

Illinois Constitution Web Quest

Log on to:

<http://www.skokie69.k12.il.us/Lincoln/staff/jonasja/llconstitution.html#1>

Scroll down the page and find Lessons 1-11 and click on each lesson to answer the questions. Or you can use the information and links provided in this document to answer the questions on your web quest.

Other helpful websites to find answers:

www.illinois.gov

<http://www.state.il.us/kids/learn/govern/default.htm>

<http://www.museum.state.il.us/exhibits/athome/index.html>

<http://bensguide.gpo.gov/3-5/state/illinois.html>

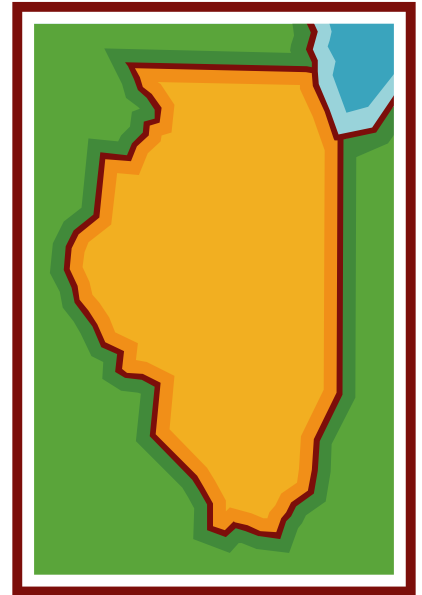
<http://www.50states.com/facts/illinois.htm>

<http://www.50states.com/illinois.htm>

http://www.museum.state.il.us/exhibits/symbols/game_top.html

<http://www.ilga.gov/commission/lrb/conmain.htm>

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Flag_of_Illinois



Lesson 1: State History



Statistics:

Illinois - 21st state

Land and Water Area = 58,000 miles

Dimensions - 385 miles long and 218 miles wide

By the time the U.S. Constitution was being signed, our state was a wilderness. Early visitors described the area as a rolling prairie covered with tall grasses and woods. The "discovery" of Illinois by whites took place in 1673 by the 2 French explorers, Marquette and Joliet. During the time between the discovery of Illinois and its admission to the union as a state, the French and English both controlled the area at times.

French forts and communities sprung up in the Illinois wilderness. Fort de Crevecoeur was established near Peoria in 1680 followed in 1682 by Fort St. Louis on Starved Rock. One of the first white villages, Pimitouri, later called Peoria was established in 1691. Cahokia was organized in 1699 and Kaskaskia four years later.

Indian tribes of Illinois included the Miami, Illiniwek (Illinois), and Potawatomee Indians. Most were relocated westward later.

Defeated by England in the French and Indian War in 1763, France gave up its claim to its possessions east of the Mississippi River.

Illinois was established as a county of Virginia in 1778. In 1787 it became part of the Northwest Territory, in which it remained until 1800. In 1800 the territory of Indiana was established and Illinois became part of it. In 1809 Illinois and the present state of Wisconsin was made a territory. Kaskaskia was its capital and Ninian Edwards of Kentucky was the first territorial governor.

On December 3, 1818, Illinois was admitted as the 21st state. Kaskaskia was our first capital city and Shadrach Bond became the first governor.

The last great Indian uprising in Illinois was the Black Hawk War in 1832. Chief Black Hawk and his Sauk and Fox warriors defeated the white militia at Stillman's Run, but retreated into Wisconsin where the band was defeated.

The capital was moved from Kaskaskia to Vandalia and in 1839 the capital was moved to Springfield. Abraham Lincoln urged the selection of Springfield while he was a member of the state legislature.



Soon after Springfield was selected as the new capital, the state became divided on the question of slavery. Lincoln emerged from political retirement in 1858 to challenge Stephen A. Douglas, U.S. Senator, and the national policy on slavery, which he advocated. They eyes of the nation focused on the state as the two men engaged in their 7 historic debates. Although Lincoln lost the election in 1858 to Douglas, the campaign gave him national recognition. Two years later he won the Republican nomination for the Presidency and was elected the 16th President. Here are a couple of links to visit and gain more information on the history of Illinois.

