

Article III WebQuest

Lesson Plan: Grades 6-8

Overview

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

Corresponding Student Center Pages

- [Article III and the Courts](#)

Suggested Time Needed

1 class period

Learning 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

- 6-8.AH.3.GS.E – Apply the principles of rule of law, representation, separation of powers, checks and balances, and federalism to explain the purposes and functions of the Constitution.

Materials List

- A: Article III WebQuest
- OR use this template to create your own Google Form [Virtual WebQuest](#)



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.
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 A: 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:
 - [State Courts vs. Federal Courts](#)
 - [Types of Court Cases](#)
 - Complete the lesson plan **Understanding the Types of Cases**



A: 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/>

<https://www.merriam-webster.com/>

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:

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?



Handout B: Article III WebQuest Answer Key

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/>

<https://www.merriam-webster.com/>

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

1. **ARTICLE III AND THE COURTS** Article III of the Constitution has **3** distinct sections.

Article III, Section 1:

2. **ARTICLE III OF THE U.S. CONSTITUTION, SECTION 1** This section tells us that the **JUDICIAL (A)** power of the United States will be vested in (or given to) one **SUPREME COURT**.

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

(A) OF OR RELATING TO A JUDGMENT, THE FUNCTION OF JUDGING, THE ADMINISTRATION OF JUSTICE, OR THE JUDICIARY

4. **ARTICLE III OF THE U.S. CONSTITUTION, SECTION 1, SECTION 1 EXPLANATION** 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 **INTERPRET** the law. This is what courts do.

5. **ARTICLE III OF THE U.S. CONSTITUTION, SECTION 1, SECTION 1 EXPLANATION** According to Article III, who got the job of creating the courts "inferior" to the Supreme Court of the United States:

CONGRESS

6. **ARTICLE III OF THE U.S. CONSTITUTION, SECTION 1, SECTION 1 EXPLANATION** According to Article III, Judges of the Supreme Court and inferior courts will hold their offices during **GOOD BEHAVIOR**. This means that they serve a term of how long? **LIFE**

7. **ARTICLE III OF THE U.S. CONSTITUTION, SECTION 1, SECTION 1 EXPLANATION** 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. **ARTICLE III OF THE U.S. CONSTITUTION, SECTION 1, SECTION 1 EXPLANATION** 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)

THIS PROTECTS THE JUDGES FROM BEING MANIPULATED THROUGH THEIR SALARY.

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 OF THE U.S. CONSTITUTION, SECTION 2** Article III, Section 2, tells us that the federal courts hear cases that arise from "**this CONSTITUTION, the Laws of the United States, and TREATIES (B) made or which shall be made....**"

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



(B) A FORMALLY CONCLUDED AND RATIFIED AGREEMENT BETWEEN TWO COUNTRIES

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

BECAUSE COURTS OF THE STATES HEAR CASES ON STATE LAWS THAT VARY FROM STATE TO STATE, FEDERAL COURTS ARE BEST SUITED TO HEARING CASES ABOUT TREATIES BETWEEN THE UNITED STATES AND OTHER COUNTRIES THAT CONCERN THE ENTIRETY OF THE UNITED STATES AND FEDERAL LAW.

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

AN AUTHORIZED REPRESENTATIVE OR MESSENGER

ANSWERS WILL VARY Give an example of any TWO public officials:

- **POLICE OFFICER**
- **JUDGE**
- **MEMBER OF CONGRESS**
- **PRESIDENT**
- **MAYOR**
- **GOVERNOR**
- **CITY COUNCIL MEMBER**
- **HEALTH INSPECTOR**
- **CLERK**

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

ANSWERS WILL VARY **Admiralty**: **THE BRANCH OF LAW THAT DEALS WITH SHIPS AND SHIPPING**

ANSWERS WILL VARY **Maritime**: **RELATING TO OR BORDERING ON THE SEA**

14. **ARTICLE III OF THE U.S. CONSTITUTION, SECTION 2** The federal courts also hear any cases where the **UNITED STATES** is a party.

15. **ARTICLE III OF THE U.S. CONSTITUTION, SECTION 2** The federal courts hear any case where two or more **STATES** are involved.

16. **ARTICLE III OF THE U.S. CONSTITUTION, SECTION 2, SECTION 2 EXPLANATION** I might have my case heard in federal court if I have a claim about **land** grants, especially grants from other states.

17. **ARTICLE III OF THE U.S. CONSTITUTION, SECTION 2, SECTION 2 EXPLANATION** According to the 11th Amendment to the U.S. Constitution, a **state** can't be sued by citizens of another **state**.

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.

ARTICLE III OF THE U.S. CONSTITUTION, SECTION 3, SECTION 3 EXPLANATION How does Section 3 define the term TREASON?: **AS LEVYING WAR AGAINST THE UNITED STATES, OR GIVING AID TO OUR ENEMIES.**

18. **ARTICLE III OF THE U.S. CONSTITUTION, SECTION 3, SECTION 3 EXPLANATION** To be convicted of treason, according to Article III, Section 3, there must be **2** witnesses willing to testify against the accused in open court, and they must testify to the same **OVERT** act.

19. **ARTICLE III OF THE U.S. CONSTITUTION, SECTION 3, SECTION 3 EXPLANATION** Another way you might be convicted of treason is if you **CONFESS** in open court.



20. **ARTICLE III OF THE U.S. CONSTITUTION, SECTION 3, SECTION 3 EXPLANATION** Who determines the punishment for acts of treason? CONGRESS

ARTICLE III OF THE U.S. CONSTITUTION, SECTION 3, SECTION 3 EXPLANATION What is the range of punishment for treason? FROM FIVE YEARS IN PRISON AND A \$10,000 FINE, UP TO LIFE IN PRISON OR DEATH.