

Only 1 in 4 Can Name All Three Branches of U.S. Government

September 17th marks the 229th birthday of the U.S. Constitution. In honor of the day, [The Annenberg Public Policy Center](#) conducted a survey to test the public's knowledge of basic civics.

One of the questions asked respondents to name the three branches of government. The number of Americans able to do so has dropped dramatically in only three years. Today, only 26 percent are able to identify the executive, the legislative, and the judicial as the three branches.

✘ That number, however, is quite interesting, as it almost perfectly matches the number of American high school seniors who are [proficient in civics](#).

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James Madison, long considered the “father” of the very Constitution that laid out those three branches of government [once said](#):

“A popular Government, without popular information, or the means of acquiring it, is but a Prologue to a Farce or a Tragedy; or, perhaps both. Knowledge will forever govern ignorance: And a people who mean to be their own Governors, must arm themselves with the power which knowledge gives.”

As we mark the birth of the law of our land, perhaps it's time to seriously consider whether or not we are equipping the next generation of leaders with the knowledge they need to thwart our government from becoming the “farce” or “tragedy” which

Madison warned against.

Image Credit: Know Your Meme