

U.S. Government: The Executive Branch

In this lesson, students will understand how the system of checks and balances plays a fundamental role in the country's balance of power and learn the roles of the executive branch –and the way the power is distributed across various positions within government.

Grades: K-5	Subject: Social Studies
Essential Question(s)	What are the roles and responsibilities of each branch of the government?
Focus Standard(s)	D2.Civ.5.K-2 Explain what governments are and some of their functions. D2.Civ.1.3-5 Distinguish the responsibilities and powers of government officials at various levels and branches of government and in different times and places. D2.Civ.5.3-5 Explain the origins, functions, and structure of different systems of government, including those created by the U.S. and state constitutions.
Learning Objective(s)	Students will be able to explain the functions and roles of the executive branch of the U.S. Government.
Materials/Resources	U.S. Government: The Executive Branch Accompanying worksheet
Vocabulary	Secretary of transportation: official in charge of travel; interpret: understand, believe about, decide the meaning of; security: safety; foreign policy: plan to deal with other countries; transportation: ways to travel, such as by car, bike, or train; impeach: charge a government leader with a crime
Anticipatory Set	Ask students if they can name any important government positions. Allow time for students to share their thoughts with the class.
Direct Instruction	Explain to students that the government has three different branches. Each branch of the government has different roles and responsibilities, but they all work together to run the country.
Guided Instruction	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Read the first three paragraphs aloud. Then display the first image of the Slide Show. Explain that today we will focus on the executive branch of the government.• Continue reading the section titled, <i>The President</i>, aloud or use a shared reading strategy. Pause to ask students, “Who is the head of the executive branch?” [president] “Who is in charge of the armed forces?” [president]• Read the next section, <i>The Vice President</i>, aloud or use a shared reading strategy. Ask students, “Who is the president of the Senate?” [vice president] “What would happen if the president had an emergency?” [The vice president would take over.]• Finish reading the rest of the article, pausing to ask students, “What is the main role of the Cabinet?” [They advise the president.] “Who helps the president with foreign policy and national security?” [Cabinet]

Independent Activity	After reading and discussing the article, pass out the accompanying worksheet. Have students draw a line to match the statement with the correct object it describes.
Closure/Assessment	Ask students to share one thing they learned about the executive branch with a neighbor. Allow a few students to share their thoughts.
Differentiation	Adjust lexile levels as needed; use accessibility tools and Read-to-Me feature as needed; print copies of article

Name: _____



Article: U.S. Government: The Executive Branch

Directions: Draw a line from the description to the correct image.

We are appointed by the president.



WHITE HOUSE

I am the head of the executive branch.

I help the president carry out laws.



PRESIDENT

The president lives here.

We advise the president on foreign policy.



VICE PRESIDENT

I am the commander-in-chief of the armed forces.

I am the president of the Senate.



CABINET

Name: ANSWER KEY



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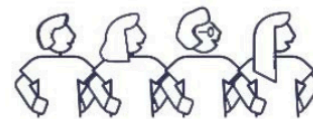
WHITE HOUSE



