

Content-related outcome:

- Students are familiar with the characteristic features of the political system of the USA as a presidential democracy.
- Students understand the principle of “checks and balances”.
- Students understand the main differences of contemporary political systems.

Language-related outcome:

- Students can distinguish between main facts and details.
- Students can work with graphs by extracting necessary information from related statements.
- Students can compare different systems.

Teacher's Handout:

Time 100'	Contents	Activity type	Classroom format	Procedure	Resources
15'	The American Way of Life	Brainstorming and collecting positive and negative aspects	Group work (4) Whole class	Students do some brainstorming on positive and negative aspects of the American Way of Life and write 3 positive ones on green post-its and 3 negative ones on red post-its to be clustered afterwards on a pin board.	3.8.A Green and red post-its Markers Pins
15'	Key lexis	Finding terms and definitions in a memory	Group work (4)	Students do the memory. Teacher may eliminate some pairs	3.8.B Memory 1,2,3 (Appendix)

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3.8.D.2 Questions and Answers

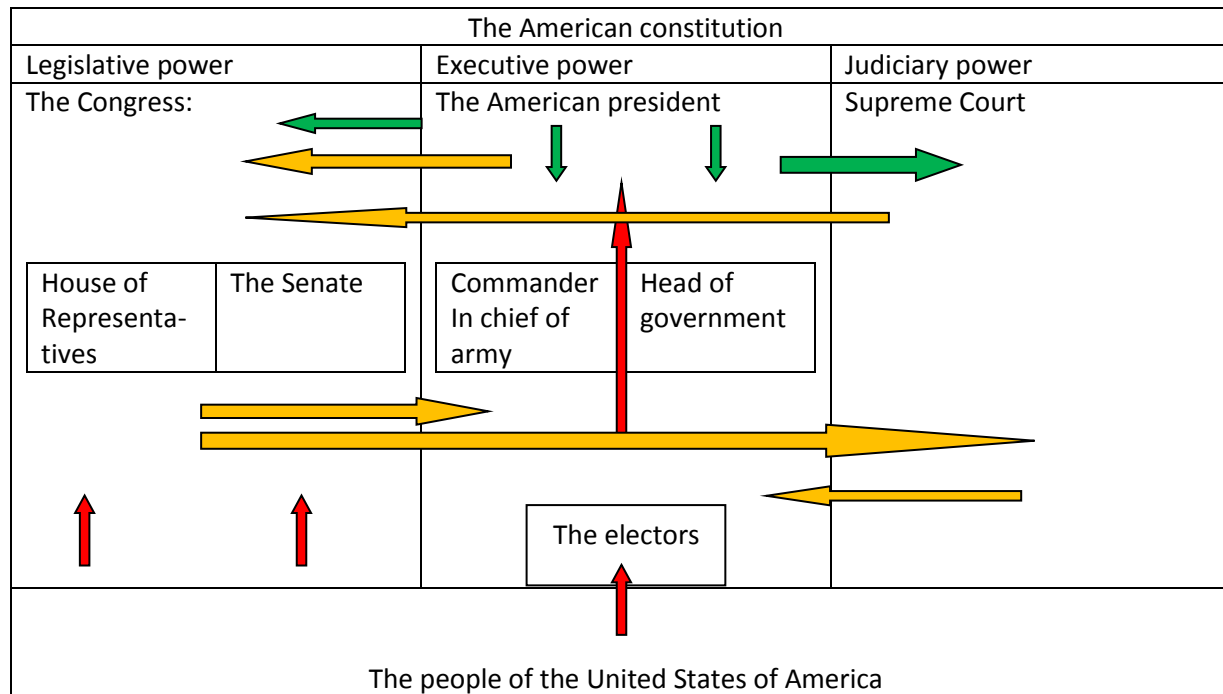
A

What is a presidential democracy?	In a presidential democracy the president is head of the government.
What are the main institutions of the US constitution and which power are they?	The president, he is the chief executive, The Congress, consisting of the House of representatives and the Senate, they are the legislature The Supreme Court, the judiciary.
Why are “checks and balances” in a democracy so important?	Checks and balances make sure that the separation of power is kept, that the legislative, executive and judiciary powers control each other.
What is the power of the Supreme Court?	The Supreme Court reviews the laws to see if they are in agreement with the constitution. The Supreme Court controls the president.
Who can initiate impeachment against the President and the Chief Justice?	The Congress

B

Which power does the president of the United States have?	He is head of the state, commander-in-chief of the army, party leader and responsible for American foreign policy. He is the chief executive. So the initiatives for new laws come from him.
How is the president elected?	The president is not elected directly. The country is divided into constituencies, which correspond to the 50 US states. Each state has a certain number of electors. The candidate who gets the most votes in a state, gets all the electors in that state to vote for him.
How do the “check and balances” work in the USA?	There is a mutual system of control. The Congress can initiate impeachment against the president and the Chief Justice, the president can veto laws from the Congress, the Congress has to pass the laws initiated by the president and the Supreme Court has to check that all the laws are in agreement with the constitution.
Who appoints the judges of the Supreme Court?	The president appoints the judges to their lifetime position.

Key 3.8.D.1:



Appendix: 3 Memory-Games:

presidential democracy	a republican system where the head of government is the president and leads the government that is separate from the legislative branch	constitutional monarchy	a monarchy in which the monarch's power is determined by a constitution.
oligarchy	A form of power structure in which a small number of people have all the power	absolute monarchy	A system where the monarch holds absolute power over his/her people. There is no separation of power.
dictatorship	a form of government where the power is held by one person and executed through oppression and violence	parliamentary democracy	A system of democracy in which the people elect the parliament. The parliament is the legislative power. The executive power is the government and gets its power from parliament. The head of state is the president, he a different person from the head of government , the Prime Minister.

constitution	a set of rules according to which a state is governed	separation of powers	a system in which the legislature, the executive and the judiciary have separate areas of responsibility and thus do not get into mutual conflicts, but control each other.
majority voting	The majority of votes decide over the decision – making bodies in a state.	constituency	an electoral district

checks and balances	Regulation within the governmental system that allows the different branches to control each other.	judiciary	The power that interprets and applies the laws in the name of the state
legislature	The decision – making organization that enacts, amends and repeals laws	executive	The branch of the government that has the responsibility of administrating of the state
vote of no confidence	a vote that states that the government/ a person is no longer thought fit to hold that position	impeachment	a formal process in which an official is accused of unlawful activity, which may lead to the removal of that official from office

federalism	A democratic system in which the power to govern is shared between local, provincial and state governments	centralism	The concentration of government in one central body
supreme court	the highest court within the hierarchy of legal jurisdictions	franchise	suffrage, the civil right to vote

House of Representatives	The lower body of the two chambers of legislature in the USA, called the Congress. Its power is to pass federal legislation.	The Senate	The second chamber of the Congress. It has several exclusive powers, such as agreeing to treaties , appointing higher federal officials, and setting up trials of federal officials impeached by the House of Representatives.
lobbyism	the act of attempting to influence decisions made by officials in the government to support the interests of certain groups	election	a process by which a population chooses an individual to hold a public function
The Democrats	One of the two main US parties. They are liberal, support the rights of minorities and are committed to the socially disadvantaged. They think that a strong state is important.	The Republicans	The conservative party in the US. They stand for American entrepreneurship, and traditional values such as national pride, religion and family.

Prime Minister	the head of an elected government	cabinet	body consisting of the top leaders of the executive branch , usually called ministers and state secretaries
overrule	the rejection of a decision	sovereign	a supreme ruler, a king, a queen, a monarch a body that has supreme power