The Main Idea
A state’s executive branch carries out laws made by the state’s legislative branch. Governors are the chief executives of state government.

Thinking Critically
1. Who is the state’s chief executive, and what are his or her powers and duties?
2. Who are the other officials of state executive branches?

Key Terms
- governor, p. 213
- patronage, p. 215
- lieutenant governor, p. 215

What does the governor do? Once the legislature writes laws, the governor and his or her executive team put those laws into action. In this way, governors may affect your day-to-day affairs. Governors can also propose legislation or veto bills, just like the president.

The State’s Chief Executive
The citizens of each state elect a governor to run the day-to-day affairs of their state. The governor is the chief executive in each state. The governor works for the people of his or her state. Governors lead the state government, set priorities, make government appointments, and implement laws to meet the needs of their states.

Qualifications and Terms of Governors
In each state, a constitution lists the qualifications for governor. In general, a candidate for governor must be a U.S. citizen and must have lived in the state for a certain number of years. Most states require a candidate for governor to be at least 30 years old. However, a few states, such as California and Ohio, allow persons as young as 18 years of age to run for governor.

CIVICS IN PRACTICE
Democrat Kathleen Sebelius was elected governor of Kansas in 2002.

Why It Matters
Show students a photograph of the governor of your state. Ask students if they know who the person is. If they can identify the governor, ask them to share what they know about the governor: the governor’s age, political party, years/ terms in office, and so on. If they cannot identify the governor, introduce them to the governor by discussing some of the information suggested above. Explain to students that it is part of their jobs as citizens in a democracy to know about their political leaders.

Key Terms
- governor - chief executive in each state (p. 213)
- patronage - system in which government jobs are given to people recommended by political leaders (p. 215)
- lieutenant governor - presiding officer of the state senate and successor of the governor (p. 215)

Taking Notes

Teach the Main Idea
1. Teach Ask students the Reading Focus questions to teach this section.
2. Apply Have students create a concept web of the executive branch. Tell them to include the key responsibilities of its members in the web.
3. Review Write the state officials of the executive branch on the board and have student volunteers write the responsibilities of each underneath the appropriate name.
4. Practice/Homework Ask students to think about which state executive branch position they would most want to run for. Then have them write a speech that explains why they would be the best choice for that position and what they would do for the state if elected.
The State’s Chief Executive

Recall What are the three main roles of governors? chief legislator, chief executive, and political party leader

Rank Which of the governor’s duties do you think is most important? Which is least important? Explain your answer. Students should choose from the duties the governor has as chief legislator, chief executive, and political party leader and other duties.

Most governors serve four-year terms. In some states, such as New Hampshire and Vermont, they serve for two years. About half of the states limit their governors to one or two terms in office.

The salaries of governors vary greatly from state to state. For example, the governor of New York receives $179,000 a year. The governor of Alaska receives $126,000 a year, and the governor of Nebraska receives $85,000 per year. In addition, governors usually receive an allowance for expenses, such as travel. In most states governors and their families live in an official residence in the state capital.

Powers and Duties of Governors

A state governor is the highest-ranking official at the state level. He or she is responsible for “faithfully executing the laws” of the state. Like the president, a governor plays many roles in his or her state. The three main roles are chief executive, chief legislator, and political party leader.

Chief Executive In most state constitutions, the governor is designated as the chief executive of the state. As chief executive, a governor may share executive powers with other “executives,” such as the state treasurer, the attorney general, and the secretary of state, who are also elected officials. State governors usually have a number of executive powers.

• Power of the Budget One of the duties and powers the governor in most states has is the power to prepare a budget for one or two years. The governor submits this budget to the legislature. The governor’s budget sets priorities and offers solutions to state problems. Citizens of a state look to this budget as an indication of leadership.

• Power to Make Appointments A number of state agencies help the governor carry out the laws. Most states have executive departments that include agriculture, justice, labor, public safety (which includes the state police), public works, and transportation. Each state agency has a specific area of responsibility. For example, the state board of health enforces health laws and recommends measures to improve the health of state citizens. The department of human services supervises programs that help people who are disabled, poor, or unemployed. Other state agencies administer state laws on conservation and public utilities.

Although voters elect some of the heads of these agencies in some states, the governor usually has the power to appoint these state officials. Appointments typically require confirmation by the state Senate. An official who has been appointed by the governor can usually be removed or replaced by the governor.

• Power to Supervise State Employees In most states, many important state agencies are under the governor’s control. By directing the operation of these agencies, the governor can have a major impact on state...
policies and state action. Overall, the 50 state governments employ more than 4.7 million people.

Most state government jobs are open to any qualified citizen who passes a state examination. However, some state jobs are filled through patronage. That is, the jobs are given to people recommended by political party leaders. Such jobs often go to people who provided valuable help during the election campaign.

**Chief Legislator** Only the state legislature can pass laws, but the governor plays an important part in proposing new laws. The governor usually appears before the state legislature at one of its early meetings. In some states this takes the form of a state of the state address to the legislature. At this meeting, the governor outlines laws he or she thinks should be passed. The governor may also submit legislation that he or she wants passed. He or she frequently talks to leaders of the legislature, urging them to pass specific bills and oppose others. State legislators know that if they pass a bill the governor opposes, the governor also has the power to veto legislation.

**Political Party Leader** The governor is the head of his or her political party in the state. State senators and representatives within the governor’s party often model their opinions and policies after the governor’s. The governor can help them during their campaigns for re-election.

