

## The Three Branches of the Navajo Nation Government

The Navajo Nation is located in three different states: Arizona, New Mexico and Utah. The Navajo Nation has three branches of government: executive, legislative, and judicial. The Navajo Tribal Council created these three branches.

The Navajo executive branch is similar to the national and state branches. The people of the Navajo Nation elect a President who executes or makes sure people follow the laws. There is also a Vice President to help the President and to also take over if the President can no longer serve. The President works in Window Rock, Arizona, the capital of the Navajo Nation.

The Navajo legislative branch is different from the Arizona and national legislative system. The Navajo legislative branch has only one house, and it is called the Navajo Nation Council. About 100 years ago, Navajo land was divided into different areas called Chapters. There are 110 chapters. These 110 chapters elect eighty-eight people who become Council Delegates. Delegates have the power to write and pass bills that become Navajo Nation laws. Based on their traditional belief system, the Delegates need to all agree on the bill before it becomes a law. The Navajo Nation Council works in the Navajo Nation Council Chambers in Window Rock, Arizona.

The Navajo judicial branch has a Navajo Nation Supreme Court that handles appeal cases from the other courts on the Navajo Nation. It has three Supreme Court justices or judges. The Navajo Nation Supreme Court judges work in Window Rock, Arizona. The other courts are called District Courts of the Navajo Nation and decide many cases every year. The judicial branch has the job of making sure that all of the laws passed are lawful in respect to written law and to traditional customs for the Navajo Nation.

## The Three Branches of Arizona State Government

The Arizona state government has three branches: the executive, the legislative, and the judicial.

The executive branch of the state of Arizona has the Governor as its leader. The Governor is elected to a four-year term and cannot serve for more than two terms of office. There is no Vice Governor. Instead Arizona's Secretary of State can take over if the Governor cannot serve. The Governor is in charge of the military forces of the state of Arizona, except when the military is called upon to serve the United States. The Governor makes sure that all laws are executed or carried out in Arizona. The Governor can sign into law bills that the legislature passes or can veto bills. The Governor's office also creates a state budget that says where the state money will be spent. The Governor works in the state's capital, Phoenix, in the Capitol building area.

The state legislature has two houses: the Senate, and the House of Representatives in the Capitol building area located in Phoenix. The state of Arizona is divided up into thirty districts, with one elected Senator and two elected Representatives per district. Their main job is to write, discuss, and pass bills for the state of Arizona. In most cases, a bill becomes a law with a simple majority passing the bill in both houses. The Governor then has five days to sign the bill or it will automatically become a law. If the Governor vetoes a bill, the legislature can override the veto by two-thirds of the legislators of both houses voting for passage of the bill.

The judicial branch of the state of Arizona is made up of all of the different levels of courts in the state. The highest state court is an Arizona Supreme Court, and there are seven Supreme Courts justices. Their decisions are only about Arizona laws and their final rulings can be overturned by the U.S. Supreme Court system. The Supreme Court judges work in Phoenix. Their job is to interpret laws so it is clear what is legal and not legal.

## The Three Branches of U.S. Government

The United States of America's government has three branches: executive, legislative, and judicial.

The President is the head of the executive branch, and is the country's leader, which means he or she is the ultimate leader of both the states and tribes of this country. The President, according to the Constitution, must "take care that the laws be faithfully executed", and "preserve, protect and defend the Constitution." The President is the commander-in-chief of the military. He has the power to sign legislation or veto it. He also negotiates treaties around the world. The President is elected every four years. He lives and works in The White House in the nation's capital, Washington, D.C.

The legislative branch is called Congress. Congress is divided into two houses: the House of Representatives and the Senate. There are two Senators elected from each state, but the number of Representatives elected from each state depends on the population within the state. So, if a state has a smaller population, it will have fewer Representatives than a state with a larger population. The main duty of the Senate and House of Representatives is to write, debate (talk about), and pass bills. Some of the duties of Congress are to levy and collect taxes, coin money, issue patents, declare war, raise and support armies, create courts lesser than the U.S. Supreme Court, and establish post offices and roads. Both of houses of Congress work in the Capitol Building, also located in Washington, D.C.

