

The Fourth Branch: YOU!

Time Needed: One class period

Materials Needed: Student worksheets, contact information for state or local representatives

Copy Instructions:

Student packet (*four pages double-sided; class set*)

Active Participation Guide and worksheet keys (*teacher copy*)

Learning Objectives. Students will be able to:

- Identify the citizen's role in each branch of government.
- Compare the impact of citizens on the President, Congress, and the Supreme Court.
- Describe the roles of the three branches
- Evaluating whether a series of communications makes correct requests of the targeted government officials.

STEP BY STEP

- ❑ **ANTICIPATE** by reviewing basic concepts with the A/B/C active participation activity (see Active Participation Guide).
- ❑ **DISTRIBUTE** one "The Fourth Branch—YOU!" packet to each student.
- ❑ **GUIDE** students through the chart on the first page with the class. We suggest going down the chart row by row, eliciting answers from the class for each question.
- ❑ **DISCUSS** the diagram at the top of the "Focus Your Citizen Power" page with students.
- ❑ **HELP** students use what they've learned to create the bar graphs at the bottom of that page.
- ❑ **REVIEW** the directions for the "Who Should You Call" exercise with students.
- ❑ **HELP** students as needed as they complete the "Who Should You Call" exercise.
- ❑ **REVIEW** the answers with the class.
- ❑ **CLOSE** by asking students to think of one issue they personally think would be important to contact their senators or representatives about. Ask volunteers to share. Then poll the class to find out which method of communication the students would feel most comfortable using: email, letter, or phone call. (Note that the website in the follow up activity also includes Twitter information, so you could include this option in your poll.)
- ❑ **FOLLOW UP** (*optional*) by giving students the name, address, phone number, and email address of their senators or Congressional representative OR by having them complete the "Who Represents Me?" web quest. Ask them to contact that person about the issue they thought of and report back to the class about the response they receive.

The Fourth Branch: YOU!

Name: _____



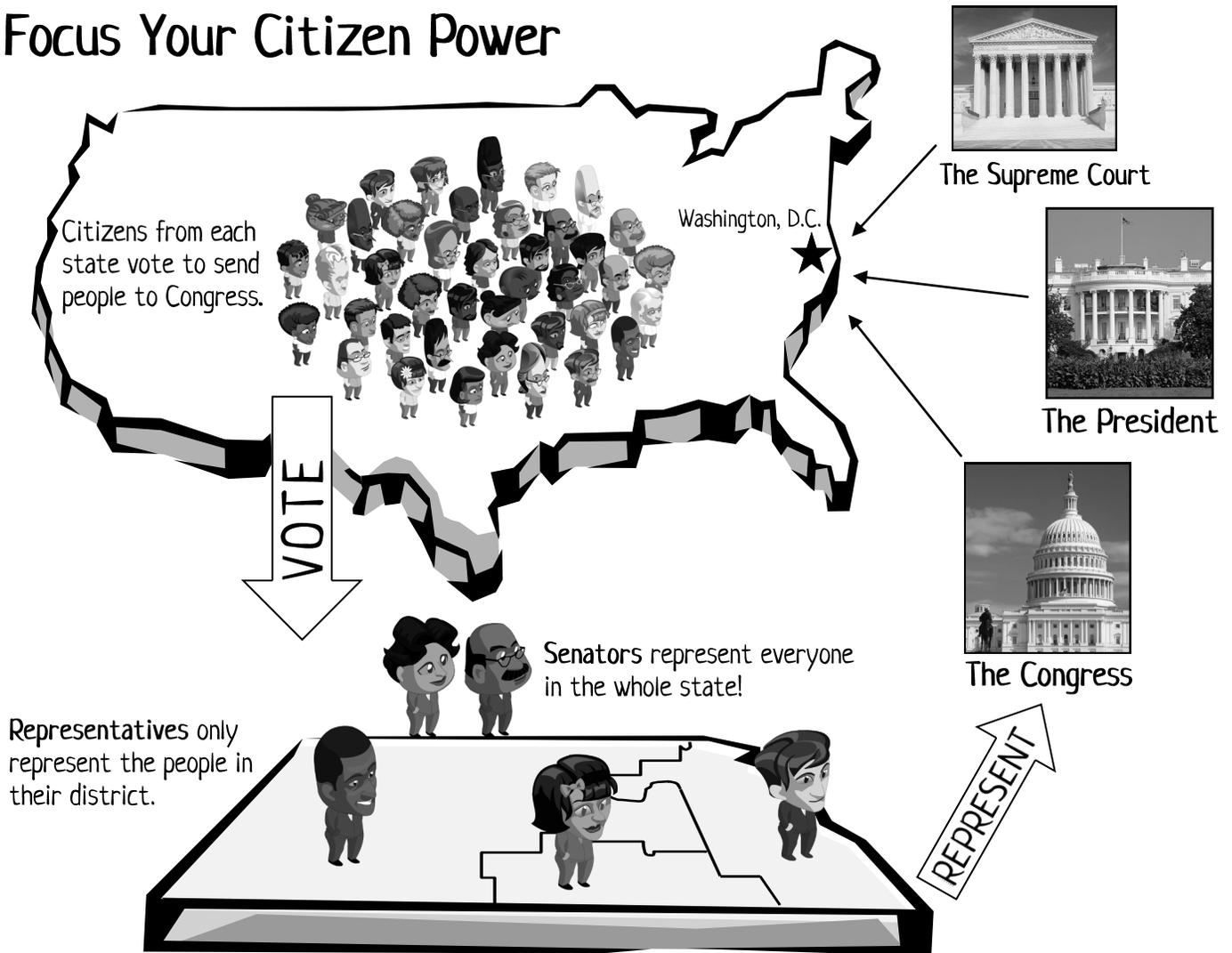
You may not feel like part of the government, but you are! The “dem” in the word “democracy” comes from the Greek word *demos*, meaning “people.” But how can one person have an impact on a government as huge as ours? By writing a letter, picking up the phone, or shooting off an email—that’s how. If you understand how the government works, and you’ve got a bit of savvy about where your opinions will have the most impact, you can be an active member of the “Fourth Branch” of our government: the citizens!

