

# USA to Z

## About the Show!

### Our Objective with the show:

Make the American political process accessible and understandable for young audiences.

### Show Description:

Just in time for election season...join Lady Liberty and Uncle Sam as they take your audience on a journey through America. Your students will learn how the political process works, the differences between the Judicial, Legislative and Executive branches and what it means to vote. At various points during the show, your audience will take part in a live-action game show component featuring patriotic prizes while our hosts entertain them with their hilarious antics. From the Constitution to the Declaration of Independence to the swing vote, this show will leave no political stone unturned.

### Show is Geared for:

Grades 3rd through 8th



## American Democracy: A lil crash course...

Did you know that the word Democracy is never mentioned in the Declaration of Independence or the US Constitution. Our founding fathers were actually a little worried about true democratic rule, but they did view it as a better idea than the monarchies of Europe. This is how we got our Representative Democracy—as it keeps our government a manageable size. The Founders also preferred the term ‘Republic’ to ‘democracy’ because it described a system they preferred: the interests of the people were represented by more knowledgeable or wealthier citizens. The term democracy comes to us from the Greek words: “demos” (The people) and ‘kratia” (Power or authority) So Democracy means a form of government where the power is given to the people.



### What is this show?

Bright Star Touring Theatre is a professional touring theatre for young audiences. This performance is performed by professional actors who are traveling the country in a mini-van and three different shows. They will travel about 1,000 miles a week educating young audiences throughout the country. We are really excited to be working with you and your young



### Have no fear we don't get into dirty politics....

Our American political process is riddled with complicated words, phrases and systems. We want to help make the whole thing a lot more accessible, while celebrating what makes America just so great in the process. We craft shows that have lots of material for both our targeted young audience as well as their adult chaperones and teachers. We hope you too will have a laugh, learn something and leave the show just a little more prepared for the next round of elections!

# CLASSROOM ACTIVITIES!



**MAKE A LAW** (Best for Grades 3-5; Materials Needed: Pen & Paper) Divide your classroom into groups of 4-5. Have each group come up with a new law and then present it to the class. Have the class vote and decide if the law should pass.

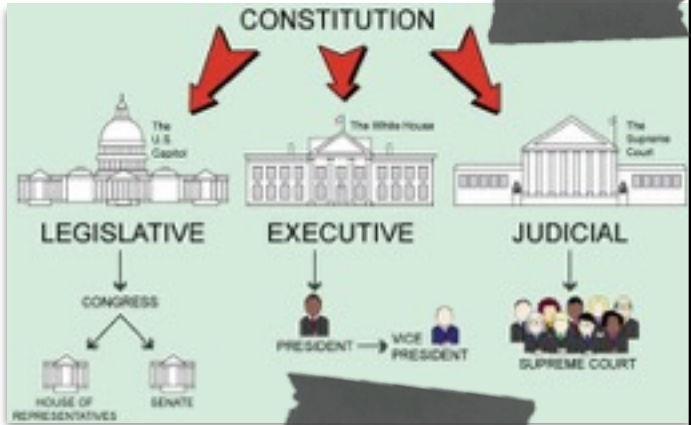
**HAVE A CLASS ELECTION** (Best for Grades 5-8; Materials Needed: Pasteboard & Markers) Hold classroom elections just for your class. Decide upon the future elected officials (i.e., Class President, Vice President, Treasurer, etc.) and their specific job duties. Let each individual decide if they'd like to run. Set an election date and let the campaigning begin! Make sure the candidates know if there will be a debate, how long they have to run and give them tips on how to convince others to vote for them.

**If I Were President I Would...** (Best for Grades 3-4; Materials Needed: Pencil, Paper, Crayons) Have each students write a page that begins with 'If I were President, I would...' and then let them fill in the rest. Have them draw a picture of themselves as the President of the United States on the bottom and then post them up on the wall for everyone to admire.

