involving ambassadors or disputes between US states.

- Beginning consideration of money bills.
- Authority to begin impeachment procedures by charging the president and other officials.
- Can elect the president if no candidate wins a majority in the Electoral College.

- Confirming appointments
- Ratifying treaties.
- The authority to conduct an impeachment trial if the House votes to impeach an official.
- Can elect the vice-president if no candidate wins a majority in the Electoral