	EXECUTIVE BRANCH	LEGISLATIVE BRANCH		JUDICIAL BRANCH
		HOUSE	SENATE	
Who is involved?				
What do they do?				
Do citizens get to vote for the person?				
How do citizens’ votes count?				
Responsible to how many citizens?				
Odds of in-person contact?				
Could YOUR calls, emails, or letters change their minds?				

The Fourth Branch: YOU!

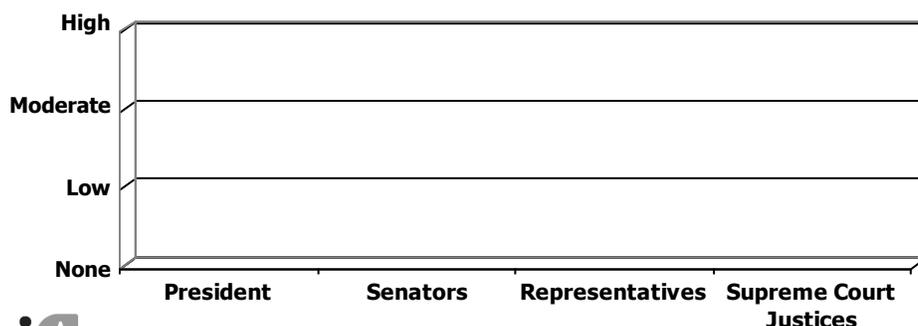
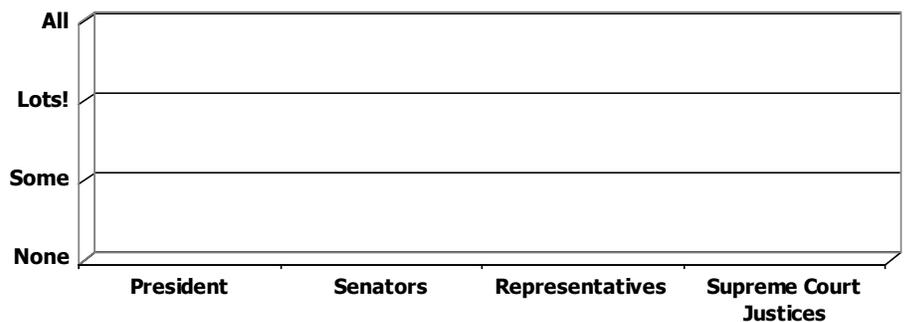
Name: _____

Focus Your Citizen Power



A. Responsible to How Many?

Make a bar graph showing how many citizens each person is responsible for representing.



