# Performer Culture & Literature 1+2

## Exercises

# The American War of Independence

Page 196 – Carry out a research project on the following:

1. The legislative branch;
2. The executive branch;
3. The judicial branch;
4. Elections and voting;
5. State and local government.

# The legislative branch

**Congress:** It consists of the House of Representatives and the Senate. It is the sole authority to enact legislation and declare war, the right to confirm or reject many Presidential appointment and substantial investigative powers.

**House of Representatives:** It is made up of 435 elected members, divided among the 50 states in proportion to their total population. Members of the House are elected every two years and must be 25 of age, a US citizen for at least seven years and a resident of the state they represent. It has the power to initiate revenue bills, impeach federal officials and elect the President in case of an electoral college tie.

**Senate:** It is made up of 100 Senators, 2 for each state. They are elected every six years by the people of each state (about one third of the Senate is up for reelection every two years). Senators must be 30 of age, US citizens for at least nine years and residents of the state they represent. The president of the Senate is the Vice President of the United States and he or she may cast the decisive vote in every event of a tie in the Senate. The Senate has the sole power to confirm those of the President’s appointments that require consent and to ratify treaties.

# The executive branch

Including the members of the armed forces, this branch includes more than four million Americans.

**President:** The President of the United States acts as head of state and Commander-in Chief of the armed forces. He is responsible for implementing and enforcing the laws written by Congress and appoints the heads of the federal agencies, including the Cabinet.

**Cabinet:** Its members are responsible for the day-to-day enforcement and administration of federal laws

# The judicial branch

Members of the Judicial Branch are appointed by the President and confirmed by the Senate.

**Supreme Court:** The Supreme Court of the United States is the highest court in the land and the only part of the federal judiciary specifically required by the Constitution.

The number of Supreme Court Justices is left to Congress. Judges and justices serve until their death, retirement, or conviction by the Senate. Since Justices do not have to run or campaign for re-election, they are thought to be insulated from political pressure when deciding cases.

# Elections and voting

One of the most important rights of American citizens is the right to vote. Today, citizens over the age of 18 cannot be denied the right to vote, regardless of race, religion, sex, disability, or sexual orientation. However, in every state except North Dakota, citizens must register to vote, and laws regarding the registration process vary by state.

Federal elections occur every two years, on the first Tuesday after the first Monday in November. Every member of the House of Representatives and about one-third of the Senate is up for reelection in any given election year. A presidential election is held every fourth year.

Federal elections are administered by state and local governments, although the specifics of how elections are conducted differ between the states.

# State and local government

**State government**: All powers not granted to the federal government are reserved for the states and the people. All state governments are modelled after the federal government and consist of three branches: executive, legislative, and judicial. The U.S. Constitution mandates that all states uphold a "republican form" of government, although the three-branch structure is not required.

**Local government:** Local governments generally include two tiers: counties and municipalities, or cities/towns. In some states, counties are divided into townships. Municipalities can be structured in many ways, as defined by state constitutions, and are called, variously, townships, villages, boroughs, cities, or towns. Various kinds of districts also provide functions in local government outside county or municipal boundaries, such as school districts or fire protection districts.