

Recommended Children’s Literature Connection:

Bush, Z. & Friedman, L. (2020). *The Little Book of Government*. Troutdale, OR: Publishing Power LLC.

Buy book [here](#).

Big Ideas:

- Government exists at the local, state, and federal level to help keep people safe and treated fairly.
- The US government is made up of three branches and each involve different people working to help make our country a fair and safe place to live.

Essential Questions:

- What is special about the United States Government?
- What is special about the three branches of our government?

Evaluate
<p>In order to understand the text, readers need the following background knowledge:</p> <p><i>People live in a city, state, and country, and these entities all have governments.</i></p> <p><i>All governments (federal, state, local) have certain structures, each with people who hold specific roles and responsibilities related to keeping people and places safe, healthy, and equitably supported.</i></p> <p>Potential stumbling blocks:</p> <p><i>Confusion between levels of government (federal, state, local)</i></p> <p><i>Book is divided into three sections. For this Frontloaders unit, teachers might want to focus on section 1, “What is Government” (pages 9–10), and section 3, “How does the United States Government Work” (20–30) for the read</i></p>

aloud. (with pages 31-32 as conclusion. Section 2 could be used as an extension and would support general background knowledge related to this unit and the "Amendment" unit..)

Instructional Opportunities:

Concept of federal, state, local government– nested and with different leaders, law makers, and judges/courts.

- *Can start with school as community (Principal as leader, school council/student government) and move to Town/city, state, country, charting the level of government, whom it serves, and who the leader is*
 - *Who helps make rules and keep things safe and fair at school?*
 - *Who helps make rules and keep things safe and fair in our town?*

Vocabulary– Tier 3 disciplinary terms can be pre-taught with definitions and syllabication exercises.

Explain

List unfamiliar words

Words to Teach	Short, Simple, Straightforward Definitions	Words to Explain	Short, Simple, Straightforward Definitions
<i>Government</i>	<i>A group of people who make rules and keep things fair for a country, state, city, or community. (pages 5-6)</i>	<i>Federal</i>	<i>The central, or main, government of our country that connects with the governments of all 50 states.</i>
<i>Executive Branch</i>	<i>The part of the government run by the president and</i>	<i>President</i>	<i>The leader of a country or group of</i>

<p><i>Legislative Branch</i></p> <p><i>Judicial Branch</i></p> <p><i>Laws</i></p>	<p><i>responsible for carrying out the laws of the land. (note "branch" means "part" of bigger entity like branches on tree)</i></p> <p><i>The part of the government responsible for making the laws.</i></p> <p><i>The part of the government that contains the court system and is responsible for interpreting the laws.</i></p> <p><i>Rules protecting people and property that people are required to follow.</i></p>	<p><i>Senate</i></p> <p><i>House of Representatives</i></p> <p><i>Supreme Court</i></p> <p><i>Judge</i></p> <p><i>Court</i></p> <p><i>Democracy</i></p>	<p><i>people (e.g. class president)</i></p> <p><i>The part of Congress where our Senators work to make laws</i></p> <p><i>The part of Congress where our State Representatives work to make laws</i></p> <p><i>Highest court in the land</i></p> <p><i>Person who interprets laws and decides on the consequences for not following the law</i></p> <p><i>The place where people go to solve a disagreement or problem.</i></p> <p><i>A system of government created by the people and for the people.</i></p>
<p>Before</p> <p><i>Show the students the cover of the book "The Little Book of Government". Read the title, author, and illustrator. Ask</i></p>	<p>During</p> <p><i>Open to page 1 and begin reading, pausing to discuss the definition of government provided on page 5-6 and to ask children to turn and talk to</i></p>	<p>After</p> <p><i>Can loop back to discussion of classroom/school/home systems of government</i></p>	

