



A Seat at the Table

Unitary, Federal, and Confederal Systems

This work is licensed under a [Creative Commons CC BY-SA 4.0 License](#)

Grade Level	9th – 12th Grade	Time Frame	75 Minutes
Subject	Social Studies	Duration	1-2 Periods
Course	U.S. Government		

Essential Question

How do governments distribute power?

Summary

In this lesson, students discover the attributes of three systems of government by discussing advantages and disadvantages of each type, sorting characteristics of each type, reflect on potential issues faced by citizens living under each type of system, and summarize their learning by giving each system a grade with their reasoning.

Snapshot

Engage

Students reflect on the role of government in people's lives.

Explore

Students analyze advantages and disadvantages of different governmental systems.

Explain

Students sort characteristics of unitary, confederal, and federal governments.

Extend

Students discuss potential problems different governmental systems face.

Evaluate

Students grade unitary, confederal, and federal governments and provide reasoning for the grades.

Standards

Oklahoma Academic Standards (Social Studies: United States Government (9th through 12th grade))

USG.1.3: Compare the advantages and disadvantages of the ways governmental power is distributed, shared and structured in unitary, federal and confederal systems in terms of effectiveness, prevention of abuse of power and responsiveness to the popular will.

Attachments

- [Chat Stations Posters - A Seat at the Table.docx](#)
- [Lesson Slides - A Seat at the Table.pptx](#)
- [Systems Card Sort - A Seat at the Table.docx](#)
- [Systems Report Card - A Seat at the Table.docx](#)
- [Systems T Chart - A Seat at the Table.docx](#)

Materials

- Lesson Slides (attached)
- Systems T-Chart handout (attached)
- Systems Card Sort handout (attached; optional)
- Chat Stations Posters (attached)
- Systems Report Card handout (attached)
- Scissors (one per group; optional)

10 minutes

Engage

Use the attached Lesson Slides to guide the lesson. Review the essential question on **slide 3** and the lesson objectives on **slide 4** to the extent necessary. Move to **slide 5** and read the question to students, *what is the role of government in people's lives?* Using the [Think-Pair-Share](#) strategy, allow time for students to think of a response before pairing up with a partner and sharing their thoughts.

Ask for several volunteers to share what they have talked about with their partner. Have a short class discussion about the way in which the government is involved in citizen's lives.

15 minutes

Explore

Place students into groups of three to four. Pass out the attached **Systems T-Chart** handout to students, each group receives one of the three pages of the handout. Move to **slide 6** and tell students to work in their groups to read over the country information. After they read about the country, have students work as a group to write down the advantages and disadvantages the citizens experience from the system of government the described country has.

Ask each group to share something that they have written about their country, until all groups have shared. As students share, take some notes on the whiteboard by creating a heading for each of the three countries and adding information underneath. After students have shared, tell students that each country represents a unique system of government that is either unitary, confederal, and federal. Explain to students that the countries they read about each have a system of government that divides power in different ways. The countries described have the following system:

