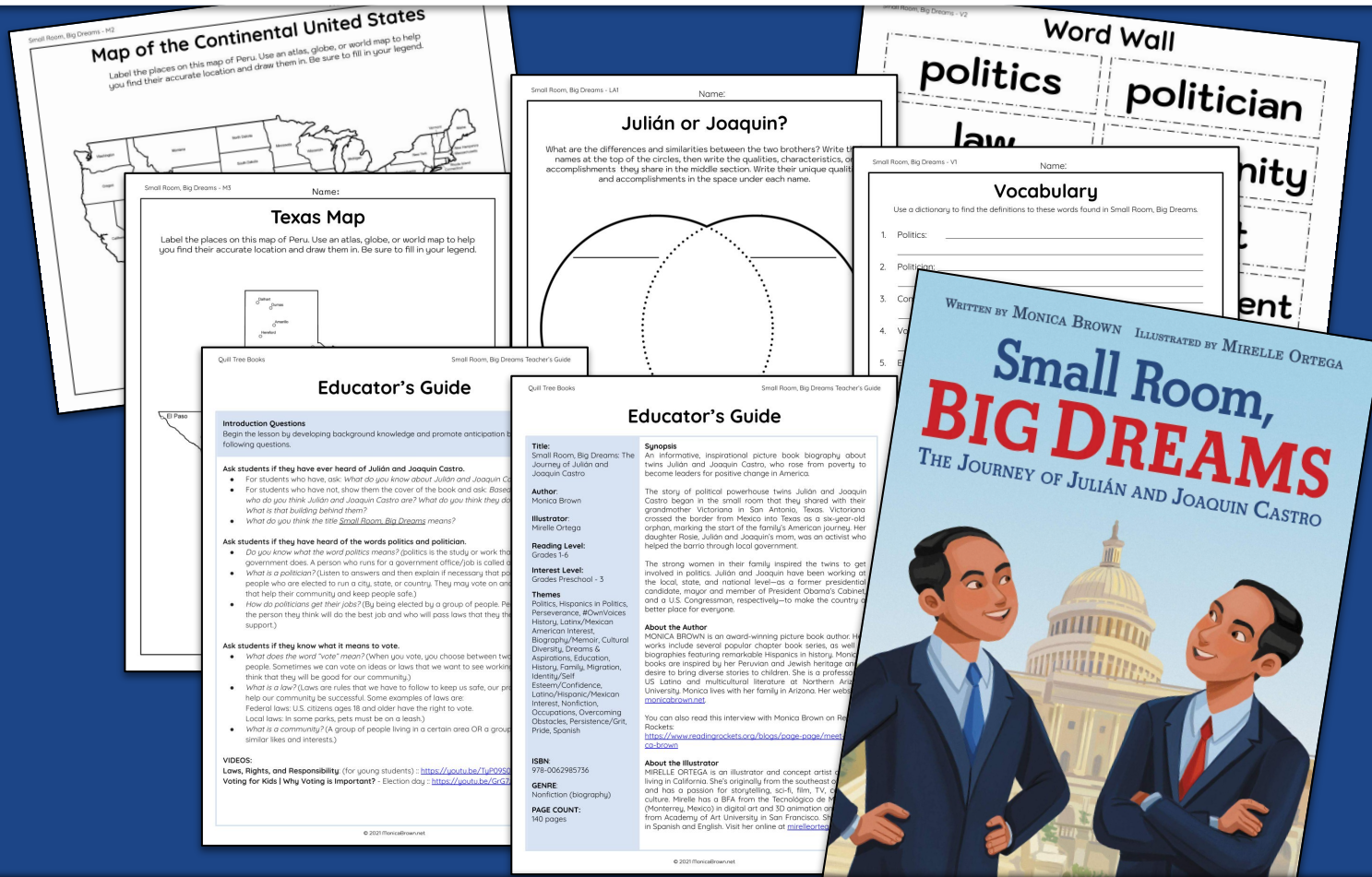


Small Room, Big Dreams

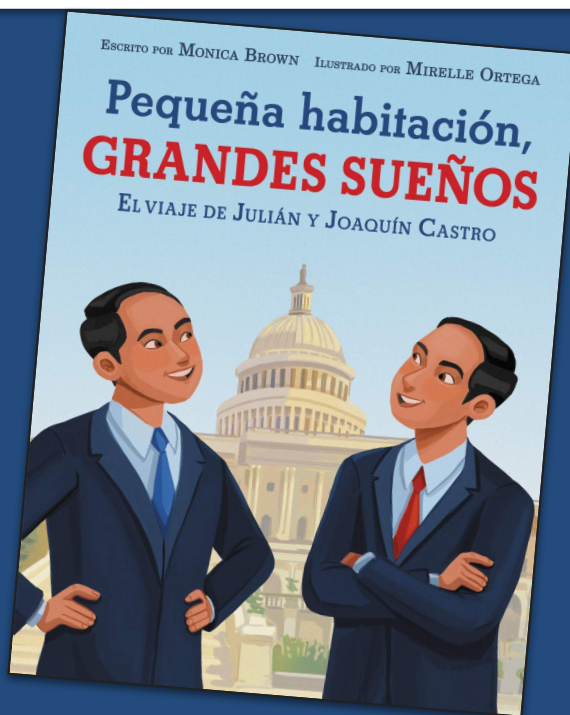
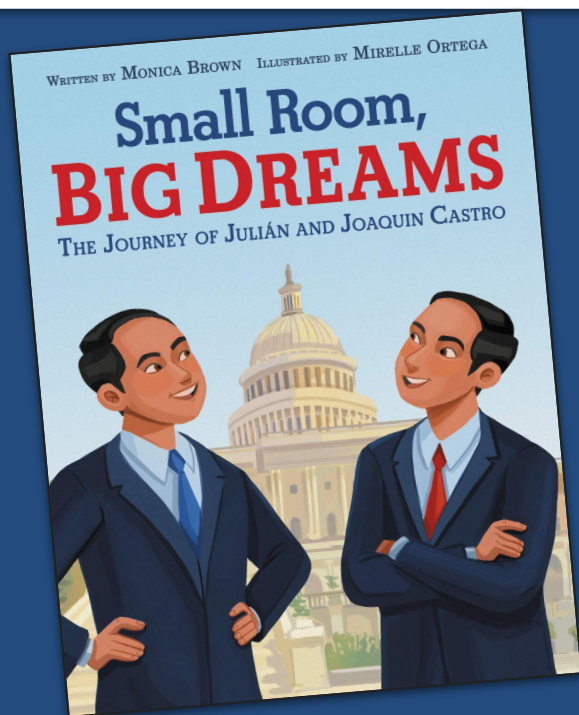
Educator's Guide & Printables



www.monicabrown.net

Small Room, Big Dreams

Educator's Guide & Printables



Also in
Spanish!

Thank you for reading my book about Julián and Joaquin Castro! I hope you enjoy this educator's guide to use in the classroom with your students or at home with your children. Efforts have been made to offer activities for children at different literacy levels.

This lesson plan is free to share and is for personal and educational use.
It MAY NOT be sold commercially.

This packet was created for Monica Brown by Monica Olivera, publisher of MommyMaestra.com, an education site for Hispanic families and bilingual educators.

Thanks to Educlips, Teacher's Resource Force, Candy Class, Dovie Funk, Whimsy Clips, and Dancing Crayon Designs for the great graphics used in this packet.

Educator's Guide

Title:

Small Room, Big Dreams: The Journey of Julián and Joaquin Castro

Author:

Monica Brown

Illustrator:

Mirelle Ortega

Reading Level:

Grades 1-6

Interest Level:

Grades Preschool - 3

Themes

Politics, Hispanics in Politics, Perseverance, #OwnVoices History, Latinx/Mexican American Interest, Biography/Memoir, Cultural Diversity, Dreams & Aspirations, Education, History, Family, Migration, Identity/Self Esteem/Confidence, Latino/Hispanic/Mexican Interest, Nonfiction, Occupations, Overcoming Obstacles, Persistence/Grit, Pride, Spanish, Latino/a/x Studies

