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## 3: The Laws of the Land

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### U.S. Government

#### CLASS TIME

Two 45- to 50-minute sessions

#### OBJECTIVE

Students will gain a greater understanding of the concept of “Federalism”. They will identify the difference between state and national laws and critically reflect on state and national powers.

#### NATIONAL STANDARDS

The standards used for these lesson plans reference the “10 Thematic Standards in Social Studies” developed by the National Council for the Social Studies (NCSS).

- **Power, Authority, and Governance**—Describe the purpose of government and how its powers are acquired, used and justified.
- **Civic Ideals and Practices**—Identify and interpret sources and examples of the rights and responsibilities of citizens.

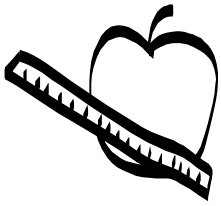
#### TERMS AND CONCEPTS

- The United States Mint 50 State Quarters® Program
- Federalism
- State powers
- National powers

#### SESSION 1

##### Materials

- 1 overhead projector (optional)
- 1 overhead transparency (or photocopy) of the “Quarter Design” sheet on page 59
- 1 copy of the “50 State Quarters® Program Overview” sheet on page 45 (optional)
- Double-sided (obverse and reverse) copies of the “Quarter Design” sheets on pages 59 and 60 (1 coin per student)
- Chalkboard
- Chalk
- Copies of the “Quarter Information” sheets on pages 46 to 57 (1 packet per student)
- Newsprint paper (1 large sheet per group)
- Markers (1 set per group)
- Classroom text (1 per student)
- 1 overhead transparency (or enlarged reproduction) of the Venn diagram
- 1 copy of the “Division of Powers” chart (optional)



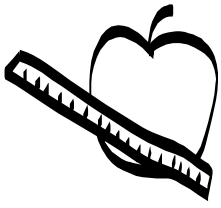
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# The Laws of the Land

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## Procedures

1. Display an overhead transparency or photocopy of the “Quarter Designs” page. Ask the students if they have ever seen these coin designs, and what they know about the coins. Who produces these coins? What do they commemorate? If necessary, reference the “50 State Quarters® Program Overview” page to describe the 10-year coinage program.
2. Distribute copies of a new quarter design to your students (each student should receive a different coin design).
3. On the board, write the following questions: What state does your coin represent? What symbols are on this coin’s obverse (front)? What do you think these symbols mean? What symbols are on this coin’s reverse? What do you think these symbols mean?
4. Allow students 5 minutes to answer these questions independently.
5. Distribute a “Quarter Information” packet to each student, and ask the students to read more about their coin’s design.
6. Assign each student a partner and conduct a 2- to 3-minute Pair-Share where each partner shares his or her coin, its symbols, and why each state might have chosen those specific symbols. Partners should also identify who is responsible for minting these coins, the state or national government.
7. Regroup and discuss as a class the information shared between partners. Ask the students these questions: Who was responsible for minting these coins, the state or national government? (National government.) If the national government was responsible for minting each coin, did each state play any role in the minting of this coin? What was that role?
8. Introduce the term “federalism” and ask students what they believe this term means. Remind students that just as with the coins, the term federalism refers to the idea that in our country there are some roles that are played by a national government and others that are played by states.
9. Continue the discussion about federalism by prompting students with questions such as, “When did federalism come into being? Why was it established in our Constitution? What does the Constitution say about the division between the powers of the states and the powers of the national government?”
10. Divide students into small groups of three or four and distribute a piece of newsprint paper and a set of markers to each group.
11. Direct each group to spend 10 minutes creating a Venn diagram that compares and contrasts state and national powers. Students should be able to locate this information within their class textbook. (Reference the “Division of Powers” chart if necessary.)



