Learning Objective: The student will understand how the principles of the Constitution have been reflected in historical events.

TEKS: Texas History 7.13A, USH 8.15D, Government 6D

Materials Needed: Copy of vocabulary graphic organizer, copy of appropriate principle handout, and access to internet to show video.

Teacher Background: The following lesson plan is designed to accompany the LRE video series #LiamLearns. The lesson plan that is provided is designed to be used in the following subjects: Texas History, 8th Grade US History, US History 1877 to the present, and U.S. Government. Each of the stimulus pieces attached to each principle have been selected to allow the principle to be reviewed throughout the various courses. Note: The intended course is located at the bottom of each page.

Teaching Strategy:

1. Explain to students that they will be reviewing “Checks and Balances” one of the principles of the Constitution and that they will be watching a short video to remind them of the concept followed by analyzing the concept in history.

2. Provide each student with a vocabulary graphic organizer, and explain that as they watch the following video, that they need to be prepared to define the principle, provide a definition, and an example.

3. Have students watch the video on Checks and Balances at the following link: http://www.texaslre.org/liamlearns/

4. When students have finished watching the video, give them time to complete their graphic organizer and check for student understanding by having students share their learning.

5. Once students have an understanding of the term, provide them with the appropriate document for their grade level and have them analyze using the questions provided.

Note: Strategies for various types of primary sources have been included in this lesson to help students with analyzing different types of sources. They are located at the end of this lesson plan.

Suggested Units to use documents:

1. Texas History – Progressive Movement
2. 8th Grade US History - Jackson Unit
3. US History 1877 to present – Modern America
4. Government – Constitution Unit or Executive Branch (note: can also be used in US History 1877 to present in unit on Modern Era)
Document Analysis Suggested Answers
Below you will find suggested answers for each of the documents. Each bullet represents the questions asked on the documents.

7th Grade
- If students circle terms such as “appointing” and make connections between the power of the governor and the power of the president to see similarities between the Texas and US Constitutions. If students can further explain the Legislative Branch approves appointments that would indicate an understanding of checks and balances.

8th Grade
- President Jackson is standing on the U.S. Constitution holding a veto. Text around the outside of the image also indicates the power of veto. If students recognize this as a check on the legislative branch they can demonstrate an understanding of checks and balances.
- Opinion statement- student answers will vary.

US History 1877 to Present
- The US House of Representatives is using its power of impeachment to check the office of the President.
- The impeached President Clinton saying that President Clinton provided false and misleading information to a grand jury.
- President Clinton remained in office. The vote of the impeachment trial in the Senate was 55 (not guilty) to 45 (guilty) on the perjury charges.

Government
- This document is a veto of the War Powers Resolution, passed by Congress, by the President of the United States.
- The President chose to take this action because he felt that the President needed flexibility in responding to foreign affairs and that this resolution might be too rigid and hinder the cooperation that should be present between the two branches.
A Citizen Writes Governor James Allred to Oppose the Appointment of Sarah Hughes to a State District Court Judgeship

Hon. James V. Allred  
Governor of Texas  
Austin, Texas.

Dear Sir:

The papers are telling of your appointing a woman to a Judgeship in Dallas and I take the liberty, which I consider is the privilege of any tax payer in our state, to urge you to not continue the practice of appointing women to high positions in the state.... Our good president, Mr. Roosevelt, whom I greatly admire and whom I consider a real blessing to the United States at this time, has made the mistake too many times of appointing a woman to a place of high authority. A woman on the Cabinet! Unprecedented. He probably, and you, too, are looking for the womens' vote in 1936, but if you make us a real Governor, which, by the way, Texas has not had for some time, you will be reelected without throwing this sop to the women....

I hope you won't think me presumptious [sic.]. When you go to the Carlsbad Caverns over the line in New Mexico, stop by and eat fried chicken with us.

Yours very truly,  
W.R. Hegler

P.S. I do not expect an answer to this, there is no reason why you should take the time to do so, but I do hope it will make you think.

Using information from the Liam Learns video and/or prior knowledge, what evidence in the document above supports the principle of checks and balances found in the Texas Constitution? Be prepared to support your answer with evidence from the document.
Above is a political cartoon depicting President Andrew Jackson after he vetoed the Second Bank of the United States.

How is the principle of Checks and Balances exemplified in this cartoon? Be prepared to support your answer with evidence from the cartoon.

Do you believe President Jackson acted within the Constitution when vetoing the bank?

This document intended to be used in 8th grade US History.
Resolution Impeaching William Jefferson Clinton, President of the United States, for high crimes and misdemeanors.

