The Three Branches of Government

1. **Legislature** 🡪 (Congress) Makes laws; congress members are elected by the American voters. Split into two parts: House of Representatives and Senate. When Congress passes a new law, the House of Representatives and Senate must agree to the exact same law (if they don’t agree, the law doesn’t pass).
   * + *Senate* (Upper House)
       - Two Senators from each state, elected by the people. Represent the interests of all the people. [Members serve 6 year term. The newest session began January 3, 2013.]
     + *House of Representatives* (Lower House) AKA “The House”
       - Each state has at least one Representative, but larger states have more. The people in each state elect their Representative(s) have the right to present concerns to their Representative(s). There are 435 Representatives. [Members serve 2 year term. The newest session began January 3, 2013.]
2. **Executive** 🡪 Enforces laws; the President is the head of this Branch and the Vice President and Secretaries of all departments are included.
   * + The *Cabinet* makes up the heads of the 15 executive departments.
       - Department of… Agriculture, Commerce, Defense, Education, Energy, Health and Human Services, Homeland Security, Housing and Urban Development, Interior, Justice, Labor, State, Transportation, Treasury, & Veterans Affairs
     + The members of the *Cabinet* are appointed by the President and confirmed by the Senate. They are often the President’s closest confidants (friends, or “go-to” people). The *Cabinet* members all take the title of *Secretary*, except for the head of the *Justice Department*, who is called the *Attorney General*.
     + The Presidential line of succession:
       - President, Vice President, Speaker of the House, Senate President pro tempore, Cabinet offices in the order they were created…
3. **Judiciary** 🡪 Interprets the law (decides what it means); includes all federal courts (all the way up to the Supreme Court). State courts are under national courts. The last court of appeal is the Supreme Court and what happens there is final (there is no appeals court higher than the Supreme Court).