

CONSTITUTION 101

Module 6: Separation of Powers and Federalism
6.5 Activity Guide

PHILOSOPHICAL THINKING ON SEPARATION OF POWERS

In this activity, you will use primary sources to identify the philosophical background for separation of powers and checks and balances.

Read and take notes on the excerpts from the primary source readings:

- [Montesquieu, *The Spirit of the Laws* \(1748\)](#)
- [John Adams, *Thoughts on Government* \(1776\)](#)
- [James Madison, *Federalist No. 51* \(1788\)](#)

After you have completed the readings, answer the following questions:

What are two main arguments the authors make?

What is the role of the governed?

Do you see these ideas in our government today?