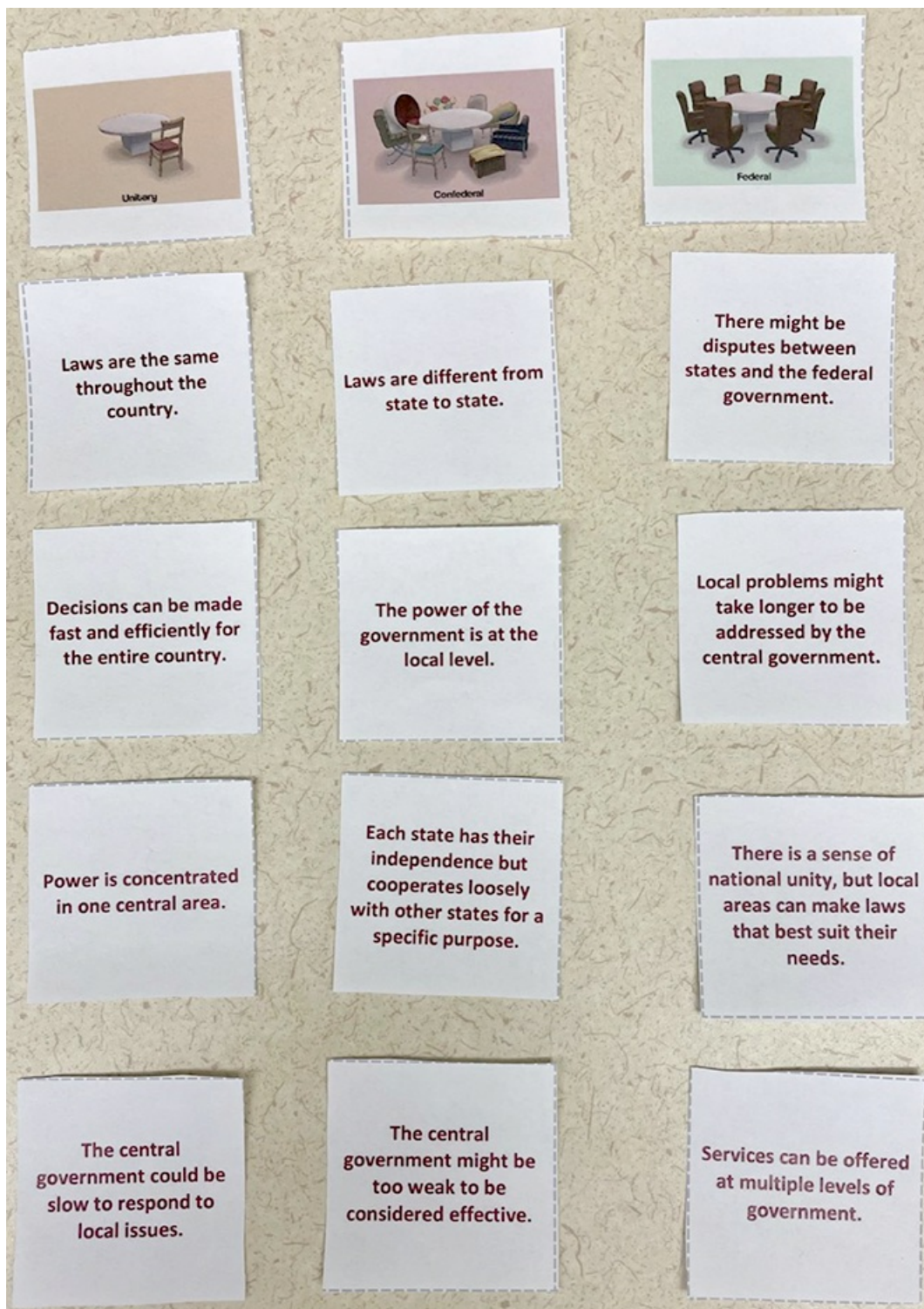
- Country A - Unitary
- Country B - Federal
- Country C - Confederal

15 minutes

Explain

Pass out the attached **Systems Card Sort** handout to each group. Have students cut out the cards. Display **slide 7** and review the formal definitions of unitary, confederal, and federal systems of governments with students. Have students sort the cards into the appropriate government system.

Circulate and monitor as students complete the card sort, answering questions and clarifying the concept as needed. The image below displays the card sort solution:



Digital Card Sort

In lieu of the paper based card sort, consider using [Desmos](#) to have students complete the activity. Students are notified when they have sorted the cards correctly.

Select the following link: "[A Seat at the Table Card Sort](#)." Create an account or sign in under the "Activity Sessions" heading. After you log in, the green "Assign" dropdown button will be active. Click the arrow next to the word "Assign," then select "Single Session Code." After making some setting selections, select "Create Invitation Code" and give the session code to students.

Students do not have to sign in unless they intend to pause and resume the activity at a later time.

15 minutes

Extend

Lesson Preparation

Prior to teaching the lesson, print out the attached **Chat Stations Posters** and hang around the room. There are three posters, print the posters the number of times that best suits your class size needs.

Display **slide 8** and tell students they are going to rotate to each poster, read the prompt, and discuss the questions on the poster. Have students choose a poster to begin with and start the timer on slide 8. When time stops, have students move to the next poster until they have visited all the posters. Tell students to return their seats. Ask students to share what they talked about at each poster and have a class discussion about the issues that can arise from the different governmental systems.

20 minutes

Evaluate

Pass out the attached **Systems Report Card** to each student. Move to **slide 9** and have students individually give each of the three systems of government a grade with their reasoning. Collect the handouts to review and check for student understanding of the lesson content.

Resources

- K20 Center. (n.d.). Chat Stations. Strategies. <https://learn.k20center.ou.edu/strategy/944>
- K20 Center. (n.d.). Desmos Classroom. Tech tools. <https://learn.k20center.ou.edu/tech-tool/1081>
- K20 Center. (n.d.). Think-Pair-Share. Strategies. <https://learn.k20center.ou.edu/strategy/139>