Resolved, That William Jefferson Clinton, President of the United States, is impeached for high crimes and misdemeanors and that the following articles of impeachment be exhibited to the United States Senate:

Articles of impeachment exhibited by the House of Representatives of the United States of America in the name of itself and of the people of the United States of America, against William Jefferson Clinton, President of the United States of America, in maintenance and support of its impeachment against him for high crimes and misdemeanors.

Article I

In his conduct while President of the United States, William Jefferson Clinton, in violation of his constitutional oath faithfully to execute the office of President of the United States and, to the best of his ability, preserve, protect and defend the Constitution of the United States, and in violation of his constitutional duty to take care that the laws be faithfully executed, has willfully corrupted and manipulated the judicial process of the United States for his personal gain and exoneration, impeding the administration of justice, in that:

On August 17, 1998, William Jefferson Clinton swore to tell the truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth before a Federal grand jury of the United States. Contrary to that oath, William Jefferson Clinton willfully provided perjurious, false and misleading testimony to the grand jury concerning one or more of the following: (1) the nature and details of his relationship with a subordinate Government employee; (2) prior perjurious, false and misleading testimony he gave in a Federal civil rights action brought against him; (3) prior false and misleading statements he allowed his attorney to make to a Federal judge in that civil rights action; and (4) his corrupt efforts to influence the testimony of witnesses and to impede the discovery of evidence in that civil rights action.

What evidence in the above document supports the principle of Checks and Balances?

What were the formal charges of these articles of impeachment?

What were the results of the impeachment trial in the Senate?
Richard Nixon – October 24, 1973

To the House of Representatives:

I hereby return without my approval House Joint Resolution 542--the War Powers Resolution. While I am in accord with the desire of the Congress to assert its proper role in the conduct of our foreign affairs, the restrictions which this resolution would impose upon the authority of the President are both unconstitutional and dangerous to the best interests of our Nation.

The proper roles of the Congress and the Executive in the conduct of foreign affairs have been debated since the founding of our country. Only recently, however, has there been a serious challenge to the wisdom of the Founding Fathers in choosing not to draw a precise and detailed line of demarcation between the foreign policy powers of the two branches.

The Founding Fathers understood the impossibility of foreseeing every contingency that might arise in this complex area. They acknowledged the need for flexibility in responding to changing circumstances. They recognized that foreign policy decisions must be made through close cooperation between the two branches and not through rigidly codified procedures.

These principles remain as valid today as they were when our Constitution was written. Yet House Joint Resolution 542 would violate those principles by defining the President's powers in ways which would strictly limit his constitutional authority.

CLEARLY UNCONSTITUTIONAL….

Source: http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/ws/?pid=4021

How does the document above reflect the principles of Checks and Balances? Be prepared to defend your answer with evidence.

Why did the President choose to take this action?
**SOAPS— Primary Document Analysis**

**Subject:** What is the main topic or idea of this document?

**Occasion:** Where and when was the document produced? What was happening during the time the document was written?

**Audience:** For whom was the document written/produced? How might an audience have received this document and why?

**Point of View:** What does the writer or producer believe?

**Speaker:** Who is the speaker or producer? What can you tell me about his background? How might his personal background have influenced his work?

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**APPARTS— Primary Document Analysis**

**Author:** Who created the source? What do you know about the author? What is the author’s point of view?

**Place and time:** Where and when was the source produced? How might this affect the meaning of the source?

**Prior Knowledge:** Beyond information about the author and the context of its creation, what do you know that would help you further understand this primary source?

**Audience:** For whom was the source created and how might this affect the reliability of the source?

**Reason:** Why was this source produced and how might this affect the reliability of the source?

**The main idea:** What point is the source trying to convey?

**Significance:** Why is this source important? Ask yourself “So What?” in relation to the question asked.

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**OPTIC— Evaluating Visuals**

**Overview:** What is the point of view of the visual?

**Parts:** What details seem important?

**Titles (Words):** What is the title of the visual? Read all labels and any written words (if you can).

**Interrelationships:** Using the title, what big umbrella concept connects the whole visual?

**Conclusion:** Why is this visual important to what we are studying?

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**SO CLEAR— Interpreting Political Cartoons**

**Symbols:** What symbols are in the cartoon? What do they represent?

**Opinions:** What is the opinion of the author?

**Characters:** Who are the people in the cartoon? What do they represent?

**Labels:** What words are there to help you understand the message?

**Exaggeration:** How are portions of the visual exaggerated? Why do you think the author did this?

**Agree:** Do you agree with the author’s point of view? Explain.

**Response:** To what event is the cartoon in response?
**Principle of the Constitution:**

**Define the principle:**

**Draw an image to reflect the principle:**

**Use the principle in an original sentence.**