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# The Laws of the Land

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12. Display a blank Venn diagram for all students to see. Write the words “State Powers” and “National Powers” on the lines above the interlocking ovals.
13. Ask each group to list either a state, national, or a shared power for placement on this chart. As each group lists their power, they must also give a brief explanation of this power. Students should reference state laws—such as those regarding marriage and driving—as well as national laws—such as those regarding treason, trade regulation, etc.
14. For homework, have the students research three specific state laws in their assigned state.
15. Ask each student to write a definition of federalism on a slip of paper and hand it to the instructor, prior to being dismissed from class.

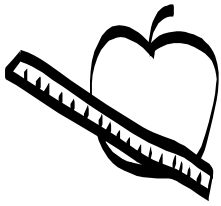
## SESSION 2

### Materials

- Newsprint paper (1 large sheet per student)
- Markers (1 per student)
- Tape
- Classroom text
- Writing paper

### Procedures

1. Review the activities from the previous class session, focusing on the concept of federalism and its relationship to our national government. Display the Venn diagram from the previous session for all students to see.
2. Distribute a sheet of newsprint paper and a marker to each student. Direct the students to spend 10 minutes drawing a freehand replica of the coin’s reverse from the state that (s)he researched and listing the three state laws that they investigated for homework.
3. Direct the students to post their work around the classroom.
4. Allow 5 minutes of time for each student to explore their peers’ work and determine if there are any similarities among the state laws. Students should make note of any commonalities between the state laws displayed.
5. Regroup and discuss as a class the similarities and differences among the state laws. Review once again the national laws that were discussed and the differences and similarities between the two. Some questions to ask may include, “Who passed the state laws? To whom do these laws apply? How are they different from the national laws? Who passed the national laws? To whom do the national laws apply? What is the reason for giving states the power to define certain laws?”



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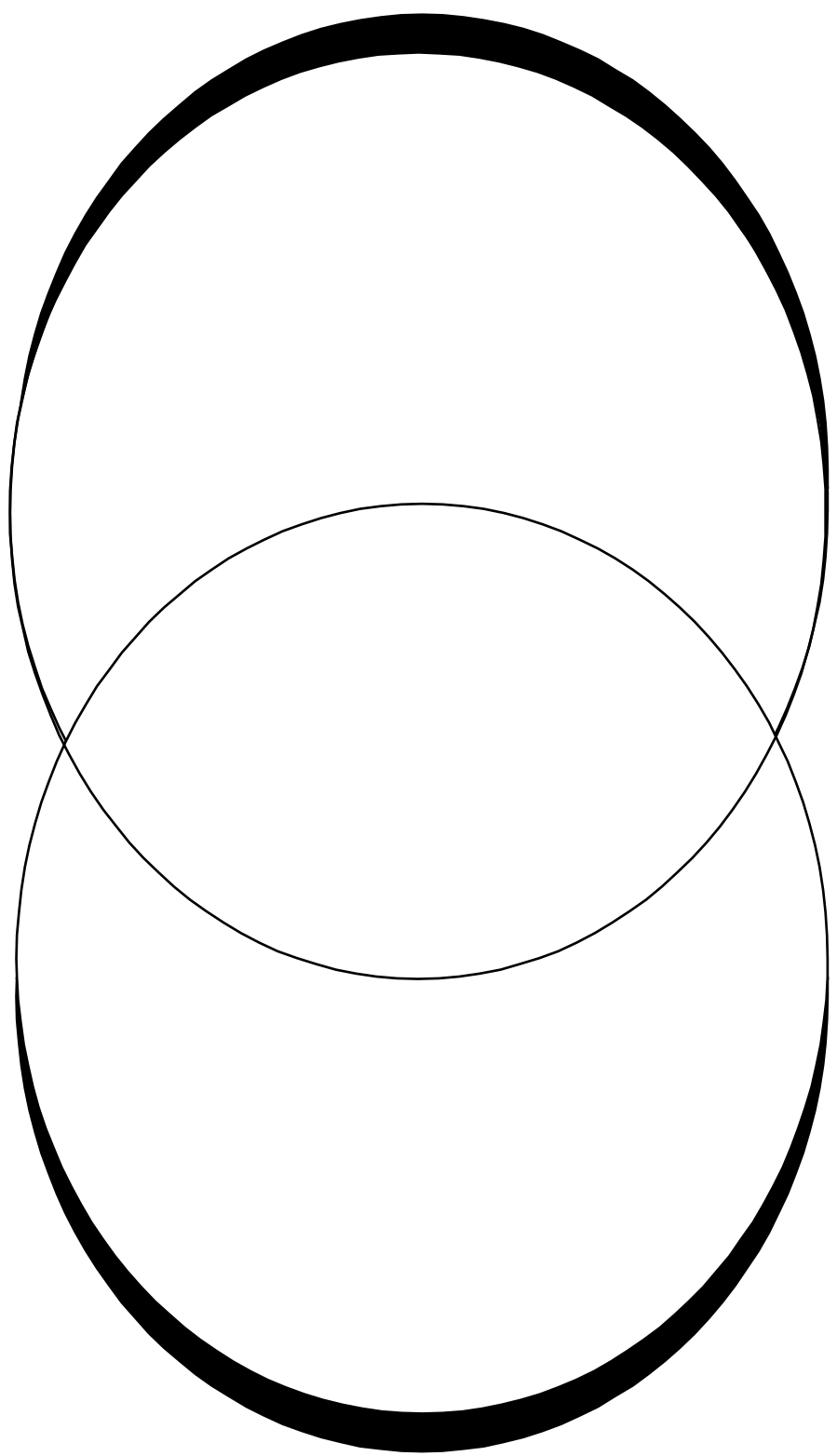
6. Assign each student a partner and instruct the students to brainstorm the pros and cons of the national government defining the laws that currently reside with the state (such as marriage laws). Students should consider their state's laws and those of other states. What differences do the students notice between states' positions? What are the positive and negative aspects of these powers remaining with the state? How does a state's position reflect federalism?
7. Distribute writing paper to each student. Once students have brainstormed this list of pros and cons, each student should write a persuasive essay reflecting their opinion as to whether or not certain laws should remain under the power of the state or become a national law. If students are unable to finish this work in class, they will complete their essay as a homework assignment.