Constitution

The first Constitution of Illinois was adopted in 1818 by a convention, which met in Kaskaskia. In 1848 a new constitution was adopted. This constitution was noted for the increase of power to the people since they could now elect many government officials. In 1862 a new constitution was discussed, but not adopted. In 1869 another new proposal met with success and became the new constitution in 1870. In 1969, Illinois voters elected delegates to a new constitutional convention.

The Constitution of 1870 had proven to be outdated and it had been almost impossible to govern Illinois under such a document. The new convention met for the first time in 1970 under the leadership of Samuel Witwer who had fought for 23 years for a new constitution. A new constitution was written, adopted in convention on September 3, 1970, and approved by the voters on December 15, 1970. The Constitution of 1970 went into force on July 1, 1971.

Changing the State Constitution

The two ways of amending the Constitution are:

1. Constitutional Convention: If 3/5 of the members in each House of the General Assembly (state legislature) approve, there can be a call for a constitutional convention, which voters can approve or disapprove.
2. By the General Assembly: If 3/5 of each house of the General Assembly approve, amendments can be proposed by the General Assembly. These must be submitted to the voters at the next General Election.

Links:

[Illinois History](#)

[IL facts](#)

[IL facts for kids](#)

[Learn IL for kids](#)

[IL Indians](#)

[IL Guide for kids](#)

Lesson 2: Illinois Rivers



Our state is located at the heart of the great interior river system of the continent. Rivers help to form some of the boundaries of our state. The Mississippi River forms our state's western boundary. The Wabash and Ohio Rivers form part of the eastern boundary. The Ohio River forms Illinois' southern boundary. Across the state flows the Illinois, Kaskaskia, Sangamon, Spoon, Rock, Embarrass, Kankakee and Des Plaines Rivers - each in its day a highway of trade. Our nation's number one waterway of trade throughout history has been the Mississippi River. The Indians called it "the Father of all the Rivers."

Besides trade, Illinois has used its rivers as a source of transportation, recreation, hydroelectric power, and natural beauty.

Illinois rivers have also been a source of problems. In earlier days Malaria was a problem facing the settlers of Illinois. Today flooding is a concern for thousands of people who live along rivers. Although improving, pollution of Illinois waterways is an area of concern.

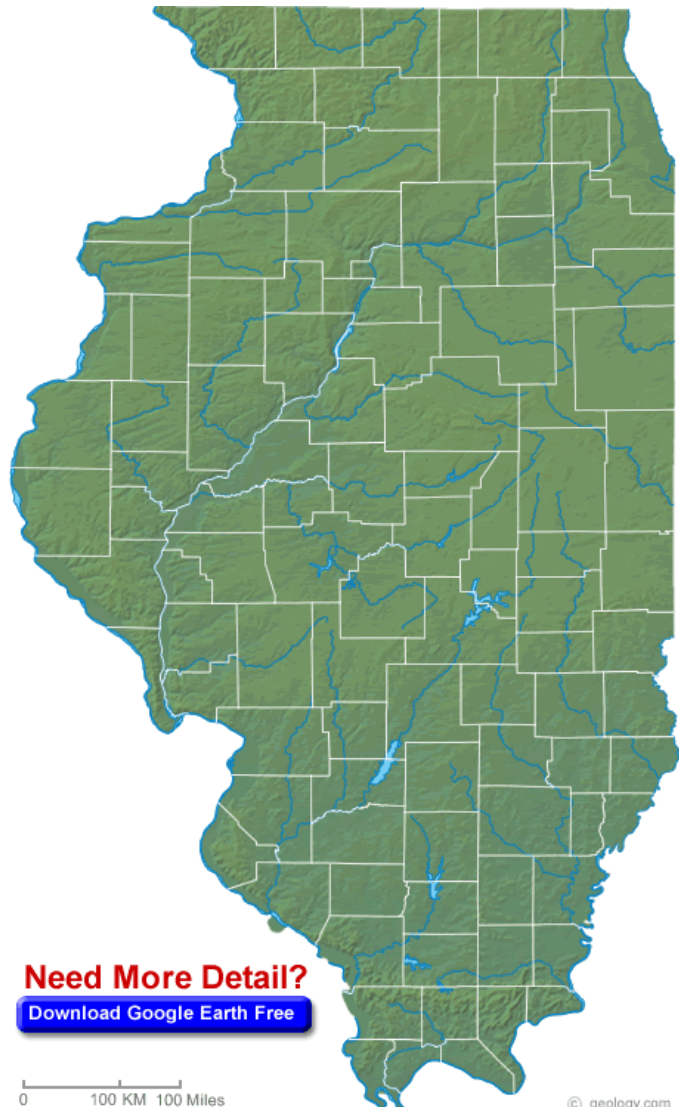
Links:

