

Chapter 15: Government at Work: The Bureaucracy
Section 3
Lecture Notes

AMERICAN GOVERNMENT

PEARSON

► Objectives

1. Describe the origin and work of the executive departments.
2. Explain how the members of the Cabinet are chosen.
3. Identify the role of the Cabinet in the President's decisions.

▶ Key Terms

- **executive department:** one of 15 major departments in the executive branch, each of which specializes in a specific area of public policy; together they make up the Cabinet
- **civilian:** nonmilitary
- **secretary:** the title given to the heads of the executive departments
- **attorney general:** the title of the head of the Department of Justice

▶ Introduction

- What is the Cabinet and what does it do?
 - The Cabinet is an informal advisory body made up of the heads of the 15 executive departments.
 - It also includes other key advisors to the President.
 - Individually, Cabinet members run their departments and carry out presidential policies.
 - As a group, they advise the President.

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▶ Executive Departments

- The 15 executive departments are also called the Cabinet departments.
 - The First Congress created the Departments of State, Treasury, and War in 1789.
 - Over time, departments have been added, abolished, divided and combined to meet the changing needs of the country.

▶ Department Secretaries

- Each department is headed by a secretary appointed by the President.
 - The Department of Justice (DoJ) is headed by the attorney general.
 - The department heads ensure that their departments carry out presidential policy.
 - They also represent the interests of their departments when dealing with the White House, Congress, other departments, and the public.
 - Each department head has many assistants and aides to help with issues such as public relations, planning, and budgeting.

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▶ Executive Departments

- The executive departments employ nearly two-thirds of the civilian federal workforce.
 - Roughly 80 percent of these employees are career civil servants, not appointees.
 - Nearly 90 percent of federal civilian employees work outside Washington, D.C.
- Each department is divided into smaller subunits with specific line or staff duties.
 - For example, the Criminal Division of the DoJ is further divided into sections dealing with counterterrorism and narcotics.

▶ Executive Departments, cont.

- The executive departments vary widely in visibility, size, and importance.
 - The Department of State is the oldest and most prestigious, but among the smallest.
 - The Department of Defense is the largest, with more than 2 million civilian and military employees.
 - The Department of Health and Human Services has the largest budget, accounting for about a fourth of all federal spending.

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How Government Works

The Executive Departments

Each of the now 15 executive departments was created by Congress. Their respective areas of responsibility generally reflect the conditions of the period and the major issues facing the nation when each of them was established. *What new department(s) do you think might be created in the 21st century?*

Federalist Era

At its first session following the adoption of the Constitution, Congress established four key departments in the executive branch.

State 1789

- Advises the President on foreign policy
- Negotiates agreements with foreign countries
- Represents the United States abroad and in international organizations

Defense 1789

- Founded as the National Military Establishment; renamed in 1949
- Provides military forces to deter war and protect the nation's security

Treasury 1789

- Produces coins and bills
- Borrows money and manages public debt
- Collects taxes

Justice 1789

- Founded as the Office of the Attorney General; renamed in 1870
- Prosecutes those accused of violating federal law
- Provides legal advice to the President
- Represents the United States in court
- Operates federal prisons

Expansion Era

As the United States expands to the west, two new departments are established to manage those lands and their use.

Interior 1849

- Manages public lands, wildlife refuges, and national parks
- Operates hydroelectric power plants
- Helps Native Americans manage their affairs

Agriculture 1889

- Assists farmers and ranchers
- Administers food stamp and school lunch programs
- Inspects food and ensures quality standards
- Manages national forests

Industrial Era

Congress creates two new departments to address issues arising from industrialization and a growing economy.

Commerce 1903

- Founded as the Department of Commerce and Labor; separated in 1913
- Promotes international trade, economic growth, and technological development
- Grants patents and registers trademarks
- Conducts census

Labor 1913

- Enforces federal laws on minimum wages, maximum hours, and safe working conditions
- Administers unemployment insurance and workers' compensation programs

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Feature Question Answer: *Student answers will vary depending upon how they view the challenges facing the United States in future decades. Two possibilities might be a department dealing specifically with senior issues or science and technology.*

Can the question and caption be rewritten so that it is more readable? I know the image will be enlargeable, but I think some of the text should always show up. It can be summarized, cut down for space if needed. -KVE

KRISTEN: We will need access to the original images in order to do any image manipulation.--AR

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Postwar Era

Following World War II, the Cabinet expands to match the Federal Government's larger role in the nation's economy, social services, and education.