## Discussion Points

1. What are the 3 branches of government and what is the purpose of each of them?  
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2. How does the election process work? Is anyone allowed to run for office?  
\_\_\_\_\_
3. Why is it important to vote? Does your vote really make a difference?  
\_\_\_\_\_
4. What are things the government decides? Are there things they shouldn't decide?  
\_\_\_\_\_
5. What is the point of having a government at all? What does a government do that makes a difference for our country?  
\_\_\_\_\_

# Branches of Government!



## THE LEGISLATIVE BRANCH

The Legislative Branch is headed by Congress. This branch includes the House of Representatives and the Senate. The main task of these two bodies is to make the laws. They pass laws, originate bills, impeach officials and approve treaties.



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## THE JUDICIAL BRANCH

The Judicial Branch is headed by the Supreme Court. Its powers include interpreting the United States Constitution, reviewing laws and deciding cases involving states' rights.



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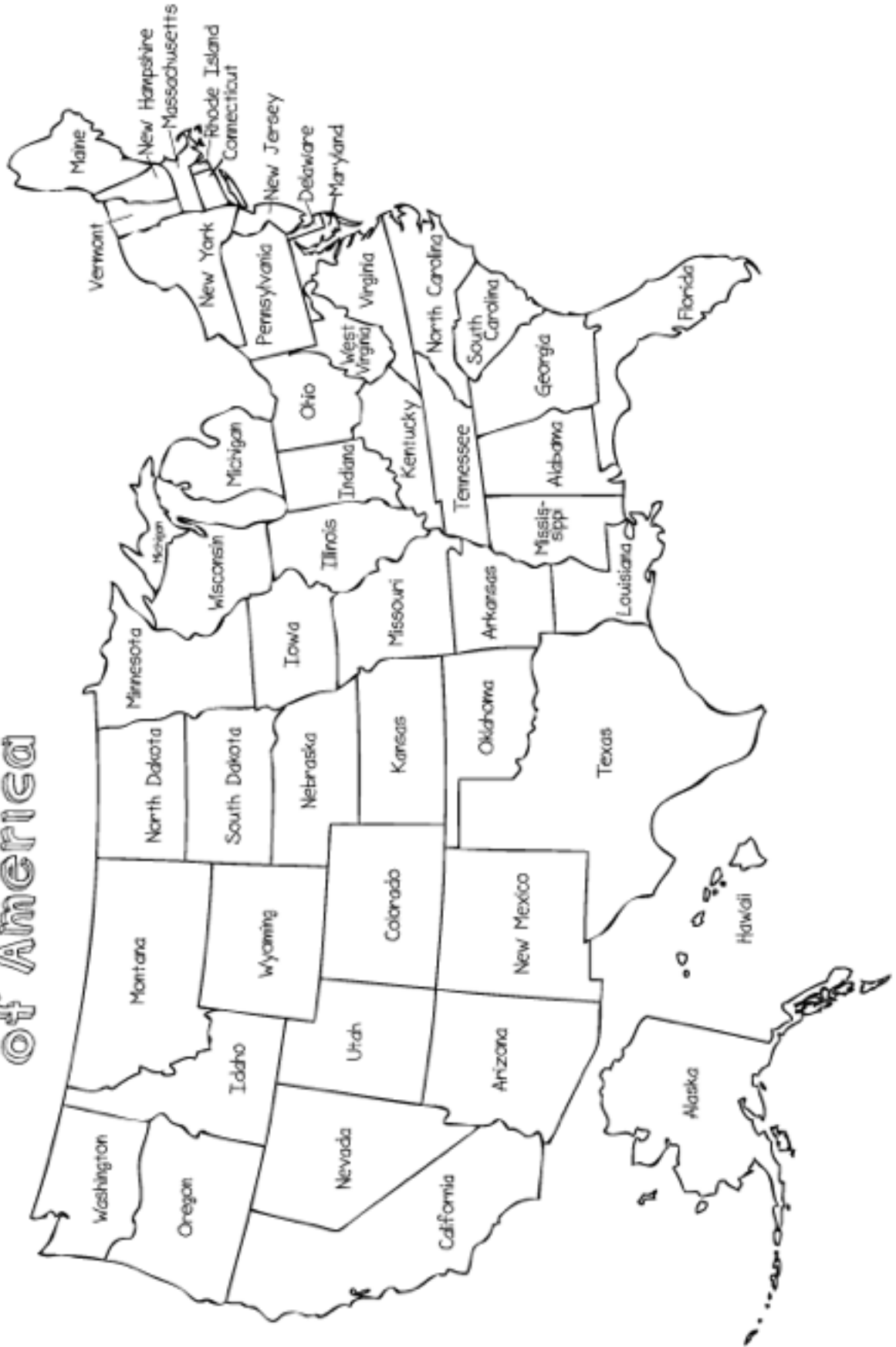
## The Executive Branch

