



Compare and Contrast

Objective: Compare and contrast responsibilities of national and state governments.

Social Studies/Civics

National vs. State Government

The first type of government in America was based primarily on state government. Prior to the signing of the Constitution, America was made up of 13 colonies, which had been ruled by England. Following the Revolutionary War, these colonies formed a league of friendship under the Articles of Confederation, but basically governed themselves. They feared a strong central government like the one they had experienced under England's rule. However, it was soon discovered that this weak form of state government could not survive and so the Constitution was drafted.

The Constitution:

- defines and limits the power of the national government,
- defines the relationship between the national government and individual state governments, and
- guarantees the rights of the citizens of the United States.



This time, it was decided that a government system based on federalism would be established. In other words, power is shared between the national and state (local) governments. The opposite of this system of government is a centralized government, like France and Great Britain have, where the national government maintains all power.

Sharing power between the national government and state governments allows us to enjoy the benefits of diversity and unity. For example, the national government may set a uniform currency system. Could you imagine having 50 different types of coins, each with a different value? You would need to take along a calculator to go shopping in another state. By setting up a national policy, the system is fair to everyone and the states do not have to bear the heavy burden of regulating their currency. On the other hand, issues such as the death penalty have been left up to the individual states. The decision whether or not to have a death penalty depends on that state's history, needs, and philosophies.

Step 1 – Introduce 2 or 3 groups of items to be compared and contrasted. Observe the differences to create categories.



Here is an example of a list of responsibilities the state and federal governments have that provide citizens with the services they need. Based on their study of the Constitution, have students identify each responsibility as national or state governmental powers and also list those powers that are shared (concurrent) powers:

- Collect taxes
- Build roads and highways, bridges and tunnels
- Issue licenses, permits and certificates
- Conduct elections
- Borrow money
- Print money
- Take private property for public purposes, with just compensation
- Establish local governments
- Declare war
- Make treaties and conduct foreign policy
- Ratify amendments to the constitution
- Establish courts
- Make and enforce laws
- Take measure for public health and safety
- Establish post offices
- Charter banks and corporations
- Spend money for the general welfare
- Exert powers the Constitution does not delegate to the national government or prohibit the states from using
- Regulate intrastate (within state) businesses
- Make laws necessary and proper to carry out these powers



Step 3 – Identify the specific characteristics and complete the chart by grouping items to identify the specific traits.

2-Group Venn Diagram Planner

Characteristics

	Group A Federal	Group B State
Category 1 Financial		
Print money		
Regulate interstate & international trade		
Regulate intrastate businesses		
Borrow money		
Issue Bonds		
Charter banks and corporations		
Collect taxes		
Spend money for the general welfare		
Category 2 Political/Legal		
Make treaties and conduct foreign policies		
Declare war		
Amend the constitution		
Make laws necessary and proper to carry out powers		
Establish local governments		
Conduct elections		
Issue licenses, permits and certificates		
Ratify amendments to the constitution		
Exert powers the Constitution does not delegate to the national government or prohibit the states from using		
Establish courts		
Make and enforce laws		
Category 3 Public Services		
Establish post offices		
Provide an army and navy		
Take measures for public health and safety		
Build roads and transportation systems		
Take private property for public purposes		

Step 4 – Complete all the attributes on the chart and highlight shared attributes. Create label cards.

2-Group Venn Diagram Planner

	Group A Federal	Group B State
Category 1 Financial		
Print money	X	
Regulate interstate & international trade	X	
Regulate intrastate businesses		X
Borrow money	X	X
Issue Bonds	X	X
Charter banks and corporations	X	X
Collect taxes	X	X
Spend money for the general welfare	X	X
Category 2 Political/Legal		
Make treaties and conduct foreign policy	X	
Declare war	X	
Amend the constitution	X	
Make laws necessary and proper to carry out powers	X	
Establish local governments		X
Conduct elections		X
Issue licenses, permits and certificates		X
Ratify amendments to the constitution		X
Exert powers the Constitution does not delegate to the national government or prohibit the states from using		X
Establish courts	X	X
Make and enforce laws	X	X
Category 3 Public Services		
Establish post offices	X	
Provide an army and navy	X	
Take measures for public health and safety		X
Build roads and transportation systems	X	X
Take private property for public purposes	X	X

