

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 pages 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? _____