B. Your Citizen Power

Make a bar graph showing where your "citizen power" has the most impact to get someone's attention on the issues you care about.

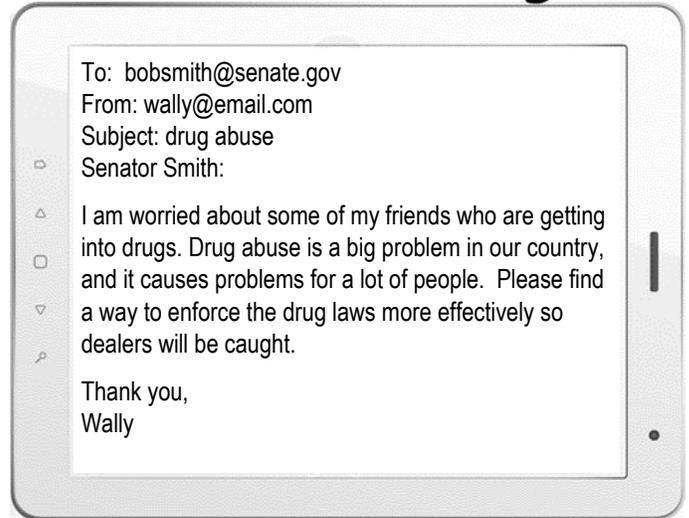
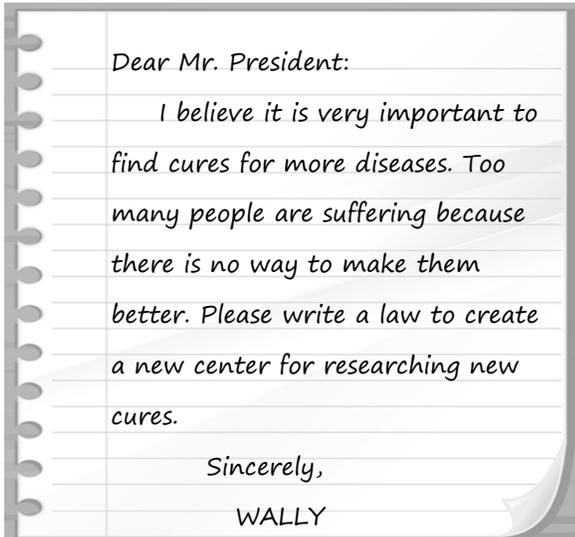
The Fourth Branch: YOU!

Name: _____

Who Ya Gonna Call?

Wally cares about a lot of issues, and he has decided to make full use of his citizen power! However . . . Wally doesn't quite understand how the federal government works. Check over Wally's letters, emails, and phone calls to make sure he targets the right people (and doesn't embarrass himself).

First, decide what Wally should do with each of his proposed communications. Tell him by circling the correct picture. If you find something wrong, tell Wally what the problem is. If not, tell him "Good job!"



1)  OR 

Here's the problem, Wally: _____

2)  OR 

Here's the problem, Wally: _____



Aide: Hello, Representative Roger's office.

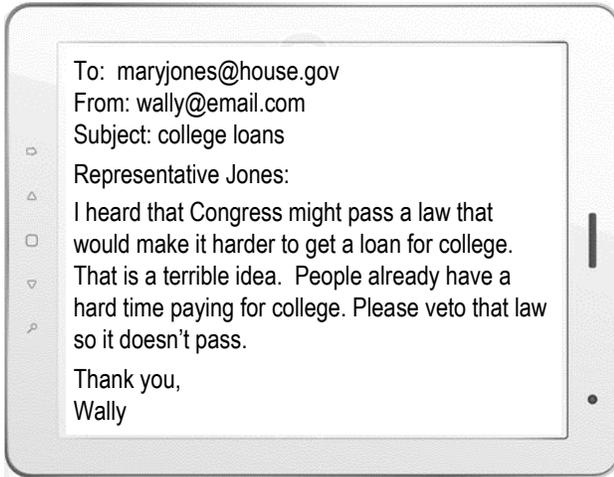
Wally: Hello, my name is Wally. I heard the Supreme Court is about to decide a case about giving kids more rights. Usually when kids talk, nobody takes them seriously. That's why I want Representative Rogers to tell the Justices to decide that kids deserve more rights.

