



our courts

Name _____

Date _____

Ahoy Mateys!

You have been selected to be a passenger on the U.S. State Schooner. Your journey will bring you to the safe land of freedom and democracy, but traveling on the high seas can be treacherous—many a ship in history has been sabotaged by a crew of untrustworthy scalawags! So before you can embark on your journey, you must check the trustworthiness of your crew, just as citizens must watch to be sure their elected officials are fulfilling their roles. Will they secure your liberty? Are there checks and balances to make sure no part of the crew gains too much power? Can the crew as a whole deliver you to a free and democratic society? Follow the directions below to see how your state schooner works to secure a fair and balanced government.

The crew is divided into 3 parts: Work with your classmates to investigate the following:

- 1) **The captain** (The Executive Branch/The Governor)

The captain's job is to steer the ship in the direction established by the sailors. Sometimes the captain may overrule the ship's crew.

- 2) **The sailors** (The Legislative Branch/The Representatives)

Members work together to decide the direction the boat should take to best reach the destination. Sometimes the members agree; more often the crew is split over the best course to take.

- 3) **The navigator** (The Judicial Branch/The judges)

When a passenger challenges an action of the sailors or the captain, judges can review the sailor's or captain's plan and decide if they are off course. There are many routes that lead to democracy and liberty, but the ship must not violate the law of the high seas (the United States' Constitution and state constitution).

Bon Voyage!



The Captain (Governor)

What is the name of your state's current governor? _____.

To what political party does s/he belong? _____.

What other offices are there in the executive branch? (list 3)

_____, _____, _____.

What are the requirements to be a governor in your state?

_____.

Describe something your Governor is doing: _____

_____.

The Crew (legislators)

How many houses are there in the state legislature? _____.

How many members are in the legislature? _____.

What are the requirements to be a state legislator? _____

_____.

Describe something that member(s) of your state legislature are doing:

_____.



The Navigator (the judges)

How many judges are on the state's Supreme Court? _____.

How do the state Supreme Court judges get their job? (Are they elected or appointed?)

_____.

What are the requirements to be a state Supreme Court judge? _____

_____.

Besides the state Supreme Court, what other courts does your state have? (list at least 2)

_____.

Describe a case that was heard or will be heard by a court in your state: _____

_____.