A + B

A

**Federal
Government**

**Concurrent
Powers**

B

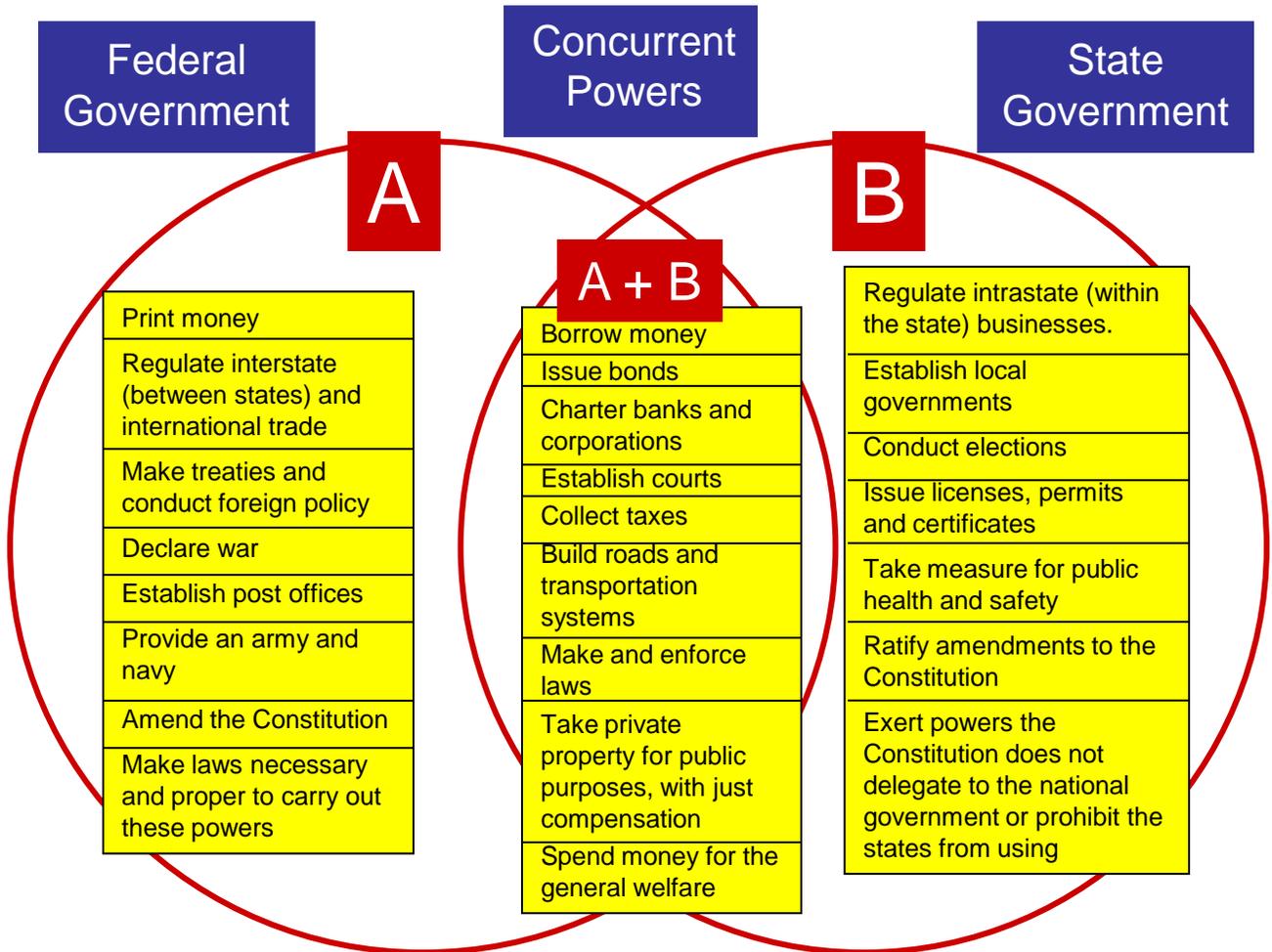
**State
Government**

Print money	Borrow money	Issue bonds
Regulate interstate (between states) and international trade	Regulate intrastate (within the state) businesses.	Charter banks and corporations
Make treaties and conduct foreign policy	Establish local governments	Establish courts
Establish post offices	Issue licenses, permits and certificates	Build roads and transportation systems
Provide an army and navy	Take measure for public health and safety	Make and enforce laws
Amend the Constitution	Ratify amendments to the Constitution	Take private property for public purposes, with just compensation
Make laws necessary and proper to carry out these powers	Exert powers the Constitution does not delegate to the national government or prohibit the states from using	Spend money for the general welfare
Declare war	Conduct elections	Collect taxes

Comparison Between Responsibilities of State and Federal Governments

Step 5 – Create the Venn Diagram based on the information on the planner, using the label cards as **manipulatives**. This is how the Venn Diagram will look when completed.

