

Substitute Guide: Federalism — How the Constitution Divides Power

Course: United States Government **Grades:** 9–12 **Time:** ~50 min standard · ~90 min block Social Studies

Learning goal (plain language)

Students investigate **federalism** — how the U.S. Constitution divides government power among a **national** level (delegated powers), the **state** level (reserved powers), and powers **shared** by both (concurrent powers). They read two short summaries, study a three-column diagram, do **source analysis** on short public-domain constitutional text (the Tenth Amendment and Article I, Section 8), **classify** example powers, explain **why the framers divided power**, sort fact from interpretation and opinion, and finish by writing a short source-based argument about how a scenario reflects federalism. **You do not need a government background to run this.** Everything students need is printed in their packet, and the separate answer key gives you every answer.

Standards alignment

Framework: 19 TAC Chapter 113 (United States Government).

- **Primary — federalism / division of powers:** a provisional standard on explaining how the Constitution divides and shares power among national, state, and concurrent levels, including delegated (enumerated) and reserved powers.
- **Skills — social studies skills (source analysis):** a provisional standard on analyzing primary and secondary sources — identifying the creator, date, type, and purpose — and using evidence to support a conclusion.

Provisional — pending educator verification against the current official TAC source. No section number is asserted here.

(Standards are paraphrased here, not quoted, and this is **not** a claim of TEKS alignment. Please confirm the chapter, section, and wording against your official source. Prompts are kept non-partisan and focused on how power is structured, not on any party or current dispute.)

Setup Before class (5 min)

- Count and hand out one **student packet** per student.
- Confirm each student has a **pencil**. No calculators, computers, or textbooks are needed.
- Decide up front whether this is a **standard (~50 min)** or **block (~90 min)** class and tell students which items to do (see Timing).
- Write the date on the board and remind students to fill in the name line.
- Keep the **answer key** with you — it is a separate file and is **not** in the student packet.

Materials What's needed

- Printed student packet (5–7 pages) per student.
- Pencil per student.

- This guide and the separate answer key (teacher only).
- No technology, no calculator, no textbooks, no safety hazards.

Timing Suggested pacing — standard vs. block

Segment	Standard ~50 min	Block ~90 min	What students do
Start — Observe a source	5 min	5 min	Q1–Q2 warm-up on the Tenth Amendment
Build — Read the sources	10 min	15 min	Sources A–B (+ Source C in block), word bank, power diagram; Q3
Apply — Analyze the sources	20 min	25 min	Q4–Q9 (+ Q10 conflict scenario in block)
Explain — CER argument	10 min	25 min	Q11 claim/evidence/reasoning (block adds the national-vs-state conflict)
Close — ACE	5 min	10 min	Articulate / Connect / Extend
Continue — early finishers	optional	~10 min	"Sort three more powers"

Standard version: students skip every item marked **[BLOCK]** (Source C, Q10, and the extended-writing add-on in Q11). **Block version:** students do those items and write a longer argument.

Script Read aloud to start

"Today's assignment is a paper civics investigation called *Federalism: How the Constitution Divides Power*. It is about how the United States splits government power between a national government, the state governments, and powers they share. You will work by yourself with just a pencil — no computers or textbooks. First read the short summaries and study the three-column diagram. Then answer the questions in order; if one is tricky, skip it and come back. Write in complete sentences where it asks you to explain. Everything you need is printed in the packet — you do not need any outside facts. Keep your answers grounded in the text and examples and non-partisan: describe how power is structured, not which side you favor. [If block: Also read Source C and do the items marked BLOCK.] Put your name, class period, and date at the top now. You have about [50 / 90] minutes; raise your hand if you need help understanding a word."

Support When students ask for help

- **You may read any part aloud** to a student or the class.
- If they are stuck **classifying powers** (Q3–Q4), point them to the three-column **diagram** and to Source A, where each group of powers is listed in bold-led sentences.
- For "why the framers divided power" (Q6–Q7), point to Source A's **last paragraph**, which names the worry (one all-powerful government) and the goals of dividing power.
- For "fact / interpretation / opinion" (Q8), point to the **Word Bank**; an "opinion" ranks or judges, an "interpretation" says "probably" or "because."
- Encourage the printed **sentence stems** for the CER (Q11) and ACE sections.
- Do **not** give answers; prompt with "Which level does Source A say handles that?" or "Is that a national, state, or shared power?"
- It is fine if a student cannot finish the optional early-finisher task or the block add-ons.

Access Accommodations & language support

- **Read-aloud** of any passage or question is allowed for all students.
- Point students to the **sentence stems** and the **Word Bank**. A quick glossary for reference: **federalism** = dividing power between a national government and state governments; **delegated power** = a power the Constitution gives the national government; **reserved power** = a power kept by the states (Tenth Amendment); **concurrent power** = a power both levels share (like taxing); **national government** = the central/federal government; **state government** = an individual state's government; **Supremacy Clause** = Article VI text making valid national law supreme where it conflicts with state law; **ratify** = to formally approve; **cause** = a reason something happens; **effect** = a result.
- Extended time is fine; the standard core can stop after Q11 if time runs short.
- Students may answer in phrases if writing full sentences is a barrier, as long as the idea is clear.
- The packet is grayscale-safe — the power diagram and table print and read clearly in black and white.

Tools Allowed & not allowed

Allowed: pencil, the printed packet, quiet self-read-aloud. **Not needed / not allowed:** calculator (no math required), phones, computers, textbooks or outside sources (everything needed is in the packet).

Collect at the end: Collect every packet, whether finished or not, with names on them. Stack them for the teacher. Note on a sticky whether the class did the standard or block version, how far most students got, and any questions that caused confusion.

Answer key: The **answer key is a separate file** (answerkey.html) and is for the teacher only. Please do not hand it to students.

Teacher follow-up (for the returning teacher)

Watch for the common mix-up between **federalism** (dividing power between national and state *levels*) and **separation of powers** (dividing power among the three *branches* within one government) — Q11 and the ACE Connect target this. Also watch for two frequent errors: thinking **states have no real power** (the Tenth Amendment reserves many powers to them — Q1, Q3, Q4, Q9), and thinking **only the national government taxes** (taxing is a concurrent power — Q9). The CER (Q11) responses show who can correctly sort a scenario's examples into delegated, reserved, and concurrent categories; block responses additionally show who can handle a national-vs-state conflict and the Supremacy Clause. A quick next-day "levels vs. branches" sort and a review of the three power categories would reinforce this well.

HS_GOV_Federalism_01 — Federalism: How the Constitution Divides Power Substitute Guide