

Lesson 20 — The Civic Workshop

Civics • ages 9–adult • 30 minutes • one screen, the free game, this page

At a Glance

- Game: The Homeschool Climb, The Civic Workshop section (free, no login, plays in the browser) — read.globalsovereignuniversity.org/homeschool-climb.html#civic-workshop. Also on the Homeschool hub: globalsovereignuniversity.org/homeschool.
- Ages & time: Civics • ages 9–adult • 30 minutes • one screen, the free game, this page.
- Prep (2 min): read the Teaching Creed once, open the game to the The Civic Workshop section, and have a sheet of paper and a pen ready. That's the whole setup.

Why this lesson

Most people pass a civics test and then spend their lives as spectators. They can name the three branches on a quiz but cannot say which one to call about a problem. This lesson treats government as machinery you can understand and use: who makes the rules, who carries them out, who decides if they are fair, and how each part keeps the others in check.

What the learner will be able to do

- Name the three branches and the job each one does.
- Explain checks and balances with one real example.
- Say why splitting power keeps people safe.
- Tell which branch would handle a real problem in their own town or country.

The 30-Minute Climb

How to read this: the gold box in each step is your lesson, word for word — run it exactly. The notes beneath are optional support. “The room/the group” = your family; “host” = you.

1 • The Hook (3 min)

“If one person could make the rules, enforce the rules and judge the rules, what could go wrong?” Let everyone answer before you say a word.

Say it like this: take every answer seriously. Someone will say “they could cheat.” That is the whole reason for three branches.

Watch for / if it stalls: make it personal: what if one sibling made the house rules, enforced them and settled every argument?

2 • Play Together (12 min)

Climb The Civic Workshop section together. Read each teach card aloud, then vote. After each branch card, draw a box for that branch on the paper and write its job inside.

Two rituals make it work: (1) read each teach card aloud before the question appears; (2) everyone votes before anyone clicks, so no one just follows the screen.

Watch for / if it stalls: on the checks and balances card, stop and draw arrows between the three boxes. Each arrow is one way a branch can stop another.

3 • The Talk (8 min)

1. Which branch would you go to if a law seemed unfair? 2. Why does the Constitution split power three ways instead of trusting one good leader? 3. What is one rule in our town you could find out about this week?

You're not fishing for a right answer — you're listening for depth:

- Q1 — the courts, the Judicial branch, decide whether laws are fair and follow the Constitution.
- Q2 — even good leaders change, and power without limits invites abuse. Shared power protects people from the worst leader, not just the best.
- Q3 — listen for curiosity about real local rules. Civics starts at home.

4 • Solo Climb (5 min)

Answer the questions at your own pace.

Why solo: a citizen votes and decides alone. Solo questions check that each learner can name the machinery without help.

5 • The Takeaway (2 min)

“Three branches, one people: power shared is power safe.” • Homework: find one real decision made by your town or county this month, and say which branch of local government made it.

The badge moment: finishing all five steps earns the Bronze ring of this lesson's badge, The Branch Builder. Mark it on the Passport now; the homework is how Silver and Gold are earned during the week.

The Teaching Creed

You are not the expert; the game is. Your job is to vote last, read aloud well, and ask “why?” one more time than feels natural. Celebrate wrong answers loudly — in here, wrong is where the lesson lives.

GENO — the GSU tutor you can actually TALK to, free, 24/7, understands 70+ languages (32 fully optimized) — can explain any answer a second way.

Adapt It & Measure It

Differentiation

- Younger (9–11): act it out. One person writes a rule, one enforces it, one judges a pretend case.
- One child: the parent argues for giving one person all the power; the child explains why not.
- Large co-op: split into three branches and pass a silly classroom rule. Let the other branches check it.
- Reluctant teen: start with a real court case or law they care about, such as phones in school, and trace which branch did what.

Evidence of learning (no exam)

Look for three things — Tried (found one real local decision and named the branch), Noticed (can explain checks and balances with an example), Changed (asks who decided a rule instead of just complaining about it). Those three words are the whole rubric, and they map onto the badge tiers below.

Gamify It — The Campus Climb

Every GSU lesson is one badge on the Climber's Passport, each earned at four depths — the GSU standard Bronze → Silver → Gold → Platinum.

LESSON 20 BADGE — The Branch Builder • Bronze — The Climb: finished the 30-minute lesson, all five steps. • Silver — The Try: found one real local decision and named the branch that made it. • Gold — The Proof: reached Gold on The Civic Workshop climb and drew the three branches with their checks from memory. • Platinum — The Teacher: ran this lesson as host for someone else. The harvest of a teacher is teachers.

The book behind this lesson: The Civic Workshop, by Dr. Gene A Constant — Chapter 1 (The Spectator Problem), Chapter 2 (The Town You Actually Live In) and Chapter 4 (The Machinery).

“Every person on Earth is born with an American spirit: an untamed yearning for a better tomorrow.” — Dr. Gene A. Constant

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