The Executive Branch is headed by the President. The President carries out federal laws and recommends new laws, directs national defense and foreign policy and performs ceremonial duties. Powers include directing government, commanding the Armed Forces, dealing with international powers, acting as chief law enforcement officer and vetoing laws.



# Color the United States!

## United States of America



## THE WHITE HOUSE



### **FUN FACTS:**

- The White House houses the Executive Branch of government and is the home of the President of the United States of America.
- George Washington chose the winning design for the White House. It was originally built between 1792 to 1800. But he never lived in the building because he died before it was completed.
- A fire destroyed the inside of the building in 1814 and was reconstructed 3 years later.
- John Adams was the first president to live there.
- It holds 132 rooms within its 6 stories, and has 35 bathrooms. 2 of those floors are reserved for the First Family. It also has a jogging track, movie theater, pool tables, bowling alley and tennis court!
- About 6,000 people visit the White House each day and you can too, its address is 1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, Washington D.C.

## THE PENTAGON



### **FUN FACTS:**

- The Pentagon houses offices for the military, such as the United States Air Force, Marine Corps, Navy, Army, and the Office of the Secretary of Defense.
- It was built in only 16 months. 13,000 people worked on the construction site. On January 15, 1943 the building was completed.
- It is the widest office building in the world, with more than 17 miles of hallways!
- It has 284 bathrooms and 691 water fountains! It also holds other offices like banks, cafeterias, a subway and bus station and tons of other stores.
- More than 106,000 people visit the Pentagon each year for tours, you can go too, it's located in Arlington, VA.
- It is a National Historic Landmark because of its history and unique shape.
- In the center of the Pentagon is a 5 acre courtyard.

## US GOVERNMENT VOCABULARY

1. **Amendments:** Changes in or additions to the US Constitution voted in by two-thirds of the state legislatures and agreed on by three-fourths of the states.
2. **Conservative:** A person who favors more limited government and more traditional values.
3. **Democracy:** A political system in which the people are said to rule directly or indirectly.
4. **Liberal:** A person who favors more active government to aid in business, social welfare, and rights for people.
5. **Poll:** A survey of the public's opinion.
6. **Social Movement:** An idea that is widely shared that demands change in some part of the social or political order.
7. **Veto:** A message the President sends Congress to disapprove a bill.

## WHAT MAKES A GOOD LEADER?

**First**, have your group make a list of the world's best leaders. Consider some of the following people: Martin Luther King, Jr., Abraham Lincoln, Gandhi.

**Next**, have students decide what traits these leaders have in common.

**Lastly**, have the class imagine themselves as a leader. Let them journal or draw a picture of what that leader looks like or means to them. What good things would they accomplish as a leader? Who would follow their example? What would people remember them for? What matters most to them?

## Before, During and After the Play...



### YOU CAN BE AN ACTOR, TOO!

**Where to start:** All of our actors started out playing and telling stories when they were young -then they decided to study acting in school. Now they are pros! Here are some ways you can start doing theatre right away!

**In School!** Does your school have plays or musical performances? This is a great place to start.

**In Your Community!** Many towns have community theaters or local acting groups. See if you can try out!

**Start Something!** If your school doesn't have a drama club or a theatre club, talk to your favorite teacher about how you might be able to start one.

**At Home!** Get together with friends, cousins, brothers, sisters and make your own play. You can make up plays based on your favorite books and stories. Invite family and friends to see your performance.

**Try your best at new things!** There are lots of jobs in the theatre besides acting. Painters, set builders costumers, playwrights and more!