3)  OR 

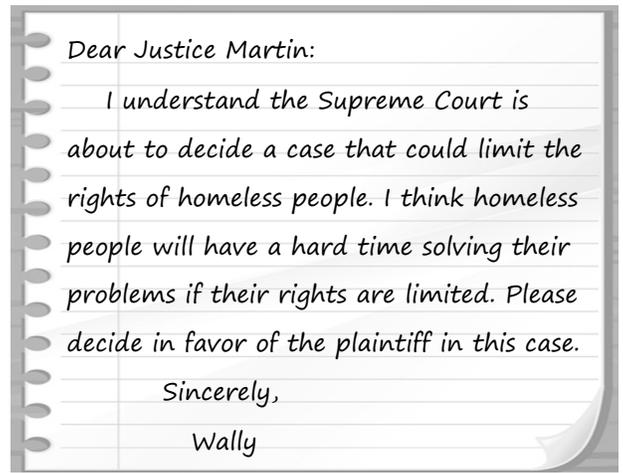
Here's the problem, Wally: _____

The Fourth Branch: YOU!

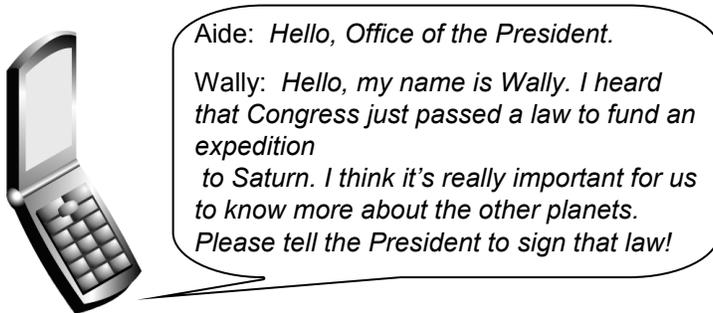
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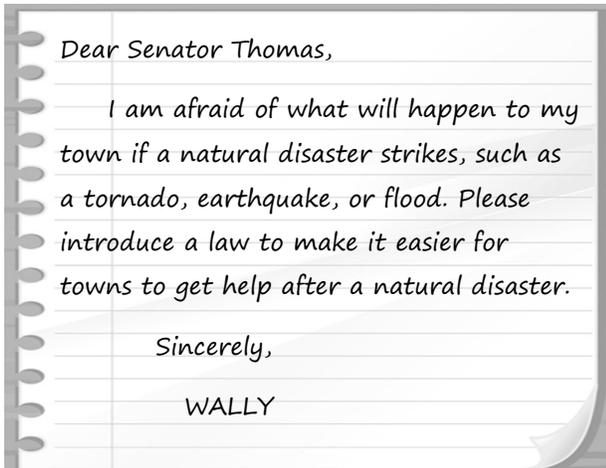
4)  OR 
 Here's the problem, Wally: _____



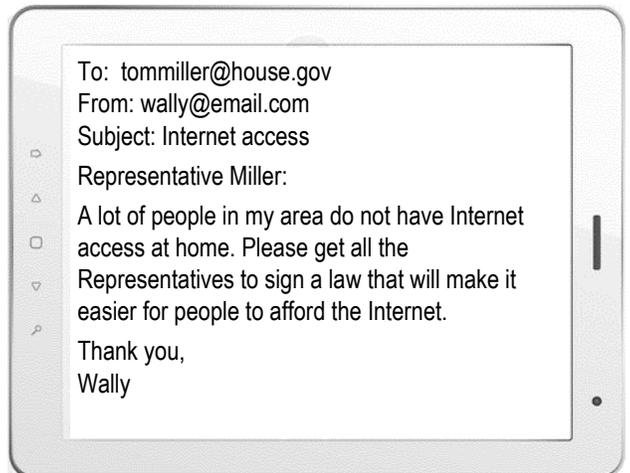
5)  OR 
 Here's the problem, Wally: _____



6)  OR 
 Here's the problem, Wally: _____



7)  OR 
 Here's the problem, Wally: _____



8)  OR 
 Here's the problem, Wally: _____

A/B/C Activity

On the board, write the following:

A	B	C
Executive Branch	Legislative Branch	Judicial Branch

Tell the class you are going to read a series of government functions. For each one, they should say A, B, or C, depending on which branch has that function.