Health and Human Services 1953

- Founded as the Department of Health, Education, and Welfare; separated and renamed in 1979
- Funds healthcare research programs
- Conducts programs to prevent and control disease
- Enforces pure foods and drug laws
- Administers Medicare and Medicaid

Housing and Urban Development 1965

- Operates home-financing and public housing programs
- Enforces fair housing laws

Transportation 1967

- Administers programs to promote and regulate highways, mass transit, railroads, waterways, air travel, and oil and gas pipelines
- Works with State and local levels on land, energy, resource, and technology programs

Energy 1977

- Promotes production of renewable energy, fossil fuels, and nuclear energy
- Transmits and sells hydroelectric power
- Conducts nuclear weapons research and production

Education 1979

- Administers federal aid to schools
- Ensures equal access to education
- Conducts educational research

Veterans Affairs 1989

- Administers benefits, pensions, and medical programs for veterans of the armed forces
- Oversees military cemeteries

21st Century

The 9/11 attacks bring a new focus on national security and the newest executive department is established.

Homeland Security 2002

- Ensures border and transportation security
- Develops emergency preparedness and response programs
- Safeguards national infrastructure and information systems



▶ The Cabinet

- The Cabinet is a vital but informal group that advises the President.
- Neither Congress nor the Constitution created the Cabinet.
- George Washington began the custom of meeting regularly with the heads of the executive departments.



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▶ Cabinet Members

- Checkpoint: What officials are members of the Cabinet?
 - The Cabinet includes the heads of the 15 executive departments.
 - Today, it also includes:
 - The Vice President
 - The President's chief domestic policy adviser
 - The White House Chief of Staff
 - The director of the OMB
 - Other officials as chosen by the President, often from within the ranks of the Executive Office of the President

Checkpoint Answer: *The heads of the 15 current executive departments, plus the Vice President, the counselor to the President, the White House Chief of Staff, and the heads of other officials from the Executive Office of the President as chosen by the President.*

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▶ Cabinet Members, cont.

- The President appoints the head of each of the 15 executive departments, who are then confirmed by the Senate. The Senate rarely rejects an appointee.
 - In this photo, the Secretary of Agriculture meets with a New Jersey farmer.



Insert image from p. 435.

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▶ Cabinet Members, cont.

- Checkpoint: What factors are considered when appointing executive department heads?
 - Party affiliation and influence
 - Professional qualifications and experience
 - Regional background and ties to key issues handled by a given department
 - A desire for gender, racial, and ethnic balance

Checkpoint Answer: *Party affiliation and importance within the President's party, professional qualifications and experience, regional background and ties to regional interests, and the gender, race, and ethnicity of the candidates.*

NOTE FOR TEACHER: The following are examples of the first members of different groups to be appointed to Cabinet-level positions. Frances Perkins was the first woman appointed to a Cabinet position, serving as Secretary of Labor in FDR's administration starting in 1933. Robert C. Weaver was the first African American cabinet member, appointed by Lyndon Johnson in 1966 to head the Department of Housing and Urban Development. Ronald Reagan appointed the first Hispanic cabinet official, Lauro F. Cavazos, as Secretary of Education in 1988. And Secretary of Transportation Norman Mineta became the first Asian-American Cabinet member in the Clinton administration.

▶ Role of the Cabinet

- Cabinet members have two key roles:
 - To run their respective executive departments
 - To advise the President as a group



President George W. Bush's first Cabinet (above) was very different from that of President George Washington in 1790 (inset). *Why has the structure of the Cabinet changed over time?*

Insert image of Bush's Cabinet from p. 439. Add Click to Enlarge feature.
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▶ Decreasing Importance

- The importance of the Cabinet has declined in recent years.
 - This is due largely to the growth of the Executive Office of the President.
 - No President has suggested getting rid of the Cabinet, though they may rely more on other unofficial advisers.



▲ President Franklin Roosevelt meets with Raymond Moley, a member of his "Brain Trust." *Why might a President rely on the advice of people outside of the Cabinet?*

Insert image and caption from p. 440.

▶ Review

- Now that you have learned about the Cabinet and what it does, go back and answer the Chapter Essential Question.
 - Is the bureaucracy essential to good government?