PRESIDENT



VICE PRESIDENT



CABINET

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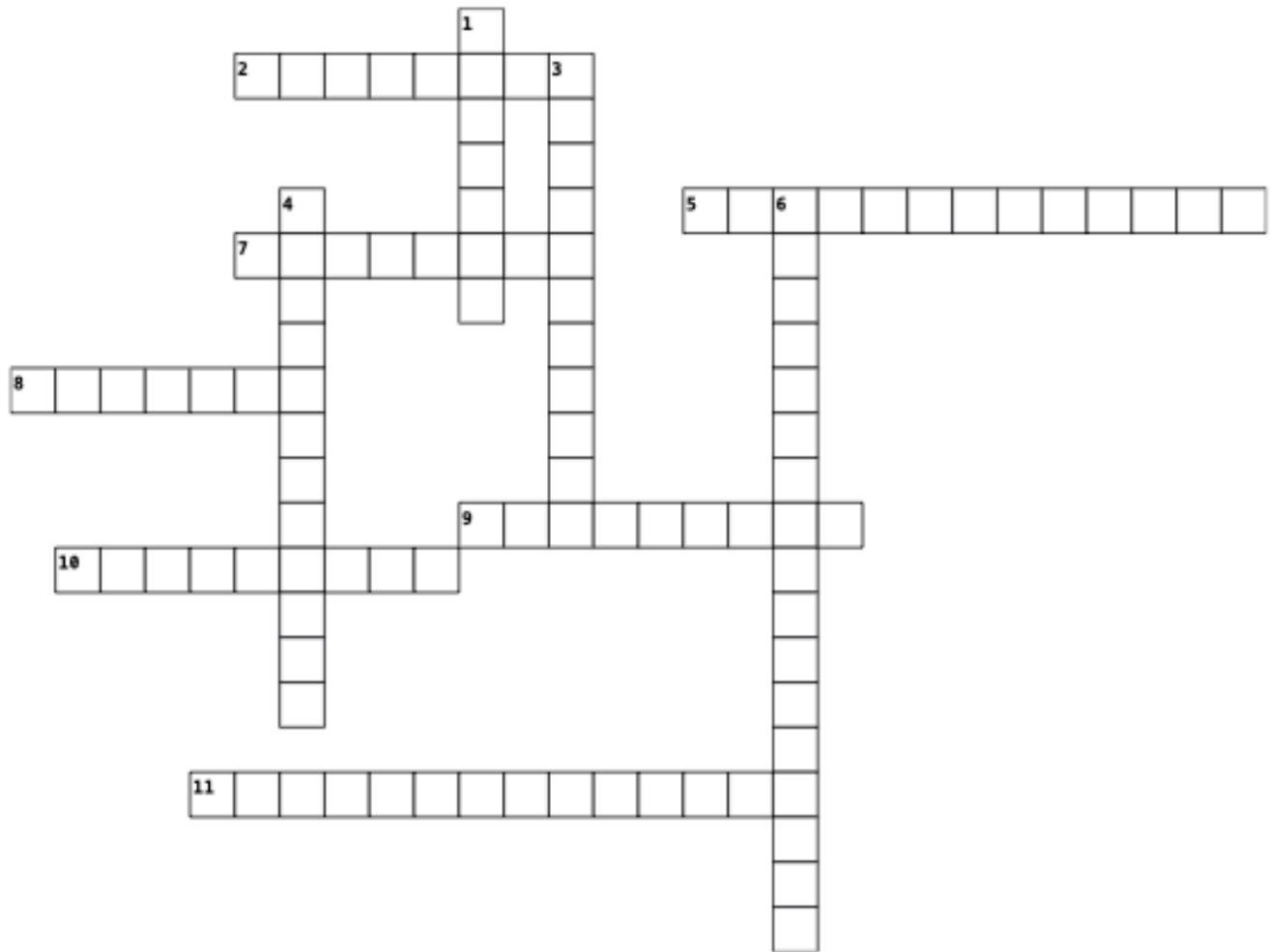
Grades: 6-8	Subject: Social Studies
Essential Question(s)	What are the roles and responsibilities of each branch of the government?
Focus Standard(s)	D2.Civ.4.6-8 Explain the powers and limits of the three branches of government, public officials, and bureaucracies at different levels in the United States and in other countries.
Learning Objective(s)	Students will be able to explain the powers and limits of the executive branch of the U.S. Government.
Materials/Resources	U.S. Government: The Executive Branch Chart paper or whiteboard Accompanying crossword puzzle
Vocabulary	Secretary of transportation: official in charge of travel; interpret: understand, believe about, decide the meaning of; security: safety; foreign policy: plan to deal with other countries; transportation: ways to travel, such as by car, bike, or train; impeach: charge a government leader with a crime
Anticipatory Set	Think-Pair-Share: Ask students, “Who is responsible for making sure the country runs smoothly every day?” Allow time for students to share their thoughts with a partner before allowing students to share with the whole class.
Guided Instruction	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. On a piece of chart paper or a whiteboard, write a list of people, groups, or jobs that students mention as helping to run the country. Then ask students, “What does the president do?”2. Next, ask students to consider these questions: “What if the president couldn’t do their job for a day? Who would help out? What other roles do you think exist in the executive branch of the U.S. Government?” Allow time for students to discuss.
Independent Activity	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Tell students that today they will explore the executive branch of the government. Their challenge is to be able to answer the following questions:<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Who works in the executive branch?• What roles do these people have?• How does the executive branch help run the country?2. Have students read the article, <i>U.S. Government: The Executive Branch</i>, independently, or with a partner, highlighting evidence to support their answers to the challenge questions.
Closure/Assessment	After students finish reading, assess their understanding by having them complete the article’s online quiz. Optional activity: Students can complete the

	accompanying crossword puzzle to further their understanding of the executive branch.
Differentiation	Adjust lexile levels as needed; use accessibility tools and Read-to-Me feature as needed; print copies of article

Name: _____

Directions: Complete the crossword puzzle using the clues below.

U.S. Government: The Executive Branch



Across

- 2. Branch that interprets laws
- 5. Head of the Senate
- 7. Group that makes laws
- 8. Advisory committee
- 9. Head of the executive branch
- 10. Branch that executes laws
- 11. Department that ensures highways are safe

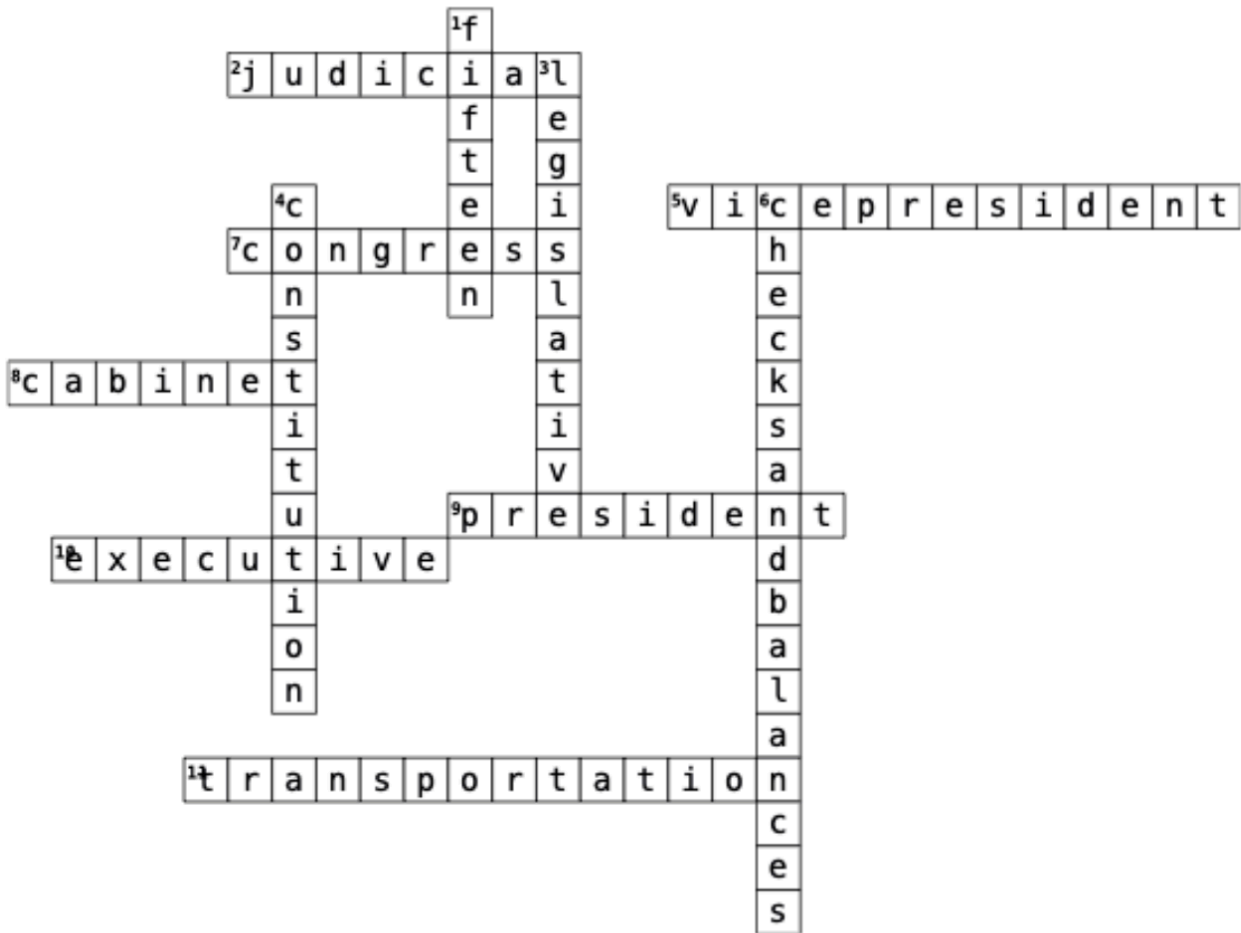
Down

- 1. Number of departments of the Cabinet
- 3. Branch that makes laws
- 4. Document to ensure citizen's rights
- 6. System that limits power

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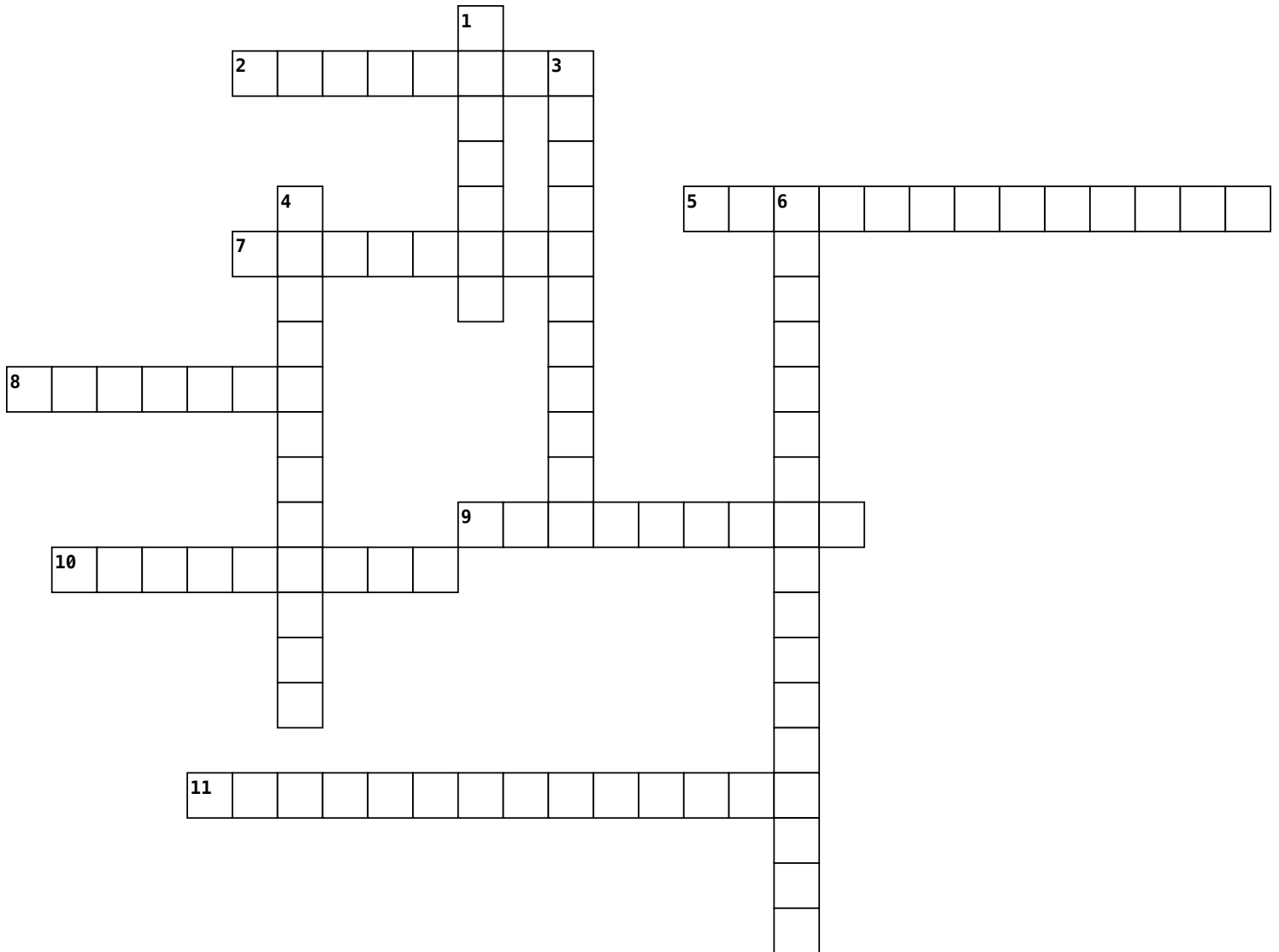
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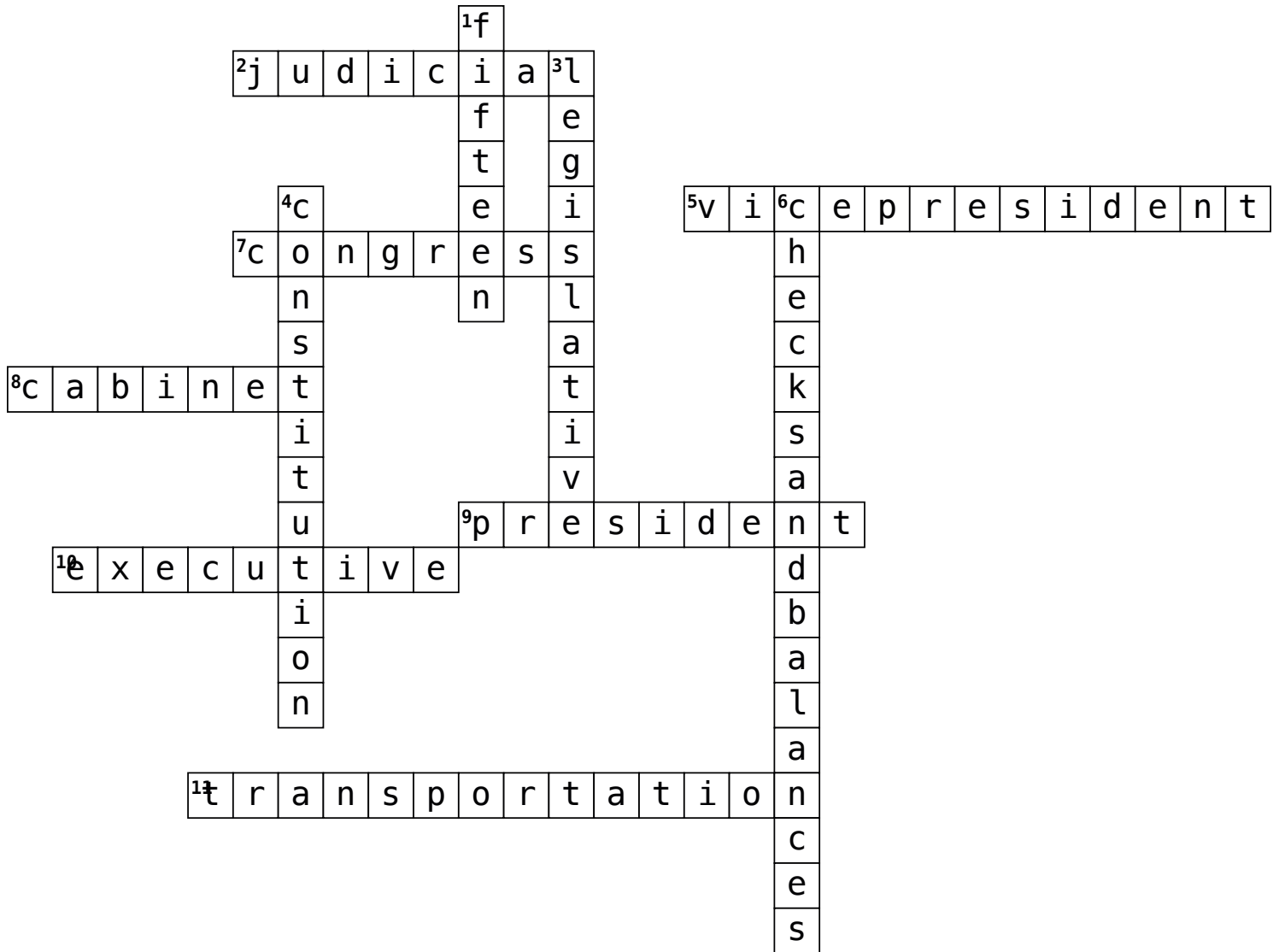
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