<p>students what they notice about the cover (Capitol Building and two children) and what the title/illustration makes them wonder about. Have students turn and talk about what they think the term "government" means.</p> <p>Tell students they will listen to learn what a government is and what is special about our government and how it works.</p> <p>(Consider using whiteboard to lift word gov-ern-ment and identify it as multisyllabic. Model applying syllabication rules to break it down, reminding students they can always read 'big words' if they use their knowledge of syllable types/patterns to break down the big word into smaller units (syllables).)</p>	<p>answer "What is the name of your city, state, and country?" Share out and record, noting we have people working to take care of our cities, our state, and our country, and these people work in the "government". Note that even smaller places within a city or town can have a government—like our school or even our classroom!</p> <p>Have students think about their school and who "runs" it. Turn and talk and share out, with teacher noting schools and classrooms need people taking care of them to make sure they are safe and fair. Note that even our homes and families need this kind of guidance or stewardship.</p> <p>Read pages 7-8 and have children make connections to rules at school and at home. Note that governments make rules (laws) and make sure they are fair and attended to by people. Then read pages 9-10, explaining that when we talk about the government for the entire country, we are talking about the "federal"</p>	<p>(leaders, rules, jobs, etc) and return to chart and add this information.</p> <p>(Consider viewing Frontloader slides for Three Branches of Govt that present visuals of the Executive, Legislative and Judicial Branch buildings and leaders, and have children connect to their learning from the read aloud. Revisit when reading decodable text.)</p>
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	<p><i>government (define briefly).</i></p> <p><i>Remind students that within our country we have smaller governments, like in Massachusetts or in our town or even in schools. Tell students they are going to learn about the 3 branches "or parts" of our US government and we'll look at the federal, or top level, government for the country.</i></p> <p><i>Skip to page 20 "How does the United States Government work?"</i></p> <p><i>Consider creating a chart with students that depict different levels of government, from local to national. (Samples below, could add rows for home and school, if desired.)</i></p> <p><i>Read pages 20-30, and fill in chart with students for executive, legislative, and judicial branches. Lift the terms for the 3 branches and write out, defining and modeling syllabication of each. Note to students that we, as readers, can read "big words" if we break them down, or syllabicate them.</i></p>	
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Define meanings of other relevant terms (see above) as read aloud unfolds. Continue charting.

Conclude with pages 31-32.

Sample Charts

(Consider creating a chart as you read to depict the three branches of government and their roles, responsibilities (branch as metaphor- tree of govt. with branches all working together).)

	<i>Job</i>	<i>Who</i>	<i>Where</i>
<i>Executive</i>	<i>Enforce laws</i>	<i>President, VP, Cabinet</i>	<i>White House</i>
<i>Legislative</i>	<i>Make laws</i>	<i>Senators and Reps.</i>	<i>Capitol Building</i>
<i>Judicial</i>	<i>Decide how to interpret laws</i>	<i>Judges</i>	<i>Court, Supreme Court</i>

Alternative format for chart:

<i>Level</i>	<i>Who govt helps</i>	<i>What govt does</i>	<i>Example of its Leader</i>
<i>Local</i>	<i>Your city/town</i>	<i>Helps our school, library, police,</i>	<i>Mayor</i>

		firefighter, fixes roads, helps keep us safe	
State	Our state	Takes care of parks, highways, state police, help keep people safe	Governor
Federal	Our country	Makes Laws, military, prints money	President

Engage and Extend

Have students explore, in more depth, the government structure of their classroom, school, community and relate to the three branches of government at federal level. (Students could interview school/home leaders, consider school/classroom/home jobs, consider government goals of protecting people, being fair, keeping places maintained and safe, etc.) and how this looks at home/school.

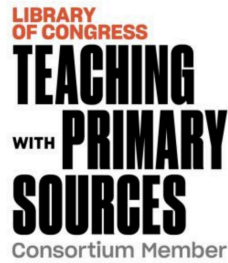
Revisit text to read and discuss the second section “When did the United States Government start? On pages 11-19. This section goes into more depth regarding the federal government and its history. Connect to the Frontloaders unit on the three branches of government and the Amendment and Leaders units.

Additional Resource: PBS Kids video on branches of government [Together We Can - Branches of the U.S. Government Video | PBS KIDS](#)

Adapted from Ness, M. (2024) Read Alouds for All Learners: A Comprehensive Plan for Every Subject, Every Day

Part of the
FRONTLOADERS

Knowledge Building for History and the Social Sciences: Decodable
and Complex Texts Sets for Grades 1-3 Series



This curriculum is sponsored in part by the Library of Congress Teaching with Primary Sources Eastern Region Program, coordinated by Waynesburg University.