[Illinois Rivers](#)

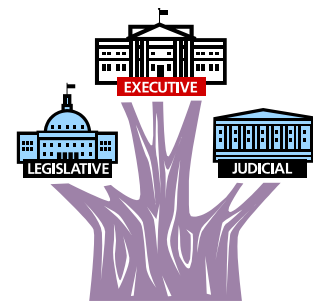
[More IL river maps](#)

[Illinois Maps](#)

[IL Geography](#)



Lesson 3: The Legislative Branch



The Legislative Branch is the law-making branch of Illinois government. The legislature (law-making body) of Illinois meets each year beginning on the second Wednesday of January and concluding when the legislative work of the state has been finished. The governor, after the legislature has adjourned, may call extra sessions.

The General Assembly

The General Assembly meets each year in Springfield starting on the second Wednesday of January. The main body of the Legislative Branch is the General Assembly. It consists of the Senate and House of Representatives. (In other words, the Senate and the House of Representatives together are known as the General Assembly). There are 177 members in the General Assembly. The Senate has 59 members and the House of Representatives has 118 members. All members of the General Assembly are elected by the people. All members of the General Assembly must be 21 years old or older, be a resident of the district for at least 2 years, and be a citizen.

In order to do work, a quorum of its members must be present. A quorum is a majority of the members. Each house determines its own rules and procedures. No member can be expelled, except by a 2/3 vote. Either house can imprison any people who show disrespect to the house, but only for 24 hours. Both houses are organized into committees to help conduct business efficiently.

Districts

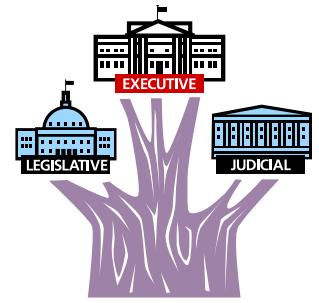
There are 59 legislative districts in the state. Each district elects one state senator and 2 state representatives. Our State Legislative District is the 44th and our State Senator is Bill Brady.

Special Duties

Besides making the laws, the General Assembly conducts investigations, submits constitutional amendments to the people, acts on amendments to the federal constitution, and confirms appointments made by the governor.

The State Senate

There are 59 state senators, one from each of the legislative districts. A senator's term is for four years and he/she may be re-elected without limit. Elections are held in even-numbered years, with about half the Senate elected every two years. The presiding officer of the Senate is the President of the Senate, who is elected by all the state senators.



Special Duties of the State Senate

In addition to its regular law-making powers, the senate has the following special powers: The Senate tries impeachment cases and the Senate must approve many of the appointments made by the governor.

The State House of Representatives

There are 118 state representatives, 2 from each of the 59 legislative districts. A representative's term is for two years. Elections are held in even-numbered years and representatives may be re-elected without limit. The presiding officer of the House is the Speaker of the House, elected by the representatives themselves. We live in the State Representative District 88 and our state representative is Mr. Dan Brady.

Special Duties of the House

Besides its regular law-making duties, the House of Representatives has the sole power of impeachment. As you may recall, impeachment means to charge an official with wrongdoing.

Federal Officials Who Represent Us

Illinois has 20 U.S. Representatives and 2 U.S. Senators that represent Illinois in the U.S. Congress in Washington, D.C. Our U.S. Senators are Mr. Richard Durbin and _____. Our second representative used to be Mr. Barack Obama, but since he has been elected President of the United States, he will no longer fill his Senate seat. We live in the 15th Congressional District and our U.S. Representative is Mr. Tim Johnson.

