



Teacher's Guide

The Indian Constitution

Period 2

Based on the NCERT curriculum for Standard VIII



JANAAGRAHA CENTRE FOR CITIZENSHIP & DEMOCRACY

Janaagraha's initiative to improve citizen engagement in India's democracy through their civic learning program

Developed in collaboration with Young Leaders for Active Citizenship (YLAC)

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Period 2

Class VII
 Board – CBSE
 Subject – Social and Political Life
 Textbook – Social and Political Life Textbook III for Class VIII (NCERT)
 Chapter 1 – The Indian Constitution
 Number of periods – 03
 Length – 60 minutes

Section I – What are we going to learn and why is it important?

Learning objectives

Students will:

- Learn key facts about the Indian Constitution.
- Identify the three levels of government (central, state, and local) as well as their functions.
- Identify the role of the three organs of government (legislature, executive, and judiciary) and how they keep each other in check.
- Understand what a representative form of government is.

Learning Outcomes

Students will

- Understand the importance of each level of the government and their functions.
- Understand the importance of having a representative government.

Key terms

Constituent Assembly	Federalism	Union government	State government
Local government	Separation of powers	Executive	Legislature
Judiciary	Checks and balances	Representative form of government	Universal adult suffrage

Section II – How are we going to learn

1. Introduction

Time: 5 minutes

Note to the teacher:

This section will introduce students to the making of the Indian Constitution. Please start with the video and conclude with a de-brief.

Facilitation Notes:

In the last class, we discussed what a Constitution is and why it is needed.

- Today, let's talk about some key features of the Constitution. But first, let's find out how we wrote our Constitution!
- Do you know how the Indian Constitution was made? *[Take a couple of responses from students]*



[\(Image Source\)](#)



Video: Making of Indian Constitution

The video details how the Indian constitution was drafted, who all was a part of the drafting process, what all deliberations were made and so on.

Link: [Youtube](#)

De-brief:

- Please ask 2-3 students to highlight their key takeaways from the video.
- Add that the text of the Constitution was written by the *Drafting Committee* (which was a part of the *Constituent Assembly*) under the leadership of Dr. B.R. Ambedkar. That's why he is called the Father of the Indian Constitution.
- The Constitution borrowed ideas from Constitutions of different countries, including the United Kingdom, the United States, Ireland, Australia, and Canada. It is the longest Constitution in the world.
- The Constitution lays down several key features of the Indian democracy - such as federalism, separation of powers, and representative form of government. We'll discuss these in detail today.

2. Federalism

Time: 5 minutesNote to the teacher: This section will use discussions and activities to introduce students to the concept of Federalism.A. IntroductionFacilitation Notes:

- The *Constituent Assembly* adopted a “federal” system of government for India.
- Do you know what federalism is? *[Take a couple of responses]*
- Federalism refers to a political system where the powers of the government are divided between different levels of government.
- In India, these levels are:
 - Central (or Union) government;
 - State government;
 - Local government (the panchayats and the municipalities).

Question: Why do you think are powers distributed between these levels of government?

Note to the teacher: Take 2-3 responses from students

Facilitation Notes:

- India is a huge country with a very diverse population. Given the vast number of communities, it is not possible to rule the entire country just from New Delhi.
- Therefore, power is divided such that national issues are given to the Central government.
- State level and regional issues are better understood by State governments and hence left to them.
- Similarly, local bodies are able to understand and address local concerns of people in that city/ town/ village better.

B. Identifying the levels of government, their responsibilities and key actors

Note to teacher: Please draw the table below on the board and leave the cells blank. Ask students the questions in the first column and fill in the cells with the correct answers.

	Central	State	Local
Where does your government meet?	New Delhi	[Capital of the State]	[City/ town]
What is the name of the leader?	Prime Minister Narendra Modi	Chief Minister [Name]	Mayor [Name]

C. Activity – Whose responsibility is it?

Time: 20 minutes

Note to the teacher:

The purpose of this activity is to help students understand and identify the level of government that should be responsible for a particular service. The activity is meant to help them think; it is designed to be open-ended - as long as students can identify reasons why a service should be delivered by a particular level of government, the answers should be acceptable.

Materials required:

Blackboard, chalk, copies of the list of services

Facilitation Notes:

Divide the class into groups of four or five students and give each group a sheet of paper that contains the table below:

S. No	Issue	Level of Government	Why do you think this issue is controlled by the level of government you chose?
1.	Public transport		
2.	Driving licenses		
3.	Currency		
4.	Passports		
5.	Garbage collection		
6.	Military		
7.	Street lights		

8.	Railways		
9.	Playgrounds		
10.	Agriculture		

Give students five minutes to discuss which level of government (Central, State, or Local) should be responsible for each issue. Ask students to write down the answers after discussing with their teammates.

