

# Chapter 3. Institutions of United States Government

Democratic government in the United States consists of a complex interplay of formal institutions and evolving political practices. Under a system of federalism that establishes a separation of powers, different branches of government perform different functions:

- The Legislature makes the laws,
- The Executive administers the laws,
- The Judiciary interprets the laws.

This separation of powers exists on the federal, state, and local levels. In theory, members of the Legislature and leaders of the Executive branch are elected by the people, but historically and still today, not everyone is allowed to vote because of legal barriers and voter suppression policies. Two major political parties dominate American politics. At times in the past, third parties have raised new issues and policies for wider discussion and debate.

The media literacy activities in this section invite explorations of the branches of the government, the impeachment process, social media use by members of Congress, public opinion polls, and how political parties deliver the messages to voters.

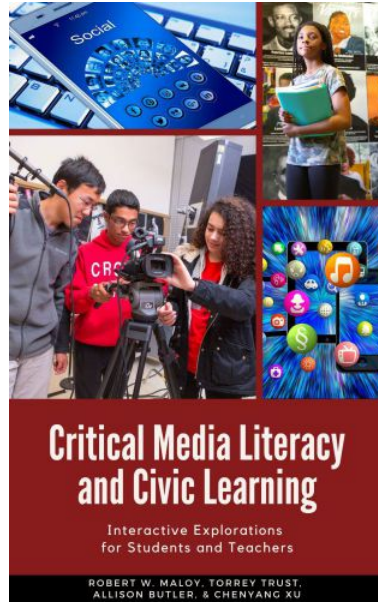
## Media Literacy Activities Choice Board

<p><a href="#">Design a Movie Trailer for Your own Political Film</a></p> <p>Design a movie trailer for a new film that explores the separation of powers between the three branches of the government.</p> 	<p><a href="#">Analyze the Social Media Activity of Members of Congress</a></p> <p>Investigate and document the social media presence of at least two members of Congress.</p> 	<p><a href="#">Conduct an Opinion Poll on an Issue of Interest</a></p> <p>Conduct a public opinion poll on an issue that matters to you and then compare your results to those of national polls.</p> 
<p><a href="#">Analyze Political Films About the Branches of the Government</a></p> <p>View a political film about each branch of the government. Explore and ask critical questions about the content and the power behind the construction of the content of each film. Based on your analysis, re-design a movie poster for one of the films to showcase your findings.</p> 	<p><b>Institutions of U.S. Government</b></p> <p><b>Media Literacy Choice Board</b></p>  <p><i>Building Democracy for All</i>, a free eBook by Robert Maloy &amp; Torrey Trust explores all these topics and more</p>	<p><a href="#">Write a Press Release</a></p> <p>Write an Impeachment Press Release for one of the Presidential Impeachments in U.S. History. You can write a statement from either the President who is being impeached, the Impeachment Managers from the House of Representatives who are presenting the case against the President, or both.</p> 
<p><a href="#">Evaluate how Election Polls can be Misleading</a></p> <p>Create a video, podcast, or sketchnote about why many people felt misled by the media after reading the 2016 election polls.</p> 	<p><a href="#">Explore Political Campaigning through Social Media</a></p> <p>Design an infographic or interactive timeline that presents political campaigning in the past, the present, and future (what you predict it will look like in the future).</p> 	<p><a href="#">Design a Website for a new Political Party</a></p> <p>Come up with a new political party and then design a website to influence others to vote for that party.</p> 

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## Media Literacy Activities



Maloy, R. W., Trust, T., , & Xu, C. (2021). *Critical Media Literacy and Civic Learning*. Equity Press. <https://equitypress.org/mediaandciviclearning>