American Government Unit 5 – “America’s Federal System”

**Elaborated Unit Focus**
This unit provides students the opportunity to understand the federal system of government found in the United States. The concept of **rule of law** will help students understand ideas like enumerated powers and jurisdiction of courts. The concept of **distribution of power** will be used to focus students on services provided by various levels of government and the on-going debate regarding the balance of power between state and national governments.

**Standards/Elements**

**SSCG5** The student will demonstrate knowledge of the federal system of government described in the United States Constitution.

a. Explain the relationship of state governments to the national government.
b. Define the difference between enumerated and implied powers.
c. Describe the extent to which power is shared.
d. Identify powers denied to state and national governments.
e. Analyze the ongoing debate that focuses on the balance of power between state and national governments.
f. Analyze the supremacy clause found in Article VI and the role of the U.S. Constitution as the “supreme law of the land.”

**SSCG17** The student will demonstrate knowledge of the organization and powers of state and local government described in the Georgia Constitution.

b. Examine the structure of local governments with emphasis on county, city, and town.
c. Identify current state and local officials.
d. Analyze the relationship among state and local governments.
e. Evaluate direct democracy by the initiative, referendum, and recall processes.

**SSCG18** The student will demonstrate knowledge of the powers of Georgia’s state and local governments.

a. Examine the powers of state and local government.
b. Examine sources of revenue received by each level of government.
c. Analyze the services provided by state and local government.
Enduring Understandings/Essential Questions

Students will understand that in a democracy, rule of law influences the behavior of citizens, establishes procedures for making policies, and limits the power of government.

- Where, specifically, does each level of government get its power?
- In what ways can items like initiatives, referendums, and the recall process place “unspoken” limits on government’s power?
- How does the source of funding for a government relate to its power?

Students will understand that distribution of power in government is based on documents and laws that specify structure combined with contemporary values and beliefs.

- Why is it important to distribute power both horizontally and vertically?
- How does the relationship between state and local governments compare with the relationship between the national and state governments?
- In what ways have our beliefs and values about federalism changed since the ratification of the Constitution? In what ways are they the same?

Sample Balanced Assessment Plan

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description of assessment</th>
<th>GPS</th>
<th>Type of assessment</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Students begin with a give one, get one activity creating a list of all the ways they think government affects them. Teacher lecture/graphic organizer on the levels of government. Students complete a journal entry on which level of government affects their lives the most.</td>
<td>5a 18a</td>
<td>*Informal Observation *Dialogue and Discussion *Constructed Response</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Students will read Article 4, the 10th and 11th Amendments of the US Constitution. Students will also read the GA Constitution finding enumerated and implied powers of both governments. After some discussion, students will compose an essay describing the types of powers and giving specific examples at all levels.</td>
<td>5b 17b</td>
<td>*Informal Observation *Dialogue and Discussion *Constructed Response</td>
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<tr>
<td>Class discussion of Georgia government based on assigned reading. Graphic organizer comparing federal and state governments and then state and local governments. Students will complete a “what if” activity analyzing powers/services at each level.</td>
<td>5c 17b 17d 17e 18a 18c</td>
<td>*Informal Observation *Dialogue and Discussion *Constructed Response *Self-Assessment</td>
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<tr>
<td>Activity Description</td>
<td>5e</td>
<td>5f</td>
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<tr>
<td>Students will research various court cases regarding federalism and state/local issues (McCulloch, Gibbons, Rasul, Martin, etc). After research, students will conduct panel discussions about the relationship between the federal government and states and states and local governments.</td>
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<td>Students will read current news articles on federalism topics for class discussion.</td>
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<td>Multiple choice test matching certain powers or services to their appropriate levels.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Students will complete the chart for all three levels of government and answer the questions about the relationship between the national, state, and local levels of government.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Students will complete the chart for all three levels of government by listing the title of the official, term of office and name of the current officials at each level. Students will compare and contrast the duties of each branch at each level of government and answer the question “How does the relationship between state and local governments compare with the relationship between the national and state governments?” Attach new chart.</td>
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**Sample Test Items**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Test Item</th>
<th>5a</th>
<th>17b</th>
<th>17c</th>
<th>18a</th>
<th>18b</th>
<th>18c</th>
<th>18d</th>
<th>18e</th>
<th>Answer</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>One power of the legislative branch of government at both the Federal and state level is the power to</td>
<td>5a</td>
<td>17b</td>
<td>17c</td>
<td>18a</td>
<td>18b</td>
<td>18c</td>
<td>18d</td>
<td>18e</td>
<td>A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A Levy taxes *</td>
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<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>B Coin money</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>C Declare war</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>D Make treaties</td>
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<tr>
<td>Use the graph below to determine the statement that helps to explain the data presented in the graph</td>
<td>5a</td>
<td>17b</td>
<td>17c</td>
<td>18a</td>
<td>18b</td>
<td>18c</td>
<td>18d</td>
<td>18e</td>
<td>B</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
A  State governments employ fewer people than do local governments because state governments run much more efficiently than are local governments.

B  Local governments employ more people than do state or federal governments because local governments meet the direct needs of so many people in so many different places. *

C  Federal government has been growing much faster than state or local governments because increasing numbers of people rely on the federal government for different services.

D  Federal, state, and local governments have increased at the same rates over a 70-year period because the system of federalism divides responsibilities among different levels of government.

Which policy area is considered to be primarily the responsibility of the state and local governments?
A  Defense
B  Medicare
C  Education *
D  Social Security

5a, 17 b, d 18 a C
## Resources for UNIT 5

http://www.constitutioncenter.org/
- Philadelphia’s great Constitution resource.

http://www.georgia.gov
- “Government” information found in top left

http://www.cviog.uga.edu/Projects/gainfo/gagovt.htm
- Link to the Georgia Constitution and Georgia Code and other resources from Carl Vinson.

http://www.legis.state.ga.us/
- The Georgia Assembly page.

http://www.georgiaarchives.org/
- The virtual vault contains quality scans of original documents, including Georgia government records.

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FOR SAMPLE PERFORMANCE TASKS FOR THIS UNIT, PLEASE VISIT

http://www.georgiastandards.org/socialstudiesframework.aspx
The Federal System
Enduring Understanding: Students will understand that distribution of power in government is based on documents and laws that specify structure combined with contemporary values and beliefs.
Standard: SSCG5 a, SSCG17 b, d, SSCG 18 a
Essential Questions: Why is it important to distribute power both horizontally and vertically?
How does the relationship between state and local governments compare with the relationship between the national and state governments?

Time: 1-2 Fifty minute periods or 1 blocked period
Materials: Textbook
   Chart
   Internet or handouts

Directions: Students will complete the chart for all three levels of government and answer the questions.

Questions:
1. Using the chart, explain how federalism and separation of powers are exemplified in the construction of the levels and branches of United States government.
2. Explain how the local level of government is directly tied to the state level of government.

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<td>5a, 17 b, d, 18 a</td>
<td>Dialog and discussion, Constructed response</td>
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One power of the legislative branch of government at both the Federal and state level is the power to
A) Levy taxes *
B) Coin money
C) Declare war
D) Make treaties

Which of the following policy areas is considered to be primarily the responsibility of the state and local governments?
A) Defense
B) Medicare
C) Education *
D) Social Security
Levels of government comparison chart

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Executive</th>
<th>Legislative</th>
<th>Judicial</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>National</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>State</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Local</td>
<td></td>
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Local governments obtain their powers from the
a. State legislature
b. State governor
c. Local townspeople
d. Federal Legislature