- 1) Writes laws (B)
- 2) Signs laws (A)
- 3) Creates agenda for the whole nation (A)
- 4) Decides whether laws are constitutional (C)
- 5) Votes to pass laws (B)
- 6) Vetoes laws (A)
- 7) Carries out laws (A)
- 8) Hears court cases (C)
- 9) Introduces laws (B)
- 10) Enforces laws (A)

The Fourth Branch: YOU!

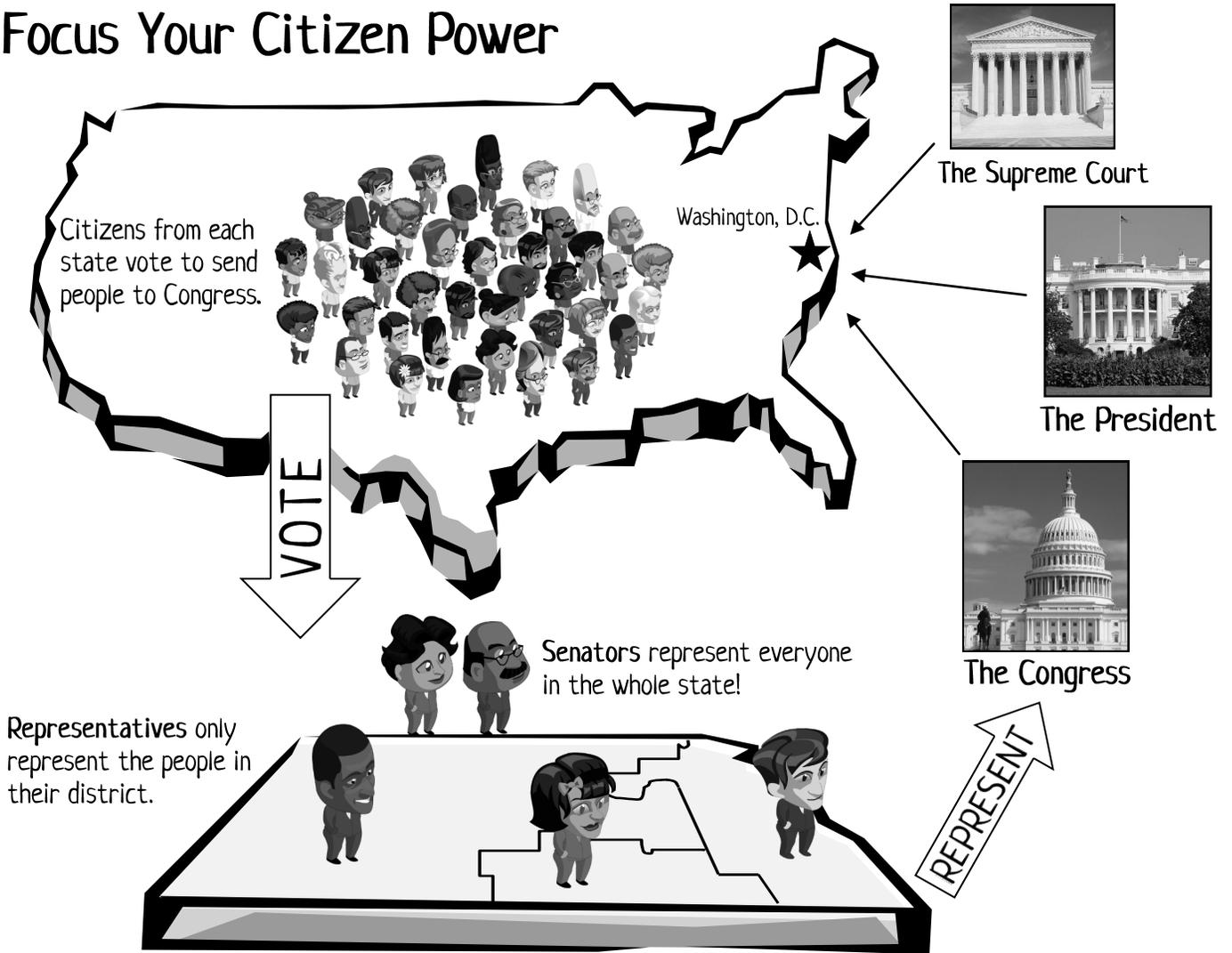
Name: ** *TEACHER GUIDE* **



You may not feel like part of the government, but you are! The “dem” in the word “democracy” comes from the Greek word *demos*, meaning “people.” But how can one person have an impact on a government as huge as ours? By writing a letter, picking up the phone, or shooting off an email—that’s how. If you understand how the government works, and you’ve got a bit of savvy about where your opinions will have the most impact, you can be an active member of the “Fourth Branch” of our government: the citizens!

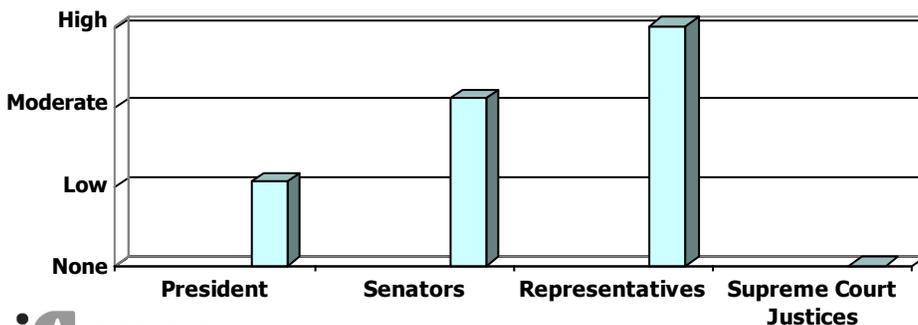
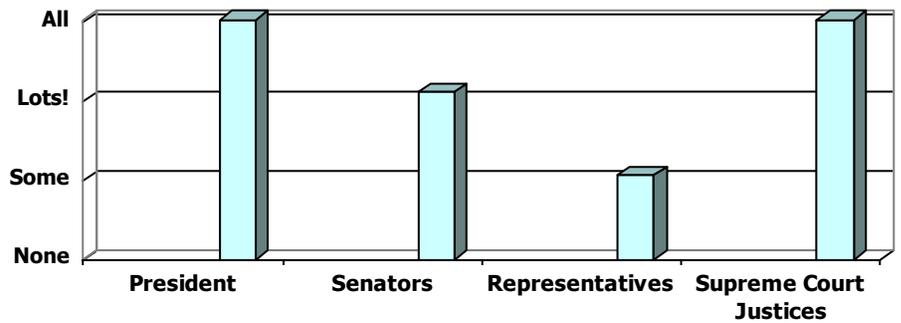
	EXECUTIVE BRANCH	LEGISLATIVE BRANCH		JUDICIAL BRANCH
		HOUSE	SENATE	
Who is involved?	<i>President</i>	<i>Representatives</i>	<i>Senators</i>	<i>Supreme Court Justices</i>
What do they do?	<i>Make agenda Sign/veto laws Carries out laws Enforces laws</i>	<i>Introduces laws Writes laws Vote for laws</i>	<i>Introduces laws Writes laws Vote for laws</i>	<i>Hear court cases to decide whether laws are constitutional</i>
Do citizens get to vote for the person?	<i>Yes</i>	<i>Yes</i>	<i>Yes</i>	<i>No</i>
How do citizens’ votes count?	<i>All of a state’s electoral votes go to the candidate who wins a majority in the state.</i>	<i>Vote directly for the candidate</i>	<i>Vote directly for the candidate</i>	<i>No voting</i>
Responsible to how many citizens?	<i>Entire U.S.</i>	<i>Citizens living in the representative’s district</i>	<i>Entire state</i>	<i>Entire U.S.</i>
Odds of in-person contact?	<i>Low. May appear at an event with thousands of people</i>	<i>Moderate. Appears at state events with many people</i>	<i>Better. Often appears at local events</i>	<i>Very low. (You might not even know if you saw them on the street!)</i>
Could YOUR calls, emails, or letters change their minds?	<i>Yes</i>	<i>Yes</i>	<i>Yes</i>	<i>No</i>