Links:

[Illinois government](#)

[More IL government](#)

[Legislative Branch](#)

[Legislative Branch for kids](#)

Lesson 4: The Process of Making Laws



According to Article IV of the Constitution, "the General Assembly shall enact laws only by bills. Bills may originate in either house, but may be amended or rejected by the other."

In general, a bill becomes a law after passing both houses of the General Assembly and receives the Governor's approval. In case of a veto from the Governor, the bill can still become a law by passing both houses by a 3/5 vote.

A bill may start in either house. Committees are used in the state law-making process much like in the federal government. Bills only need a majority vote for passage. However, if the Governor vetoes a bill that has been sent to him, the General Assembly must then pass the bill by a 3/5 vote in both houses to override his veto.

The constitution's rules about passing bills include:

1. Bills are to be read on 3 different days (by title) before final vote on passage.
2. Most bills are confined to one subject.
3. A bill passed by both houses must be sent to the Governor within 30 days. The Governor has 60 calendar days to sign it, or to return it with his veto. If he does nothing, the bill will automatically become a law after the 60-day period.

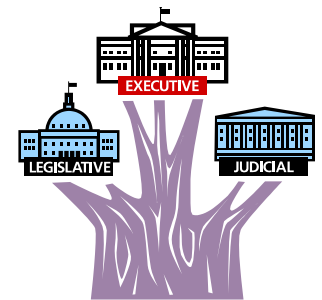
Lobbies are important in the law-making process. Lobbies are organized groups who seek to influence lawmakers. Most of these lobbies operate legally under the laws controlling them, and some of them do a service of informing our lawmakers. However, there are some instances where these lobbies exert too much influence and the views of other citizens are overlooked.

While our legislators are making laws they are free from arrest except from major crimes such as felonies. Restrictions on the State Senators and Representatives include:

1. They cannot receive an appointment by the Governor to another public office.
2. They cannot hold any other public office in the state.
3. They must file a statement of economic interests.
4. They cannot receive a salary increase during their term of office.
5. Neither house can adjourn without the consent (approval) of the other house.

Links: [Legislative Branch](#)

Lesson 5: The Executive Branch



The Governor

The Executive Branch enforces and administers the laws. The Governor is the Chief Executive of state government. In other words, he/she is the head of the Executive Branch.

The Governor must be at least 25 years old and a resident of the state for the three years preceding his election, and a citizen. The Governor's term of office is 4 years and may be re-elected an unlimited number of times. The order of succession to the Governor's office is:

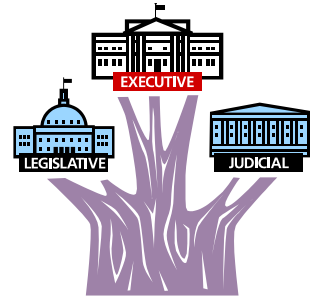
Lieutenant Governor, Attorney General, Secretary of State, Comptroller, and Treasurer

The Governor, besides enforcing and administering the law, also has the important duty of vetoing or approving bills passed by the General Assembly. Other duties of the Governor are:

1. The Governor appoints many members of the state government. Many of these appointments require the approval of the State Senate. The Governor may also remove any of these officials he feels are incompetent. (The Governor cannot remove the other executive officers such as the Secretary of State since they are elected).
2. The Governor may grant pardons, reprieves, and commutations. Pardon means to forgive a person of a crime. Reprieve means to delay the carrying out of a criminal sentence. To commute a sentence is to shorten a criminal sentence.
3. The Governor shall deliver to the General Assembly an address about the condition of the state.
4. The Governor is the commander-in-chief of the state militia, except in cases of national emergency when they are called into federal service. The Governor may call out the militia to carry out the laws of the state.
5. The Governor may call special sessions of the General Assembly.

Veto

The Governor has three types of vetoes. The regular veto is like the President's veto in which the whole bill is rejected. The bill is returned to the house of the General Assembly where it began with a list of reasons why the Governor vetoed it.



The item veto means to veto only a part of a bill. This type of veto is for appropriations (spending) bills where the Governor simply changes the appropriation. The houses can pass over this veto by simply accepting the appropriation change.

