Title: Article III WebQuest

Corresponding Student Center Pages: The Role of the Federal Courts; Article III and the Courts

Age Level: Grades 6-12

Suggested Time Needed: 1 class period

Description: This is a brief webquest, designed to walk students through Article III of the Constitution.

Educational Objectives:
After completing this activity, students will:
• Have a greater understanding of the content found in Article III.
• Begin to build the vocabulary necessary to understand Article III.
• Understand the jurisdiction of the federal courts.

Guiding Questions:
• Which article of the U.S. Constitution talks about the federal courts?
• Does Article III explain the appointment process for federal judges?
• What kind of power is vested in the courts, according to Article III?
• What is treason?
• What are TWO areas over which the federal courts have jurisdiction?

Missouri Grade Level and Course Level Expectations:
• Principles of constitutional democracy in the United States – Analyze/apply important principles in the Constitution.
• Identify, select, use, analyze, and create primary and secondary sources for social science inquiry

Materials List:
• Access to laptops or computer lab and the internet
• Handout
Procedure:

1. Explain to students that although Article III is the shorter than Articles I or II, it is still very important.

2. Place students into groups of 2, 3, or 4 depending on your class size and access to computers.

3. Instruct students to navigate their internet browsers to the page they will use:
   a. Student Center page – Article III and the Courts
   b. Blue terms require the students to use a suitable online dictionary

4. Distribute copies of Handout 1 – Article III WebQuest.

5. Allow time to complete.

6. Conclusion. Go over the WebQuest responses with the class.

7. Review the Guiding Questions
   - Which article of the U.S. Constitution talks about the federal courts?
   - Does Article III explain the appointment process for federal judges?
   - What kind of power is vested in the courts, according to Article III?
   - What is treason?
   - What are TWO areas over which the federal courts have jurisdiction?

8. OPTIONAL EXTENSION:

   a. Section 2 of Article III, detailing the jurisdiction of the federal courts, often causes confusion in students. Useful follow up activities can be found by visiting the Student Center and Educator Center pagers on:

      - “Organization of the Federal Courts; State Courts vs. Federal Courts”
      - “How Courts Work; Types of Court Cases”
      - Complete the lesson plan Understanding the Types of Cases
Handout: Article III WebQuest

Directions: The following WebQuest will take you through the Judicial Learning Center’s pages on Article III of the U.S. Constitution. An online dictionary will also be needed.

Go to web site for the Judicial Learning Center:
http://judiciallearningcenter.org/article-3-and-the-courts/

Read this section of the web page, and answer the following questions:

1. Article III of the Constitution has _____________ distinct sections.

Article III, Section 1:

2. This section tells us that the ____________________________(A) power of the United States will be vested in (or given to) one _________________________________.

3. Use an online dictionary to look up the word in blank A. Write the definition below:

(A) __________________________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________________________

4. If we know that legislative power is the power to “make law,” and that executive power is the power to “enforce law,” then judicial power is the power to____________________________ the law. This is what courts do.

5. According to Article III, who got the job of creating the courts “inferior” to the Supreme Court of the United States:

______________________________________________________________________________

6. According to Article III, Judges of the Supreme Court and inferior courts will hold their offices during ______________ ______________________________. This means that they serve a term of how long? ______________

7. Article III, Section 1, tells us that federal judges will receive compensation (pay) while they hold office.
   a. Can this pay be increased during their term? YES NO
   b. Can this pay be decreased during their term? YES NO
8. Why is the information in #7 important if we want the members of the judiciary to be independent? (To be independent is to be free from political pressure, to be allowed to make decisions about how to apply or interpret the laws based on the Constitution)

__________________________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________________

Now – Move on to Article III, Section 2. This section tells us about the jurisdiction of the federal court, which means it will tell us what kinds of cases they hear.

9. Article III, Section 2, tells us that the federal courts hear cases that arise from “this _________________, the Laws of the United States, and _________________ (B) made or which shall be made....”

10. Use an online dictionary to look up the word in blank B. Write the definition below:

(B) ________________________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________________

11. Why would the federal courts be BEST suited to hearing cases about these things, as opposed to the courts of the states?

__________________________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________________

12. The federal courts also hear cases about ambassadors, public officials, and public consuls. Use an online dictionary, and define the word: AMBASSADOR:

__________________________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________________

13. Give an example of any TWO public officials: __________________________________________

and __________________________________________. 
14. The federal courts also hear cases involving admiralty and maritime jurisdiction. Use an online dictionary and define these terms.

Admiralty: ________________________________________________________________

Maritime: ________________________________________________________________

15. The federal courts also hear any cases where the _____________________________ is a party.

16. The federal courts hear any case where two or more _________________________ are involved.

17. I might have my case heard in federal court if I have a claim about __________________________ grants, especially grants from other states.

18. According to the 11th Amendment to the U.S. Constitution, a _____________ can’t be sued by citizens of another _____________.

Note: The federal courts have jurisdiction in very specialized areas. So most Americans will never have a reason to have a case heard in the federal courts, instead, the state courts deal with most of our day to day legal issues.

Now – Move on to Article III, Section 3.

19. How does Section 3 define the term TREASON?: ________________________________________________________________

20. To be convicted of treason, according to Article III, Section 3, there must be ________________ witnesses willing to testify against the accused in open court, and they must testify to the same __________________________ act.

21. Another way you might be convicted of treason is if you ____________________________ in open court.

22. Who determines the punishment for acts of treason? ________________________________________________________________

23. What is the range of punishment for treason? ________________________________________________________________