Focus Your Citizen Power



A. Responsible to How Many?

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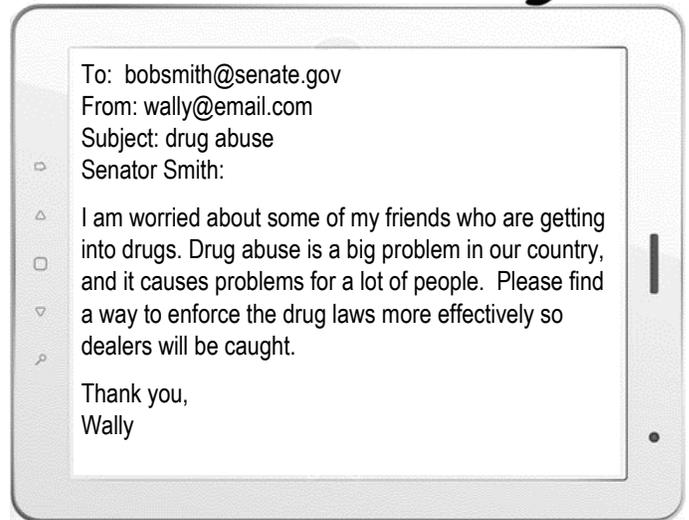
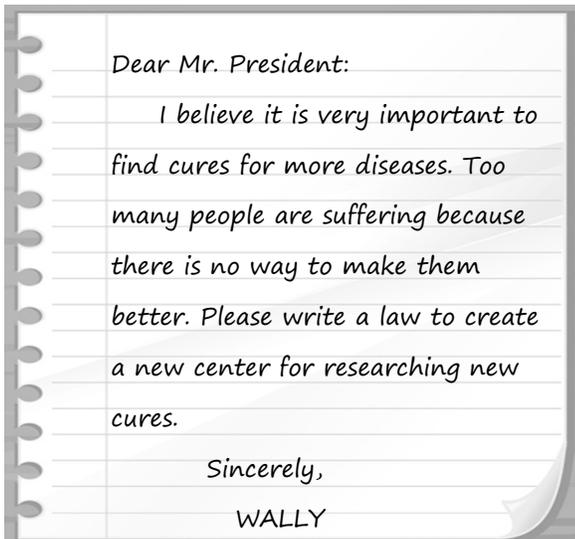
The Fourth Branch: YOU!

Name: ** *TEACHER GUIDE* **

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First, decide what Wally should do with each of his proposed communications. Tell him by circling the correct picture. If you find something wrong, tell Wally what the problem is. If not, tell him "Good job!"



1)  OR 

Here's the problem, Wally: _____
The president does not write laws.

2)  OR 

Here's the problem, Wally: _____
Senators do not enforce laws.



Aide: Hello, Representative Roger's office.

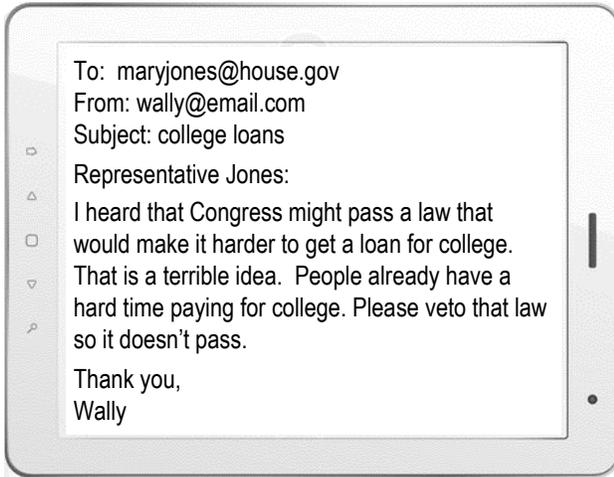
Wally: Hello, my name is Wally. I heard the Supreme Court is about to decide a case about giving kids more rights. Usually when kids talk, nobody takes them seriously. That's why I want Representative Rogers to tell the Justices to decide that kids deserve more rights.

3)  OR 

Here's the problem, Wally: _____
A) Representatives cannot tell the Supreme Court what to do.
B) The Supreme Court cannot be influenced by citizens.