The third type of veto is the amendatory veto. If the Governor notes specific recommendations the house can pass the bill by simply accepting the recommendation.

The Governor's office is similar in some ways to the office of the President except Governors do not deal with the making of foreign policy or national defense issues to any great degree.

Links:

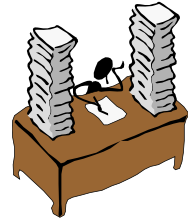
[Executive Branch](#)

[More Executive Branch](#)

[Executive Branch for kids](#)

[Executive Branch information](#)

Lesson 6: Other Executive Officers



Officers

Besides the Governor, other executive officers include the Attorney General, Secretary of State, Treasurer, Comptroller, and the Lieutenant Governor. The Illinois Constitution provides that all executive officers have the same qualifications and term as the Governor.

Lieutenant Governor

The Lt. Governor shall perform the duties and exercise the powers in the executive branch that may be delegated to him by the Governor and that may be prescribed by law. The Lt. Governor may become the Governor if for some reason the present Governor can no longer fulfill his duties.

Attorney General

The Attorney General is the chief legal officer of the state. This office gives legal advice to the Governor and executive branch. The Attorney General's office has been given a new task with the 1970 Constitution. This office protects consumers from fraud and rip-offs.

Secretary of State

The Secretary of State's office deals more directly with the people of Illinois than any other executive office. This office maintains drivers' records, issues driver licenses and plates, and maintains vehicle records. This office is also the keeper of the Great Seal of Illinois. It is in charge of the maintenance of the Capitol building. The Secretary of State's office is in charge of the state library system and is the State Archivist.

Comptroller

The Comptroller is the state's chief fiscal (money) control officer. The Comptroller checks to make sure all bills submitted to the state are valid and should be paid. Sometimes the Comptroller's office is called the "Watchdog of the State's Money".

Treasurer

The Treasurer shall be responsible for the safekeeping and investment of the monies and securities deposited for the state.

Terms of Office

All officers in the executive branch are elected and serve 4-year terms.

Executive Department Organizations

Various departments of the Executive Branch are organized to carry out specific tasks. These are called Civil Administrative Code Departments. The most

important of these are: Aeronautics, Agriculture, Conservation, Finance, Labor, Mines Safety, Public Aid, Public Works and Buildings, Registration and Education, Revenue, Personnel, Children and Family Services, Insurance, Mental Health, and Financial Institutions. The Governor selects and appoints the heads of these departments.



Besides the Code Departments, there are also a great number of independent boards and commissions under authority of the Governor. Some of these boards and commissions are permanent while others exist only for a short time. Examples include: Racing Board, Fair Employment Practices Commission, Human Relations Commission, and the Toll Highway Commission. The Governor also appoints these commissions.

The Governor and Executive Officers

Governor, Rod R. Blagojevich

Lieutenant Governor, Pat Quinn

Attorney General, Lisa Madigan

Secretary of State, Jesse White

Comptroller, Daniel W. Hynes

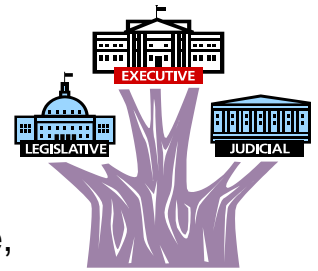
Treasurer, Alexi Giannoulis

Links:

[Leaders](#)

[More leaders](#)

Lesson 7: The Judicial Branch



The main functions of the Judicial Branch are they administer justice, interprets the meaning of law and the Constitution of Illinois, and settles disputes. It is composed of a system of state courts. The state courts are the Illinois Supreme Court, Illinois Appellate Courts, and the Illinois Circuit Courts.

Circuit Courts

Circuit courts are the general trial courts. In these courts cases are heard and judgments are made. They have original jurisdiction. The voters elect circuit court judges to 6-year terms.

Appellate Court

This court hears appeals from the Circuit courts and therefore has appellate jurisdiction. Its judges are elected and serve for 10-year terms.