Ask each group to give one answer and check if all the other groups agree.

Answer key:

S. No	Issue	Level of Government
1.	Public transport	State/ Local ¹
2.	Driving licences	State/ Central
3.	Currency	Central
4.	Passports	Central
5.	Garbage collection	Local
6.	Military	Central
7.	Street lights	Local

¹ Depending on the region/ service, public transport could also be a concern of the local government. For instance, in Mumbai local buses are run by the municipality.

8.	Railways	Central
9.	Playgrounds	Local
10.	Agriculture	State ²

Discussion:

As you can see, the Central government handles all matters of national and international concern such as currency, the military, passports, and railways. It also plays a role in matters that require coordination between states (for instance driving licenses)

State governments are responsible for regional issues such as public transport, driving licences, and agriculture.

Local governments represent the interests of cities, towns, and villages, and they are responsible for local matters, such as street lights, playgrounds and garbage collection.

Each level of government has the freedom to make laws and exercise their authority on issues that they are responsible for. In the Constitution, there are lists which contain the issues that each level of government is responsible for.

3. Separation of powers

Time: 5 minutes

Facilitation Notes:

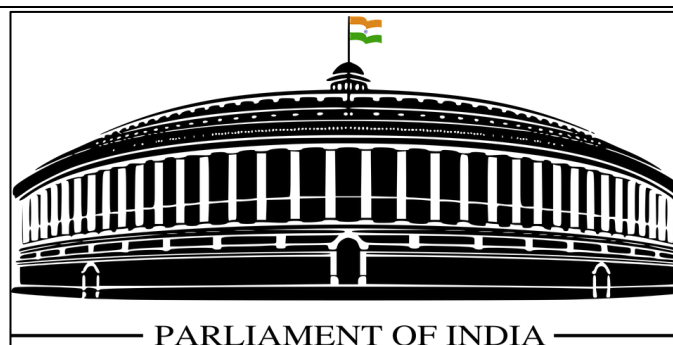
- The Constitution also divides each level of government into three organs, based on their functions and responsibilities — the legislature, the executive, and the judiciary.
- Let's go into these three organs in some more detail. *[Display the image below and then ask students to explain the role of each organ]*

A. The role of each organ:

² Mainly because agricultural policy varies by agro-climatic zones. However, please note that issues of agricultural marketing such as Minimum Support Price (MSP) etc. are also decided by the Centre.

Legislature	The legislature is a body made up of elected representatives who make our laws.
Executive	The executive is a body that implements the laws made by the legislature. They are also in charge of running the government.
Judiciary	<p>The judiciary refers to the system of courts in the country. It is their duty to check if the legislature and executive are following the rules laid down in the Constitution. In addition, they resolve any disputes that arise in society.</p> <p>We will discuss the judiciary in further detail in a later chapter.</p>

The Three Organs of the Government



The Legislature: The Indian Parliament

[\(Image Source\)](#)



The Executive
([Image Source](#))



The Judiciary
([Image Source](#))

B. The three organs at the Central and State levels:

Note to the teacher: Please draw the table on the board and leave the cells blank. Ask students what the legislature, executive, and judiciary are called at the central and state levels and fill in the cells with the correct answers.

	Centre	State
Legislature	Parliament	Legislative Assembly ³
Executive	President, Prime Minister, and Ministers, Government Officers	Governor, Chief Minister, and Ministers, Government Officers
Judiciary	Supreme Court	High Courts

C. Checks and Balances:

³ For ease of discussion, we are leaving out State Legislative Councils at this stage.

Question: Why do think are powers divided among these three organs?

Note to the teacher: Take 2-3 responses from students

Facilitation Notes:

- The idea behind the division of powers is to ensure that power is distributed (and not concentrated in one organ) and that the organs work to check each other's powers.
- This is called the system of checks and balances.
- For example, the executive can work only according to the laws passed by the legislature. It also has to answer questions raised by the legislature. Similarly, the legislature cannot pass laws that violate the Constitution. If it does, the judiciary will strike them down. The overall aim is to prevent misuse of power.
- Let's look at one example to see how checks and balances work in real life.

Activity to demonstrate Checks and Balances

Time: 10 minutes

Note to the teacher: Divide the class into groups of four students and distribute copies of the newspaper article to each group (See Appendix for a printable version of the article). Give students time to read the article and discuss among them. Select one group at random and ask one student from the group to explain the reading. *[The teacher can also project the document for the entire class to see it.]*

Article: *Supreme Court hits out at the executive over diversion of funds [See Appendix]*

Key takeaway: In this article, the Supreme Court, which is part of the judiciary, is criticising the executive. In doing so, it is placing a check on the powers of the executive and ensuring that it does not misuse its authority.