### BEFORE YOU SEE THE PLAY...

Attending the theatre is very different from watching TV or going to the movies. For one thing, the actors are real people who are performing right then and there. They can see and hear everything that happens in the audience. Because of this, YOU are an important part of the play and its important to do your job as an audience member well. Here are some tips before you see the play.

1. Please be quiet and respectful so everyone else around you can hear what's happening and so the actors can do their job.
2. The actors may ask you to participate. Don't be afraid to respond, ask a question or volunteer!
3. Keep your hands to yourself and your eyes up front.
4. If you like the play, be sure to clap at the end.
5. Have fun and enjoy!

## FUN FACTS ABOUT THEATRE!

After a play is over and everyone goes home, there is always a light left on backstage. It's called a ghost light!

The oldest play that is still around was written by an Ancient Greek named Aeschylus. It's almost 2500 years old!

The longest performance on stage ever was over 23 hours long! It happened in New Jersey in 2010.

William Shakespeare is a famous playwright, actor and poet. He wrote 37 plays like Romeo & Juliet, Macbeth and Hamlet and is still quoted by many people. There are 157 million google pages that mention him--the most of any famous person ever!

## After Seeing the Play...

Write your own review of the play!  
A review is a way of telling your thoughts about a play, movie or book. Consider the following when you are writing your review.

*What was your favorite part? Who was your favorite character? Can you summarize the play in your own words? If you had written this play, would you have done anything different? Would you recommend this play to a friend? Name one new thing you learned from watching this play!*



In theatre, it is considered bad luck to tell an actor, "Good luck" before a performance. Instead, you're supposed to say, "Break a leg!" No one really knows why, but actors say it anyway!

# Everything about the Theatre!



A mini-van is our hip and favored mode of transportation for touring the country!

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## THEATRE VOCABULARY!

**Actor:** The people on-stage performing the play.

**Backdrop:** The background for the play.

**Props:** Anything that an actor holds while on-stage--a cane, book or rubber chicken.

**Downstage:** the area closest to the audience a long time ago stage were built at angles.



**Upstage:** The area away from the audience, like the back wall of the a stage.

**Director:** The person who told the actors where to go while they

## Facts about us!

1. Did you know we're owned by an Emmy winning actor?
2. Our actors average 1,000 miles a week traveling the country to entertain young audiences.
3. Our programs have been seen in almost every corner of the country and even around the world.
4. We watch over 1200 actors audition before we cast our season.
5. We offer dozens of different shows a season from Black History & anti-bullying to literary classics, science and more!
6. We tour to Moscow & St. Petersburg, Russia each year with performances.
7. We're based in Asheville, NC.

### ABOUT US!

Founded in 2003, Bright Star Theatre tours the nation offering high quality, affordable programs to every imaginable venue. We've had countless engagements at the National Theatre, toured to Moscow and are so grateful to be in your very school today!

were on-stage and helped them create the characters they played.

**Costumes:** The wigs, clothing and glasses that the actors wore to help flush out their characters .



**Auditions:** How an actor gets a role is by auditioning. They may have to interview, pretend to be a character from the play or read something from it.

**Set Designer:** The person who decided what should be on the background and who painted or created it.

The Process of a Play:

1. Actors audition
2. Directors cast the show (that means they choose actors)
3. The directors and actors rehearse the play (that means they practice it).
4. A team of people works on building the set, costumes and props.
5. The play opens (that means it is performed for the first time)!

Were there other terms that came from the experience of seeing the live play that you'd like to learn more about?

## BRIGHT STAR THEATRE

Bright Star Touring Theatre performs across the country from Boston to Burbank and many schools, museums theaters and community events in between. Each season our shows run the gamut from Black History to anti-bullying, from literary classics to biographical shows. Our shows are available throughout the year for any event in any part of the world.

## USA TO Z

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Learn more about this show, this company & our whole Season:

[www.brightstartheatre.com](http://www.brightstartheatre.com)

## USA TO Z

Made its debuts in 2016  
National Tour

We want every show to be special and remarkable for our audience. Please feel free to connect with us at anytime to tell us about your experience:

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