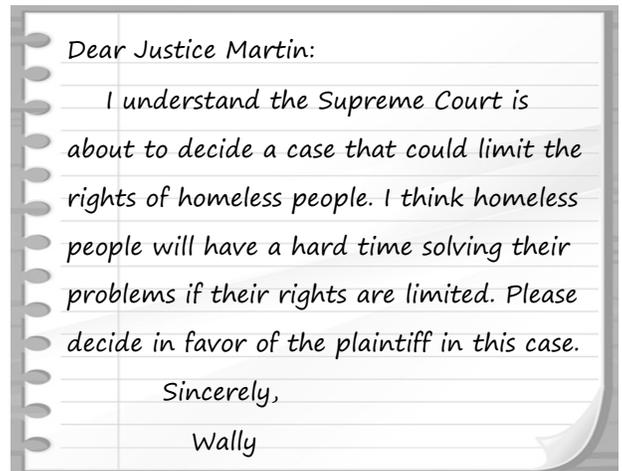
The Fourth Branch: YOU!

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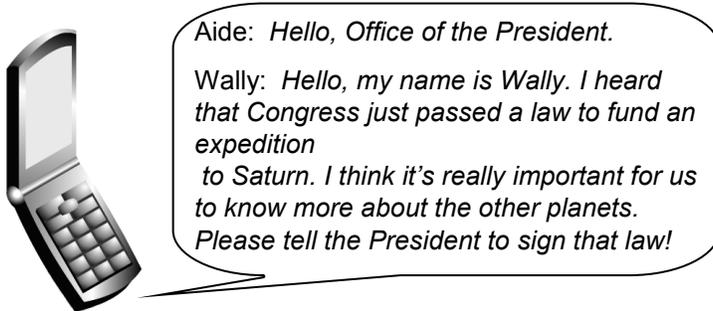
- 4)  OR 

Here's the problem, Wally: _____
*Representatives don't **veto** laws—
 that is the President's job!*



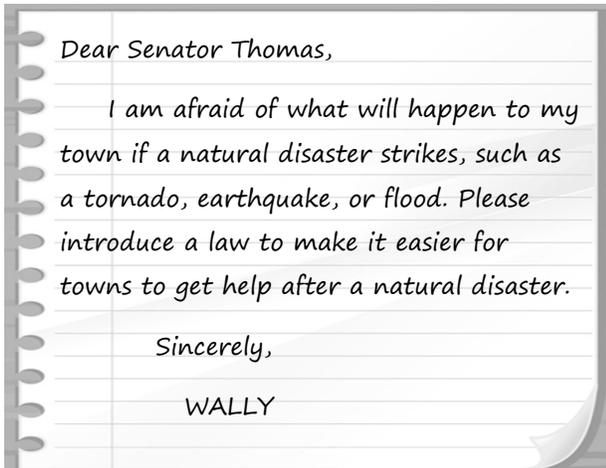
- 5)  OR 

Here's the problem, Wally: _____
*The Supreme Court Justices are not
 influenced by citizens' opinions.*



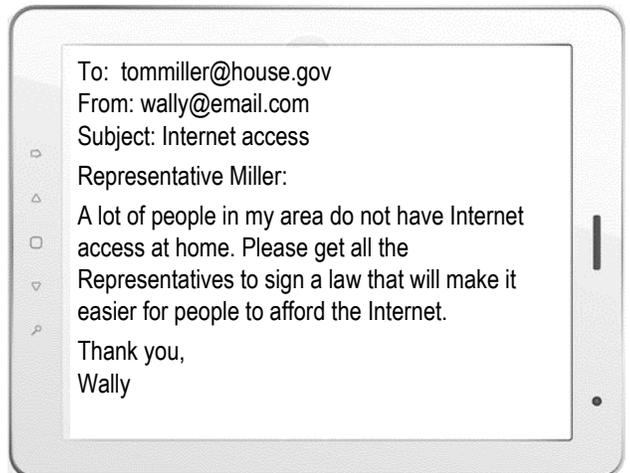
- 6)  OR 

Here's the problem, Wally: _____
No problem, Wally. Good job!



- 7)  OR 

Here's the problem, Wally: _____
No problem, Wally. Good job!



- 8)  OR 

Here's the problem, Wally: _____
*Representatives don't **sign** laws.
 They vote for or against laws.*