

## “3 Branches of U.S. Government” Infographic

### The United States Three Branches of Government

The Constitution of the United States divides the federal government into three branches to make sure no individual or group will have too much power:

- Legislative—Makes laws (Congress, comprised of the House of Representatives and Senate)
- Executive—Carries out laws (president, vice president, Cabinet, most federal agencies)
- Judicial—Evaluates laws (Supreme Court and other courts)

Each branch of government can change acts of the other branches:

- The president can veto legislation created by Congress and nominates heads of federal agencies.
- Congress confirms or rejects the president's nominees and can remove the president from office in exceptional circumstances.
- The Justices of the Supreme Court, who can overturn unconstitutional laws, are nominated by the president and confirmed by the Senate.
- This ability of each branch to respond to the actions of the other branches is called the system of checks and balances.

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#### **Legislative (makes laws)**

- Congress
  - Senate
  - House of Representatives

#### **Executive (carries out laws)**

- President
  - Vice President
  - Cabinet

#### **Judicial (interprets laws)**

- Supreme Court
- Other Federal Courts

## “Iowa: Three Branches of Government” from *The Goldfinch*

Iowa’s present constitution is based on the Constitution of 1857. The Constitution of 1857 included a Bill of Rights based on the first ten amendments to the U.S. Constitution. It also provided for three branches of government (see chart below).

Like the U.S. The Constitution, Iowa’s Constitution has been changed many times.

### ***Separation of Powers Chart***

#### **Executive Branch**

- Governor and other staff
- Approves or vetoes (refuses) bills
- Administers or carries out laws passed by the General Assembly
- May recommend proposed laws

#### **Judicial Branch**

- State Supreme Court and other courts
- Decides whether laws are constitutional
- Appoints state supreme court justices
- Interprets laws

#### **Legislative Branch**

- General Assembly: House of Representatives, Senate
- Passes laws
- Confirms state supreme court justices