

Civics and Economics

CE.7 Study Guide

STANDARD CE.7A

-- STATE GOVERNMENT

The structure and powers of the state government.

The form of government of the Commonwealth of Virginia is established by the Virginia Constitution.

Legislative, executive, and judicial powers are separated at the state level of government.

The Virginia Constitution distributes power among the **legislative, executive, and judicial branches** of the state government.

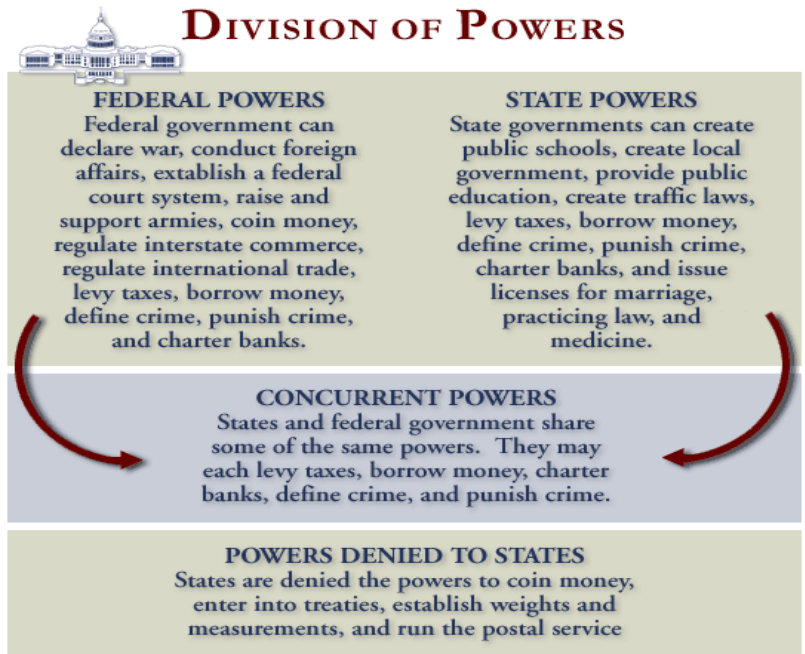
The legislative branch is the **General Assembly**, a **bicameral legislature**—the **House of Delegates** and the **Virginia Senate**—that meets annually for a fixed number of days.

The executive power is exercised by the **governor**, who is elected for a **four-year term** of office. The governor appoints members of the cabinet, who oversee specific functions of government.

The **lieutenant governor** and the **attorney general** are executive branch officers who are elected for a four-year term of office.

The judicial power is exercised by a court system that consists of four levels of courts:

- **Supreme Court**
- **Court of appeals**
- **Circuit courts**
- **District courts** (including **small claims** courts and **juvenile** and **domestic relations** courts)



STANDARD CE.7B

-- FEDERAL SYSTEM



The relationship of state governments to the national government in the federal system.

*The Constitution of the United States of America establishes the principle of **federalism**, which is the **division of power** between the **states** and the **national government**.*

*The **expansion of the national government's powers** into areas traditionally **reserved to the states** has altered the **relationship of states to the national government**.*

The Constitution of the United States establishes a **federal form of government** in which the **national government** is **supreme**.

The **powers not given** to the national government by the Constitution of the United States **are reserved to the states**.

The Constitution of the United States **denies certain powers** to **both** the national and state governments.

Some powers are **shared** between the national and state government (**concurrent powers**).

Primary responsibilities of each level of government

- **National:** Conducts **foreign policy**, regulates **commerce**, and provides for the common **defense**
- **State:** Promotes **public health, safety, education, and welfare**

Tensions exist when federal **mandates** require state actions without adequate **funding**.

STANDARD CE.7C -- STATE LAWMAKING PROCESS



The state lawmaking process.

Members of the **Virginia General Assembly** are elected to make **state laws**.

Citizens learn the lawmaking process and influence public policy through direct **participation** and/or **simulation**.

The lawmaking process requires **collaboration** and **compromise**.

The lawmaking process in the Virginia General Assembly

- **Introducing** a bill in either house
- Working in **committees**
- **Debating** the bill on the **floor**
- **Voting** on the bill
- Sending the bill to the **other house**
- Repeat process in the other house
- Sending the bill to the **governor**



Elected officials in the Virginia General Assembly **write laws** and take action **in response to problems or issues**.

Individuals and **interest groups** help shape legislation.

The primary issues in the legislative process at the state level

- **Education:** To promote an informed and engaged citizenry (i.e., establish minimum standards for local schools)
- **Public health:** To promote and protect the health of its citizens
- **Environment:** To protect **natural resources** (i.e., improve **water quality** in the Chesapeake Bay)
- **State budget:** To approve a **biennial** (two year) budget proposed by the governor
- **Revenue:** To levy and collect **taxes**

STANDARD CE.7D -- STATE EXECUTIVE BRANCH

The roles and powers of the state executive branch and regulatory boards.

*The **executive branch** of the **Virginia** state government **enforces the laws** and plays a key role in the **policymaking** process.*

Ways the executive branch influences policymaking

- Proposes **biennial budget**
- Proposes **legislation**
- Approves **veto** or line-item veto bills

The **governor** of Virginia exercises the formal powers granted by the Virginia Constitution.

In carrying out both the formal and informal powers of the office, the **governor** fills **several roles**, including

- **chief of state:** ceremonial head of the state government
- **chief legislator:** proposer of the legislative agenda
- **chief executive:** head of the executive branch of state government
- **party chief:** leader of the political party that controls the executive branch
- **commander-in-chief**
- **chief citizen:** representative of all Virginians



Gov. Terry McAuliffe

Cabinet secretaries and departments, agencies, commissions, and regulatory boards

- administer laws and enforce laws
- create **regulations** to **monitor** aspects of business and the economy
- provide services