Supreme Court

The Supreme Court of Illinois has original jurisdiction in the following cases: Revenue, mandamus, and habeas corpus. Otherwise it is simply the final court of appeal on all other state matters that have come up from the lower courts. Its judges serve for 10-year terms. There are seven Supreme Court judges. These are elected also.

Re-election

Once judges have been elected, they may run for re-election on their records, without opposition. In these cases voters simply vote yes or no on their retention. If 3/5 approval is not obtained, the judge must be replaced.

Qualifications

All judges must be citizens, licensed attorneys of the state, and residents of the districts from which they are elected. Judges must devote full time to their judicial duties and may not engage in law practice or hold other office, including officers in political parties.

Links:

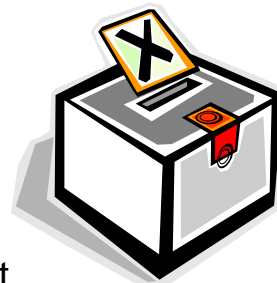
[Judicial Branch](#)

[More](#)

[Courts](#)

[Judicial Branch for kids](#)

Lesson 8: Voting



Qualifications

To vote in Illinois, a person must be at least 18 years old, a resident of their district for 30 days and a citizen. Voters must register with the local election district at least 28 days before the election.

General Election

General elections are always held on the first Tuesday following the first Monday in November in even-numbered years.

Primaries

Primaries are elections in which party members elect the candidates of their party. Three ways of nominating candidates used are convention, caucus, and primaries. The primary is the most widely used method. In a closed primary, voters on Election Day must choose one political party's ballot. Only Democratic candidates are found on the Democratic ballot. Republican candidates are found on the Republican ballot. Voters must choose only one ballot. Therefore in closed primaries, voters receive the same ballot, which contain the candidates' names from all political parties. The voters do not have to declare their party affiliation in open primaries. Illinois uses the closed primary system. In the convention method, counties choose delegates to meet in a convention to decide party's candidates. In the caucus methods, party leaders select political party candidates for the ballot.

Voting Disqualification

A person convicted of a felony or who is otherwise under sentence in jail loses the right to vote. This right is restored after the sentence is served.

Referendums

Voters are sometimes asked not only to vote for candidates, but also to vote on public issues such as bond issues of some governmental body or change in the state constitution. A tax increase for a school is settled by referendum or a state wide no smoking ban are just a few examples.

Links:

[Voting](#)

http://www.cyberdriveillinois.com/publications/handbook/executive_branch/election_process.pdf



Lesson 9: Counties



Illinois has 102 counties. The county is the largest unit of local government. Remember, Illinois has to share the power of government between the federal, state, and local levels. This sharing of power is referred to as Federalism. Each county has a county seat where its governing body is located. Our county seat is McLean. All counties carry out state policy in a general nature; they enforce laws, prosecute offenders, build and maintain roads, keep records, conduct elections, assess property, and collect taxes. Each county has a governing body known as the county board.

Throughout the United States, many different forms of local government are implemented. Though all forms of municipal government may exercise the same basic power structure, there are a variety of different relationships between the legislative (alderman/trustee/councilman) and executive (mayor/president) branches, within these different forms of government. Some of the services a municipality provides are: fire services, police protection, street construction, water services, sewer services, cultural and recreational services and activities.

Individual state constitutions allow for City charters to adopt a constitutional "home-rule" whereby, the citizens of a City may decide which form of municipal government they wish to implement. Some states, may however, impose certain restrictions. For example, a state may not allow a city with a population below 5,000 to perform any actor organize themselves in any fashion not expressly allowed by the state.

The three of the five forms of Municipal Government that Illinois recognizes are: The Council-Manager Form, Mayor-Council, and Commission.

A **mayor-council city government** consists of a mayor and a number of council members or aldermen. The mayor is elected at large, and the aldermen may be elected at large but generally are chosen from wards or aldermanic districts. The mayor presides at council meetings and is the chief executive officer of the city. He is properly the head of the police force and the budgetary officer of the city. The council is the legislative agent; the proposals and appointments of the mayor are or may be subject to its approval.

