**Supreme Law of the land= the Constitution (no one has higher authority)**

**Federal/ National Government: Three branches**

* Reason for three branches= so no one branch has more power than the other and so that each can act as a check on the power of the other. AKA **system of checks and balances**
* **\*\*\*Federal law is supreme over state law**
* **Executive branch:** President
	+ Job= execute or carry out the laws (make sure they are enforced)
	+ Election every four years (four years is one term of office)
	+ two term limit or 10 years
	+ power of the media has made the President more powerful over time (Congress was originally the most powerful)
	+ executive order: has the effect of law without needing the approval of Congress
	+ can veto laws
	+ appoints people to the Supreme Court
* **Legislative branch:** Congress
	+ Job: make the laws
	+ Term=
		- 6 years for the Senate (1/3 of Congress is reelected every two years)
		- 2 years for the House of Representatives
	+ No limit to the number of terms that a Congress member can get elected to
	+ Must give approval for Presidential Cabinet appointments and appointments to the Supreme Court
	+ Can overturn a presidential veto with 2/3 majority
	+ Can impeach and remove the President or a member of the Supreme Court
* **Judicial branch:** court system (highest court which sets precedents (examples) is the Supreme Court)
	+ Job= **judicial review** or to determine whether or not laws are in accordance with the constitution
		- If a law is determined to be unconstitutional, it is **struck down** (no longer exists)
		- If it is constitutional, it is said to be **upheld**
	+ Appointments to the court are for life or retirement
	+ The Supreme Court can declare actions of the Executive or Legislative branch to be unconstitutional