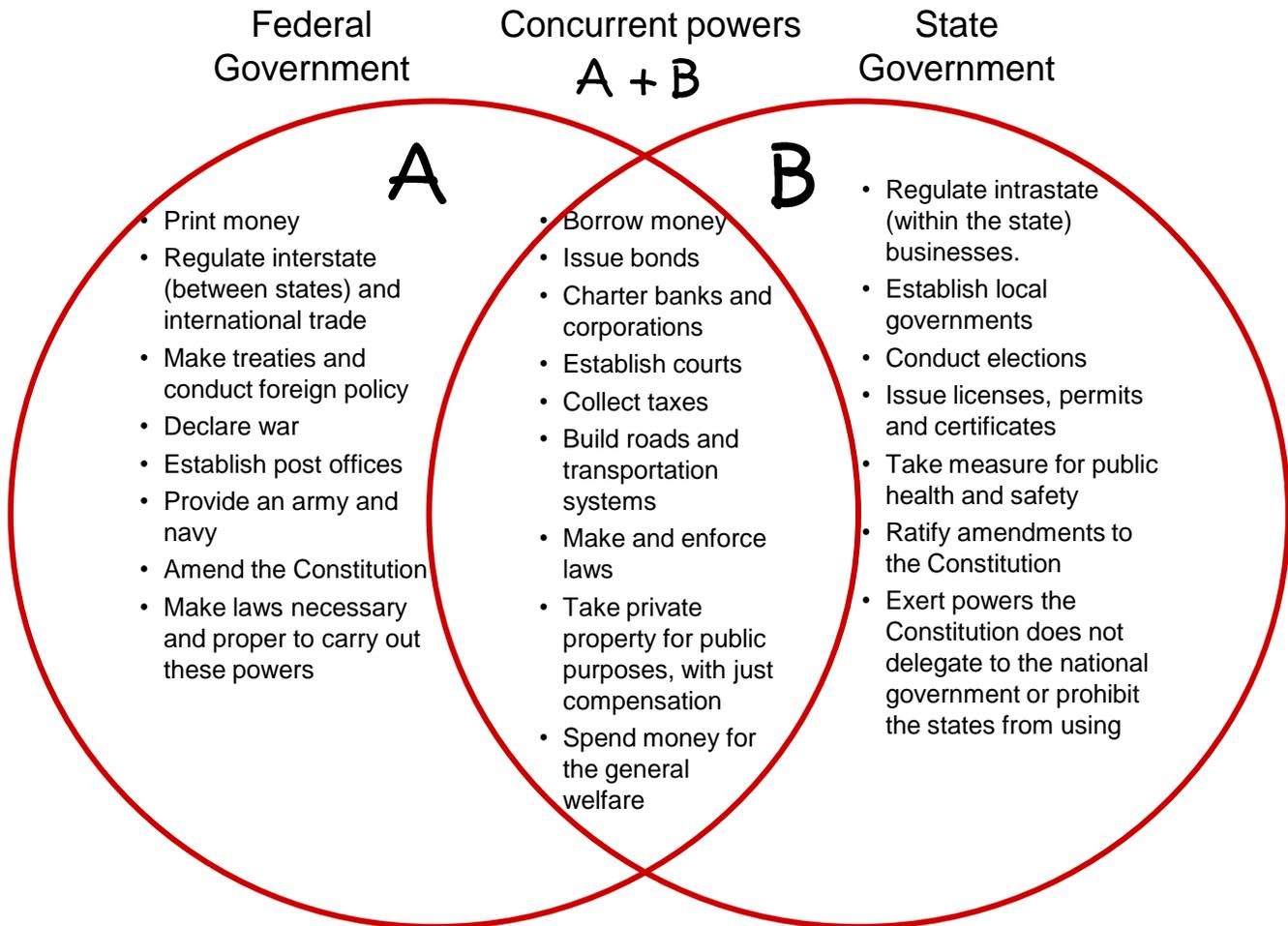
Comparison Between Responsibilities of State and Federal Governments



Summary: Don't forget to have students write a summary of the information in the Venn Diagram.

Step 6 – Have students complete a Venn Diagram template worksheet with a summary. (Better yet, have students create the Venn Diagram on their own.)

Comparison Between Responsibilities of State and Federal Governments



Summary

The federal government and the states each have limited powers; however, some powers are held by both federal and state governments. Examples of these concurrent powers are: borrow money; issue bonds; charter banks and corporations; establish courts; collect taxes; build roads and transportation systems; make and enforce laws; take private property for public purposes, with just compensation; and spend money for the general welfare.