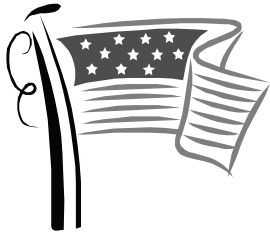
## EXTENSIONS

- Invite students to research the amendment process within the Constitution. They will also need to explain how this reflects federalism.
- Ask students to create an alternative to your state's quarter design. What images would they place on this coin that would reflect their state's history? What would they create for symbols of the national government?
- Have students research the meaning of "E Pluribus Unum." How is this reflected in the creation of the newly minted quarters?
- Conduct a debate based on the positions students have expressed in their persuasive essays.
- Have students look up the governing structure of their own state. They may create a diagram showing the similarities and differences between their state's governing structure and that of the national government.
- Have students research other countries that may have a similar structure of state vs. national government. (Mexico, Russia, or Ireland, for example). They may investigate whether or not the "states" of these countries have their own Constitution/laws that are separate from those of the national government. The student may present this to the class in a written or visual format.
- Invite the school's superintendent or principal to come into the class to discuss the state vs. national laws that the school is required to follow.

NAME: \_\_\_\_\_

# Venn Diagram





# Division of Powers

FEDERAL GOVERNMENT POWERS	SHARED POWERS (BOTH FEDERAL AND STATE GOVERNMENTS)	STATE GOVERNMENT POWERS
Maintain military	Enforce laws (The state governments enforce different laws than the federal government)	Conduct elections
Declare war	Establish courts	Establish schools
Coin money	Borrow money	Regulate businesses within state
Regulate trade between states and with foreign nations	Protect the health and safety of the people	Establish local government
Make all laws necessary for carrying out delegated powers	Build roads	Regulate marriages
	Collect taxes	Assume other powers not given to the national government