

Dear Family Member,

Welcome to our next unit of study, “Government in Action.”

I’m excited to begin our third unit of study in the Benchmark Advance program. As with the previous units, I am providing suggested activities you and your child can do together at home to build on the work we’re doing in class.

In our third unit of study, “Government in Action,” students will discover the role local, state, and federal government plays in our everyday lives. For example, some government laws are designed to keep people safe, while others might be designed to conserve natural resources or preserve our natural environment. The selections include a variety of genres including informational texts, realistic fiction, and science fiction. Understanding the way our government can influence the way we live will help students become responsible citizens. I hope the topic and suggested activities will spark some lively discussions at home.

As always, should you have any questions about our reading program or about your child’s progress, please don’t hesitate to contact me.

Government in Action

In this unit, we read fiction and nonfiction about how government works on a national, state, and local level. We think in depth about the question “How can government influence the way we live?” Here are some activities designed to continue the conversation about government and to build on the skills and concepts your child is learning in school. Hopefully you’ll even have some fun, too, as you work together!

Topic Connection

Government Giving Tree

Your state government is organized into three branches that form the unique basis of a giving tree for its citizens. On paper, work with your child to draw a tree with three large branches. Label them *executive*, *legislative*, and *judicial*. Then brainstorm a list of tasks and responsibilities that your state government has. Write each task on the correct branch of the tree. Decorate your giving tree and hang it on the refrigerator!

Vocabulary Connection

Governing Words

Your child is learning new words related to government, such as **enforce**, **federal**, **critical**, and **maintain**. You can support understanding of these words by coming up with an imaginative short story about a new colony on the moon. In this unit, students will read a science fiction story on the topic, and you can take part in imagining what a new colony on the moon would be like as it forms a new government. What are the concerns the government has for its citizens? How can it address them? Use the vocabulary words to help tell your story.

Comprehension Connection

State Park Smarts

In this unit, we’ll read about the role that Yellowstone National Park played as the nation’s first national park in 1871. Work with your child to identify a state park near you. Research the park and find out about its history. Find out what kinds of activities can be done at the park, and plan a wish list for a tentative trip to the park. Base your list on real activities that are offered at the park.

Word Study Connections

Problem Solvers to the Rescue

Help your child gain a deeper focus of the words *authority* and *enforce*. Explain that one of the things local governments do best is use their authority to solve problems. Make a two-column chart with your child with “Problem” on one side and “Solution” on the other. Together brainstorm problems your local government has come across lately and the steps they took to solve the problem by *enforcing* their *authority*. If the problem is unsolved, use the second column to list possible solutions to the problem.