4. Representative form of government

Time: 5 minutes

Note to the teacher: The textbook uses the title “Parliamentary form of government” but discusses concepts such as universal suffrage and elections. Hence, this section has been renamed “Representative form of government”. The nuances of the parliamentary form of government will be discussed in a later chapter.

Facilitation Notes:

In India, we elect political leaders at all three levels of government. This allows us to vote for people who we think will represent us best.

Everybody above the age of 18 years is allowed to vote. This is known as **universal adult suffrage**. *Suffrage* means the right to vote in elections.

Why is it called “*universal*” adult suffrage? *[Take 2-3 responses from students]*

Earlier, not all adults were allowed to vote—there were restrictions on who could vote. For example, only men were allowed to vote in elections. Women were not considered to be equal to men, so they did not have the right to vote. In fact, not even all men had the right to vote—under the British rule, only those who owned land or paid income tax or passed 10th standard could vote. Thus, very few people had the right to vote.

When we were drafting the Constitution, we wanted to encourage a democratic mindset among the people, and wanted to emphasise that we were all equal. Thus, our Constitution guarantees universal adult suffrage.

Section III – Assessment

Time: 5 minutes

True/False Quiz

Note to the teacher:

Divide the class into two teams, and divide the blackboard into two columns for Team A and Team B. Ask each team to answer if the following statements are true or false. Give 10 points for every correct answer.

1. The central government is responsible for the roads in your neighbourhood. [False]
2. The state government is in charge of agriculture. [True]
3. The local government issues passports to all Indians. [False]
4. The executive implements laws. [True]
5. The legislature and the executive are the same. [False]
6. The judiciary makes laws. [False]
7. Separation of powers creates a system of checks and balances. [True]
8. The Constitution provides for limited adult suffrage in India. [False]
9. The Indian Constitution was discussed and passed by the *Constituent Assembly*. [True]
10. The Indian Constitution came into force from 26th January 1951. [False]
11. Mahatma Gandhi is known as the Father of the Indian Constitution. [False]
12. India has only two levels of government—central government and state government. [False]

Homework

Ask students to identify how federalism might apply to the school. Who will represent each level of the school? [Principal, teacher, and class monitor.] What kind of powers should each of them have?

OR

Give students copies of the following crossword to solve at home and bring back the next day.

Crossword Sheet – Blank

The answers for the crossword are given below:

Crossword Sheet – Answer Key

Section IV – Closure

Summary by students

Note to the teacher: Select a student at random to summarize the key points of the session and why this particular session is important. *[Add to the summary from the recap below, if required]*

Recap by the teacher

Time: 5 minutes

The Constitution was written by the *Drafting Committee* under the leadership of Dr. BR Ambedkar and it came into force on 26th January 1950. Therefore, 26th January is celebrated as the Republic Day.

We discussed three essential features of the Indian Constitution today — federalism, separation of powers, and representative form of government.

Federalism refers to a political system where the powers of the government are divided among different levels. In India, these levels are the Central (or Union) government, State government, and Local government.

The Constitution divides our government into three organs — the legislature, the executive, and the judiciary. Separation of powers creates a system of checks and balances where the three organs of government work to check each other's powers.

The Constitution also guarantees universal adult suffrage to all citizens of India. Any citizen above the age of 18 can vote to elect their representative. We therefore have a representative form of government.

Section V – Additional resources

Resources for teachers:

1. Video: Samvidhan – Episode 08 – Federalism: Linking The States And The Centre

The video explains how, at the time of independence, powers were divided between states and the centre, what problems arose and how were they solved.

Link: [Youtube](#)

2. Video: Samvidhan – Episode 09 – Three Pillars: Executive, Legislature, Judiciary

The video systematically explains how powers were divided between the three wings of the government to ensure accountability.

Link: [Youtube](#)

Appendix

Supreme Court hits out at the executive over diversion of funds

PTI | Apr 10, 2018, 06.49 PM IST

NEW DELHI: "We are being befooled by the executive", the Supreme Court said on Tuesday. The Court observed that around Rs one lakh crore worth of funds, meant to protect the environment, was being diverted for other purposes.

Severely criticising the government, the Supreme Court observed that it had "trusted" the executive.

The Court made it clear that this huge amount of money, collected for protection of environment, should be used only for environmental purposes and benefit of the people. The money was instead being used for construction of roads, renovation of bus stands and science laboratory in colleges.

"First, we have to catch them that you have diverted the money and betrayed the trust. Are we policemen or investigating officers? We are not talking about a small amount," the Court said.

Note: This piece is an abridged, and adapted, version of the original article that appeared in Times of India. Available at: [Times of India](https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/india/supreme-court-hits-out-at-executive-over-diversion-of-funds/articleshow/62444477.cms)

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