

Government Unit Vocabulary:

SS8CG1

Bill of Rights- a list of rights and freedoms found in both the Georgia and United States Constitutions.

Checks and Balances- a political system that allows one branch of government to veto or amend the acts of another to prevent one branch from having too much power.

Felony- a crime that carries more than one year of jail time as a sentence; more serious crimes/ supersedes across state lines

General Election- an election where the winning candidates of each party's primary, along with third party candidates and independents, run for political offices.

Georgia State Constitution- the document that outlines the rights, rules, regulations, and procedures for Georgia's citizens and government.

Georgia Supreme Court-the highest appellate court in GA, handles all death penalty cases

Governor- the Chief Executive in the state of Georgia; he holds the power to veto bills or sign them into law

Juries- a population of citizens that determines culpability in civil and criminal cases based upon evidence

Nonpartisan- an election where candidates are not officially affiliated with a political party.

Political Parties- a group of like-minded individuals who share common beliefs and ideas that work together in hopes of electing their members to political office.

Polling Place- location people are assigned to vote based on their residence.

Precinct- a voting district.

Primary Election- an election where members of the two major parties vote for candidates to represent them in the general elections; however, one does not have to be a member of a party to vote in a primary.

Referendum- a direct vote by the people.

Responsibilities of Citizens- duties that all citizens have; some are mandatory, like paying taxes and serving on juries; others are voluntary, such as voting.

Rights of Citizens- government protected rights found in the U.S. Bill of Rights and the Georgia Bill of Rights.

Runoff Election- an election between candidates that did not receive 50% +1 of the vote.

Separation of Powers- the constitutional principle that limits the powers vested in one person or branch of government.

Special Election- an election that is used to present a special issue to voters or fill an office vacancy.

Taxes- money paid by citizens to support the function of local, state, and/or the federal government.

Two Party System- a democratic form of government where two major parties dominate the political landscape.

Unconstitutional- an amendment or law that does not follow the structures of the US Constitution

Veto- the power held by the executive branch to reject a law; vetoes can be overturned.

Volunteering- when someone offers a service out of their own free will without the benefit of payment.

Voting- a way for the electorate to select candidates for political office.

Voting Qualifications- required criteria a person must have in order to vote; these include being 18 years of age and being a citizen of the United States.

SS8CG2

Ad Hoc Committee- committee created for a special purpose

Conference Committee- created when the House and Senate writes differing versions of a bill; committee must compromise to make the bill the same.

Floor Leader- a representative whose role is to promote the interest of the Governor on the house floor.

Georgia General Assembly- Georgia's legislative branch; made up of a bicameral legislature consisting of the House of Representatives and the Senate.

Georgia State Representative- a member of the Georgia House of Representatives; must be 21 years of age, a resident of Georgia and their district for two years, and a U.S. citizen.

Georgia State Senator- a member of the Georgia Senate; must be 25 years of age, a resident of Georgia and their district for two years, and a U.S. citizen.

Joint Committee- a committee made up of members of the Senate and House.

Legislation- acts passed by the legislative branch and approved by the executive branch or acts passed by the legislative branch, vetoed by the president, and overruled by the legislative branch.

Legislative Branch- governmental branch responsible for creating laws.

Majority Leader- leader who is responsible for making sure members of his or her party vote for bills and agendas that the majority party favors.

Minority Leader- leader who is responsible for making sure members of his or her party vote for bills and agendas that the minority party favors.

Speaker of the House- presiding officer of the House of Representatives.

Standing Committee- a permanent committee.

SS8C3

Department of Economic Development- department of Georgia's executive branch responsible for bringing economic development to the state.

Department of Education- department of Georgia's executive branch responsible for overseeing all facets of education in the state.

Department of Human Resources- department of Georgia's executive branch, now part of the Department of Human Services, responsible for customer focused human services.

Department of Natural Resources- department of Georgia's executive branch responsible for department of Georgia's executive branch responsible for enforcing laws concerning the states rivers and lakes and operating the states public parks and preserving the state's historic sites.

Department of Public Safety- department established to protect Georgia's citizens and their property. The Georgia State Patrol is part of this department.

Department of Transportation- department of Georgia's executive branch responsible for planning, constructing, and maintaining Georgia's roads and highways.

Executive Branch- governmental branch responsible for enforcing laws.

Governor- Head of the states executive branch responsible for overseeing the office of the executive branch.

Lieutenant Governor- second highest office of the executive branch; presides over the Georgia senate and takes on the role of the governor if the governor leaves the state; will take over the office if the governor dies or is impeached.

SS8CG4

Appeal- seeking a new trial after a court decision.

Appellate- courts whose responsibility is to review prior court cases.

Arraigned- a step in the criminal court pretrial process where the suspect has received an indictment and is brought before a superior court judge.

Arrest- when law enforcement has enough evidence to take a suspect into custody.

Bail- payment a suspect can pay to be released from custody until their trial date; bail is determined by the magistrate court.

Booking- stage at which law enforcement officers make an arrest report and hold the suspect in jail.

Capital Crimes- crimes that can be punished by the death penalty.

Chief Justice- presiding justice of the Supreme Court.

Court of Appeals- court that reviews civil and criminal cases that have been previously heard by trial courts.