**Other Powers** A governor has many other powers. Directors of many state agencies are appointed by the governor. The heads of the state police force and state militia report to the governor. In times of emergency, such as during floods or hurricanes, the governor may call out the National Guard to help keep order and assist with relief efforts. The governor also has the judicial power to pardon certain prisoners.

**Other State Executive Officials**

Each state also has a number of other executive branch officials to help run the state government and enforce state laws. In most states voters elect these officials. In some states, however, the governor appoints these officials who are then a part of the governor’s cabinet.

**Lieutenant Governor**

Most states have a lieutenant governor. The lieutenant governor becomes head of the state executive branch if the governor dies, resigns, or is removed from office. The lieutenant governor often serves as the presiding officer of the state senate. In some states it is possible for the lieutenant governor and the governor to belong to different political parties.

**Governor Helps Out**

Governor Haley Barbour of Mississippi helps unload water and other supplies as part of relief efforts for residents of Mississippi affected by Hurricane Katrina in 2005.

**Challenge and Enrichment Activities:**

- Ask students to find and read a speech or other primary source materials by one of the state officials discussed in the section, besides the governor. Then have them write a brief paragraph summarizing the speech or other material and its goal.

**Reading Check**

**Reading Focus**

- **Interpersonal, Verbal/Linguistic**

**Identify** Name the other officials of the state executive branch. lieutenant governor, secretary of state, attorney general, state treasurer, state auditor, superintendent of public instruction

**Draw Conclusions** How do the state treasurer and state auditor work together to handle state funds? The state auditor has to make sure that any money spent by the state treasurer is authorized.

**Make Judgments** Do you think the governor should appoint top state officials or should the people elect them? Explain your answer. Possible answers: The governor should appoint them because he or she has to work closely with them. The people should choose who they think is best for the job.

**Reading Skill**

**Activity** Ask students to find and read a speech or other primary source materials by one of the state officials discussed in the section, besides the governor. Then have them write a brief paragraph summarizing the speech or other material and its goal.

**Answers**

- chief executive; draws up a budget, appoints state officials and works with them to carry out laws; chief legislator; proposes laws, signs laws, and puts them into action; political party leader: head of political party in the state
**Review & Assess**

**Close**
Review with students the positions in the state executive branch and the responsibilities of each official.

**Review**
- Online Quiz: Section 3
- Quiz Game

**Assess**
- SE Section 3 Assessment
- Daily Quizzes: Section 3

**Reteach**
- Main Idea Activities for Differentiated Instruction: Section 3

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### SECRETARY OF STATE

The secretary of state keeps state records and carries out election laws. In states without a lieutenant governor, the secretary of state may take over as governor if the governor’s office becomes vacant.

### ATTORNEY GENERAL

The attorney general is in charge of the state’s legal business, or matters concerning the law. He or she provides state officials with advice about the meaning of laws. The attorney general or an assistant represents the state in court when the state is involved in a lawsuit. The attorney general may also assist local officials in the prosecution of criminals.

### STATE TREASURER

In some states the state treasurer is in charge of handling all state funds. Sometimes this official supervises the collection of taxes and pays the state’s bills as well.

### State Auditor

The state auditor ensures that no public funds from the state treasury are used without authorization. The auditor also regularly examines the state’s financial records to make sure that they are correct. The auditor is sometimes called the comptroller.

### SUPERINTENDENT OF PUBLIC INSTRUCTION

The superintendent of public instruction carries out the policies of the state board of education. The state board makes regulations, under state law, that govern local school districts. The superintendent distributes state funds to local school systems according to state and federal laws. In some states this official is called the superintendent of public schools or the state commissioner of education.

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**SECTION 3 ASSESSMENT**

### Reviewing Ideas and Terms

1. **Define** Write a brief definition for the term governor and patronage.
2. **Summarize** What are the primary powers and duties of most governors?
3. **Draw Conclusions** How does the governor’s legislative power influence the types of bills legislators introduce?
4. **Make Predictions** What might happen if the governor and legislature do not agree on legislative priorities?
5. **Define** Write a brief definition for the term lieutenant governor.
6. **Identify** What state executive officials deal with state finances?
7. **Compare and Contrast** How are the duties and responsibilities of the lieutenant governor similar to those of the vice president of the United States? How are they different?

### Critical Thinking

3. **Categorizing** Copy the graphic organizer. Use it and your notes to identify the role of each state official.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Position</th>
<th>Duties</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Lieutenant Governor</td>
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<tr>
<td>Secretary of State</td>
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<tr>
<td>Attorney General</td>
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<td>State Treasurer</td>
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<td>State Auditor</td>
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<tr>
<td>Superintendent of Public Instruction</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Focus on Writing

4. **Problem Solving** Imagine that you are part of the governor’s executive team. You have been asked to put into action a bill that creates new after-school programs. Write out a plan for this program.

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**Section 3 Assessment Answers**

1. **a.** governor, p. 213; **b.** patronage, p. 215; **c.** propose, sign, and enact laws; create a budget; appoint other state officials; lead his or her political party in the state. **d.** Legislators know the governor can veto bills or sign them into law, so he or she has great influence on the bills introduced. **d.** Bills will not be passed.
2. **a.** lieutenant governor, p. 215; **b.** state treasurer and state auditor. **c.** Both take over the position above them if the person in that position dies or is removed from office; the lieutenant governor serves as presiding officer of the state senate, and the vice president serves as presiding officer of the U.S. Senate.
4. Students’ program suggestions should be educational in some way and should include mention of state officials who would be needed to implement the program(s).