The Executive Branch

The President of the United States represents the entire country. The President is considered the Head of Government. However, the President is also only the leader of one of three branches of government: the executive branch.

To execute means to carry out. To enforce is to make sure something is done or followed. Other branches of government make the laws (legislative branch) and decide what the laws mean (judicial branch). The executive branch executes and enforces those laws.

The executive branch includes more people and places than the President and the White House. They all carry out the law.

The Vice President is ready to take power if anything happens to the President. The Vice President also serves as the President of the Senate and helps the President run the government.

The Executive Office of the President includes people who help the President govern more effectively, or well. Some offer advice. Others, like the Press Secretary, talk to the public for the President.

The Cabinet is made up of advisors to the President. Every Cabinet member is in charge of one of 15 departments. Each department handles different things, like the Department of Education or the Department of Defense. Cabinet members are called “Secretaries,” like the Secretary of Education—except for the head of the Department of Justice, who is called the Attorney General. (Attorney is another word for lawyer.)

Most federal agencies, or groups, fit within a department. For example, the Federal Bureau of Investigations (commonly known as the FBI) is part of the Department of Justice. Others, like the United States Postal Service who deliver our mail, don’t. They are still part of the executive branch.

The President is also the Commander in Chief. The Commander in Chief leads the military. When you add everyone together, more than four million people make up the executive branch. They all answer to the President.

The President has other important executive jobs too. One is meeting with foreign officials, or leaders from other countries, as the Head of State. Another is approving the bills passed by the legislative branch and signing them into law. If they aren’t approved, they are vetoed. The President also appoints the judges who work in the judicial branch, but the legislative branch has to approve them.
The Executive Branch

1. The main jobs of the executive branch are to ___________________ and ___________________ federal laws.

2. Which of the following is/are not part of the executive branch?
   a. judges the President appoints
   b. the United States Post Office
   c. The Department of Education
   d. the President’s advisors

3. Who is in charge of the United States military?
   a. the FBI
   b. the President
   c. the Attorney General
   d. the Secretary of Defense

4. What is the Cabinet? ___________________________________________________________
   How many departments are in it? ___________________

5. Reread the following sentence from the article. Using context clues, what does the underlined word most likely mean?
   a. ignored
   b. supported
   c. disapproved
   d. thrown away

6. Write the title of the person who does each job on the line.
   a. signs bills into law    _____________________________
   b. is in charge of the Justice Department  _____________________________
   c. President of the Senate    _____________________________
   d. talks to the public for the President  _____________________________
   e. is in charge of the Education Department _____________________________

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Preview
Please log in to download
the printable version of this worksheet.
The scrambled words below are vocabulary words from the story. Unscramble each word and write it on the line. Please be sure each word is spelled correctly.

1. ___________________________  c t e e x u e  
   **clue:** to carry out

2. ___________________________  r r t e e n s e p  
   **clue:** to act or speak for someone or something else

3. ___________________________  n r g v o e  
   **clue:** to act as part of a government; to rule

4. ___________________________  b a n C t i e  
   **clue:** a group of advisors to the President

5. ___________________________  e f r o e n c  
   **clue:** to make sure something is done or followed

6. ___________________________  g n e i c a s e  
   **clue:** groups set up to do a particular job or provide a particular service

7. ___________________________  f f e e v t i c e  
   **clue:** done well; accomplishes what it is meant to accomplish

8. ___________________________  g e n o r f i  
   **clue:** from a different country

9. ___________________________  v o d i s r a  
   **clue:** someone who gives advice about a particular thing

10. ___________________________  e t a r t y n o  
    **clue:** a type of lawyer
The Executive Branch

In the article, “The Executive Branch,” you learned that the executive branch of government is made up of many people and departments.

Pretend someone tells you that the President is the only important person in the executive branch. Using information from the article, write a response explaining why that is not true. Make sure to talk about other executive departments and jobs people do.

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   Vice President
   Press Secretary
   Secretary of Education

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1. execute
2. represent
3. govern
4. Cabinet
5. enforce
6. agencies
7. effective
8. foreign
9. advisor
10. attorney

clues:
- advisor: someone who gives advice about a particular thing
- attorney: a type of lawyer