Crimes- serious offenses that are punishable with fines, community service, prison, and sometime death.

Cross Examine- when an attorney for the plaintiff or the defendant asks questions of witnesses called by the opposing side.

Custody- when a suspect is being held based on evidence that they committed a crime.

Defendant- person or group being charged for a wrong doing.

Deliberation- when the jury discusses the guilt or innocence of a defendant.

Delinquent- a minor 17 years of age or under who has been charged with wrong-doing.

Division- an area under the jurisdiction of the Court of Appeals.

Felony- a serious crime that can be punishable by no less than one year in prison.

Grand Jury- a group of citizens look over evidence to determine if a suspect should be charged with a crime.

Indictment- when a grand jury determines that there is enough evidence to be charged with a crime.

Initial Appearance- when a suspect goes before a magistrate court to have charges against them explained and to determine bail.

Judicial Branch- branch of government responsible for interpreting the laws

Jurisdiction- area that a court is responsible for.

Justices-members of the Supreme Court; in the Georgia Supreme Court, justices hold six year terms and are selected by popular vote.

Juvenile Court-the court that specializes in justice for minors.

Limited Jurisdiction – a court with a jurisdiction of only one county.

Magistrate Court- a court with the powers to issue warrants and try minor criminal cases, civil cases for sum of \$15,000 or less, and civil disputes.

Misdemeanor- a minor offense with a penalty of no more than one year in prison and/or a fine.

Opening Statements- in a trial, attorneys for both the plaintiff and defense are given the opportunity to speak directly to the jury to explain what they hope to prove in the case.

Plea Bargain- the ability for a defendant to plead guilty to a lesser charge.

Preliminary Hearing- when a magistrate judge determines if there was crime committed and if there is probable cause that the suspect was involved in the crime.

Presentation of Evidence- during a trial when witnesses are called to provide testimony.

Probable Cause- when there is sufficient evidence that the suspect was involved in a crime.

Probate Court- court with the power to rule on wills and estates, traffic violations, violations of game and fish laws, grant marriage and firearms licenses, appoint legal guardians, and misdemeanors.

Sentencing- after a jury finds a defendant guilty the judge determines the number of years the defendant will serve in prison or the amount of damages owed.

State Court- court responsible for ruling in misdemeanor cases, preliminary criminal cases hearings, civil cases, and can issue search warrants.

Superior Court- court responsible for hearing civil and criminal trials, divorce cases, felony cases, and land titles.

Supreme Court- court responsible for reviewing decisions made in civil or criminal cases, determining the constitutionality of laws, changes to elections, and death sentences.

Suspect- person who has been charged by law enforcement for committing a crime.

Tort- a civil wrong doing against an individual.

Unruly- disobedient behavior that does not actually break any laws.

Verdict- a determination of guilt or innocence by a jury.

SS8CG5

Board of Commissioners- a group of individuals that have the power to adopt ordinances and oversee the daily operations of a county's government.

City Manager- an individual hired by a city government who is responsible for running the day to day operations for the city.

Clerk of the Superior Court- primary record keeper for a county government.

Council-Mayor System- a form of city government where the mayor plays a ceremonial role but holds little power; most decisions for the county are made by the city council, and often a city manager is responsible for day to day operations.

County Commissioner- an individual who has the power to adopt ordinances and oversee the daily operations of a county's government.

Judge of the Probate Court- an individual who oversees property deeds, marriage licenses, wills, and supervises elections in a county government.

Weak Mayor System- a form of city government where the mayor holds some responsibilities, but the city council holds the majority of the power, duties, and responsibilities.

Municipal Charter- a written document that sets up the structure of a city government.

Municipality- a city or town.

the jailer for a county government.

Special Purpose District-government entities created to serve a special function for the state or community.

Strong Mayor System- a form of city government where the major holds major responsibilities and powers including acting as the city's chief executive officer, administering the city's budget, and vetoing legislation passed by the city council.

Tax Commissioner- an individual who is responsible for receiving tax returns, maintaining tax records, and paying taxes for a county government.

SS8CG6

Adjudicatory Hearing- a step in the juvenile justice process where the judge determines the juvenile's guilt or innocence.

Appeal- a step in the juvenile justice process where the juvenile can challenge the ruling if there is enough evidence to prove that they were innocent.

Delinquent Act- an act committed by a juvenile that would be a criminal offense according to adult law.

Disposition Hearing- a step in the juvenile justice process where the judge hears witnesses and determines the punishment for the juvenile.

Informal Adjustment- an optional step in the juvenile justice process where a juvenile who is a first time offender must admit guilt to the judge and is under the supervision of the court for 90 days.

Intake Officer- a law enforcement agent who decides if there is enough evidence to bring a charge against a juvenile.

Release or Detain- a step in the juvenile justice process where it is determined if the juvenile should be released to their parent or guardian or if there is enough evidence to hold them in a juvenile detention center until trial.

Sentencing- a step in the juvenile justice process where a judge rules on a juvenile's punishment.

Seven Delinquent Behaviors- seven crimes that will automatically result in the juvenile being tried as an adult; these include murder, rape, and armed robbery with a firearm.

Unruly Act- an act committed by a juvenile that would not be a criminal offense according to adult law.