The judicial branch has U.S. courts. The highest court is called the U.S. Supreme Court. The U.S. Supreme Court adjudicates "cases and controversies." These include matters pertaining to the federal government, disputes between states, and interpretation of the United States Constitution. The U.S. Supreme Court can declare legislation or executive action made at any level of the government as unconstitutional, nullifying the law and creating precedent for future law and decisions. The U.S. Supreme Court has nine justices who are selected by the President and remain judges until they retire or die. Once the Supreme Court decides if a law is constitutional or unconstitutional, their decision is final. No other U.S. court can overrule their decision. They also work in Washington, D.C. at the U.S. Supreme Court building.

Name \_\_\_\_\_

## Comparing Governments

Use Not Given (NG) in the box if the reading does not contain this information.

	United States Government	Arizona Government	Navajo Government
Capital city			
Branches of government			
Name of leader of Executive Branch			
Who is next in line to be leader?			
Major duty of this branch			
Work place			
Name of Legislative Branch			
Name of houses in the Legislative Branch			

Name of the members of this branch			
Major duty of this branch			
Work place			
Name of the highest court of the Judicial Branch			
Number of judges			
Major duty of this branch			

# Comparing Governments-Answer Key

Use Not Given (NG) in the box if the reading does not contain this information.

	United States Government	Arizona Government	Navajo Government
Capital city	<b>Washington DC</b>	<b>Phoenix</b>	<b>Window Rock</b>
Branches of government	<b>Executive Legislative Judicial</b>	<b>Executive Legislative Judicial</b>	<b>Executive Legislative Judicial</b>
Name of leader of Executive Branch	<b>President</b>	<b>Governor</b>	<b>President</b>
Who is next in line to be leader?	<b>Vice President</b>	<b>Secretary of State</b>	<b>Vice President</b>
Major duty of this branch	<b>Make sure the laws are followed</b>	<b>Make sure the laws are followed</b>	<b>Make sure the laws are followed</b>
Work place	<b>White House</b>	<b>Capitol</b>	<b>NG</b>
Name of Legislative Branch	<b>Congress</b>	<b>Legislature</b>	<b>Navajo Nation Council</b>
Name of houses in the Legislative Branch	<b>House of Representatives Senate</b>	<b>House of Representatives Senate</b>	<b>Only 1 house or NG</b>
Name of the members of this branch	<b>Representatives Senators</b>	<b>Representatives Senators</b>	<b>Delegates</b>
Major duty of this branch	<b>Make laws</b>	<b>Make laws</b>	<b>Make laws</b>
Work place	<b>Capitol</b>	<b>Capitol</b>	<b>Navajo Nation Council Chambers</b>
Name of the highest court of the Judicial Branch	<b>US Supreme Court</b>	<b>Arizona Supreme Court</b>	<b>Navajo Nation Supreme Court</b>
Number of judges	<b>9</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>3</b>
Major duty of this branch	<b>Interpret the laws as to constitutional or not</b>	<b>Interpret the laws so everyone understands what is legal</b>	<b>Make sure that all of the laws passed are lawful in respect to written law and to traditional customs</b>

Name \_\_\_\_\_

## Writing Assignment and Scoring Guide

Which tribal nation did you select to research?

Where is it located?

1. Research a current (within last 5 years) issue of your tribal nation.
2. Identify the scale of this issue (local, tribal, state, national, or international).

### Scoring Guide

Requirements	Points Possible	Points Earned
Tribal nation is named	5	
Location of tribal nation is given	5	
Issue described occurred within 5 years of today	5	
Issue is described clearly	10	
Scale of the issue is correctly given	5	
1-2 paragraphs are written with an introduction and a conclusion	10	
Good grammar is used	5	
Writing is legible	5	
Total Points	50	

Comments: