



NAME: _____

CLASSROOM LAW PROJECT

THE DEBT CEILING

VOCABULARY

Directions: Frontload (introduce and review) these vocabulary words with your students to facilitate their understanding of the topic and coinciding resources:

1. **Debt Ceiling** (n.) - A legislative limit on the amount of national debt that can be incurred by the U.S. Treasury, thus limiting how much money the federal government may pay on the debt they already borrowed.
2. **Fiscal Year** (n.) - A year as reckoned for taxing or accounting purposes.
3. **Default** (n.) - Failure to fulfill an obligation, especially to repay a loan or appear in a court of law.
4. **United States Department of the Treasury** (n.) - A federal executive agency responsible for promoting economic prosperity and ensuring the financial security of the United States. The Department is responsible for a wide range of activities such as advising the President on economic and financial issues, encouraging sustainable economic growth, and fostering improved governance in financial institutions.
5. **Separation of Powers** (n.) - An act of vesting the legislative, executive, and judicial powers of government in separate bodies.

CURRENT EVENT ESSENTIAL QUESTIONS

Directions: As you read through news and other resources about TOPIC, consider the following questions:

- What is the debt ceiling?
- How does the debt ceiling affect the U.S. federal government? How does the debt ceiling affect the average U.S. person?
- Where does the U.S. Treasury Department receive its legal authority to issue debt for the U.S. government? How did that authorization come to be?
- What roles does the Fourteenth Amendment to the U.S. Constitution play in the conversation and controversies surrounding the debt ceiling?
- What are possible consequences if the U.S. defaults on its fiscal obligations?
- In your opinion, should the executive branch of the U.S. government continue to borrow money in excess of the debt ceiling to avoid default?
- In your opinion, is the debt ceiling a useful legislative check on executive power or should other mechanisms be instituted in order for the federal government to maintain its fiscal responsibilities?