In the **council-manager form of government**, the council is the governing body of the city elected by the public, and the professionally trained manager is hired by council to carry out the policies it establishes. The council usually consists of five to nine members including a mayor (or council president) who is either selected by the council or elected by the people as defined in the city charter. The size of the

council is generally smaller than that of a mayor-council municipality, and council elections are usually nonpartisan. This is the form of government Normal uses.



Under the **commission form of government** voters elect a small governing commission, typically five or seven members, on an at-large basis. As a group the commissioners constitute the legislative body of the city responsible for taxation, appropriations, ordinances, and other general functions. Individually, each commissioner is in charge of a specific aspect of municipal affairs, e.g., public works, finance, or public safety. One of the commissioners is designated chairman or mayor, but his function is principally one of presiding at meetings and serving in ceremonial capacities. Thus the commission plan blends legislative and executive functions in the same body.

Special Purpose Districts

Special-purpose districts provide specialized services only to those persons who live within them. Special districts possess fiscal and administrative autonomy. They often are empowered to tax residents of the district, usually by a property tax but sometimes an excise or sales tax, for the services that they provide. They often cross the lines of towns, villages, and hamlets but less frequently cross city or county lines. Increasingly, however, regional special districts are being created that may serve a large portion of a state or portions of more than one state.

Special districts are sometimes created to provide fire protection, sewer service, transit service or to manage water resources, among many other possible functions. In many states in the USA, school districts operate the public schools (as opposed to dependent school systems, which are dependent on the state or a local government for administrative and/or fiscal direction). All special-purpose districts are founded by some level of government in accordance with state law and exist in all states.

Links:

[Living in IL](#)

[Map of counties](#)

[History of IL counties](#)

Lesson 10: Illinois Constitution **and State Symbols**



John Deere's invention of the prairie plow in 1837 gave encouragement to Illinois agriculture and it became a leading agricultural state. After the Civil War, Illinois turned to the development of its natural resources and to its transportation. By 1870 coal mining had become one of Illinois' largest industries. Improved transportation, an abundance of coal, and westward movement of industry combined to make Illinois a great industrial region. Sprawling, vigorous Chicago was destined to become the manufacturing center, not only of Illinois, but the entire Midwest.

Constitution

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In 1848 a new constitution was adopted. This constitution was noted for the increase of power to the people since they could now elect many government officials.

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Illinois Flag

The flag of the state of Illinois was designed in 1912 by Lucy Derwent and chosen by the Rockford Chapter of the Daughters of the American Revolution in response to a contest held by that organization. The contest was led by Mrs. Ella Park Lawrence, state regent of the Daughters of the American Revolution. The flag became the official state banner on July 6, 1915 following its passage in the Illinois State House and Senate. Governor Edward F. Dunne did not sign the bill, but he did not veto it.

In the 1960s, Chief Petty Officer Bruce McDaniel petitioned to have the name of the state added to the flag. He noted that many of the people he served with during the Vietnam War did not recognize the banner. Governor Richard B. Ogilvie signed the addition to the flag into law on September 17, 1969 and the new flag was designed by Mrs. Sanford Hutchinson and became the official flag on July 1, 1970.



Flag Design

The current flag depicts the Great Seal of Illinois, which was originally designed in 1819 and emulated the Great Seal of the United States. In the eagle's beak there is a banner with the state motto, "State Sovereignty, National Union." The dates on the seal, 1818 and 1868 represent the year Illinois became a state and the year in which the Great Seal was redesigned by Sharon Tyndale. Although "State Sovereignty" comes first in the motto, Illinois was victorious in the American Civil War on the Union side, fighting against state sovereignty, so Tyndale placed "State" at the bottom and "Sovereignty" upside-down.

Links:

[IL Symbols for kids](#)

[IL State Symbols](#)

[IL State Symbol game](#)

[IL facts](#)

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Flag_of_Illinois

Lesson 11: Articles of Illinois Comparing Illinois & Federal Constitution



For this section you are to look at the 14 Articles in the IL Constitution and give a 1-2 sentence summary of what this article is about. You can read each article in detail, or you can skim and scan the articles. Remember to complete the venn diagram on the back of your packet comparing the U.S. and IL Constitutions. How are they the same? How are they different?

<http://www.ilga.gov/commission/lrb/conmain.htm>