ISBN:

978-0062985736

GENRE:

Nonfiction (biography)

PAGE COUNT:

140 pages

Synopsis

An informative, inspirational picture book biography about twins Julián and Joaquin Castro, who rose from poverty to become leaders for positive change in America.

The story of political powerhouse twins Julián and Joaquin Castro began in the small room that they shared with their grandmother Victoriana in San Antonio, Texas. Victoriana crossed the border from Mexico into Texas as a six-year-old orphan, marking the start of the family's American journey. Her daughter Rosie, Julián and Joaquin's mom, was an activist who helped the barrio through local government and community service.

The strong women in their family inspired the twins to get involved in politics. Julián and Joaquin have been working at the local, state, and national level—as a former presidential candidate, mayor and member of President Obama's Cabinet, and a U.S. Congressman, respectively—to make the country a better place for everyone.

About the Author

MONICA BROWN is an award-winning picture book author. Her works include several popular chapter book series, as well as other biographies featuring remarkable Hispanics in history, such as *Sharuko: El Arqueólogo Peruano Julio C. Tello / Peruvian Archaeologist Julio C. Tello*, *Pele, King of Soccer/Pele, El Rey del Futbol*, and *Frida Kahlo and Her Animalitos*. Monica's books are inspired by her Peruvian and Jewish heritage and a desire to bring diverse stories to children. She is a professor of US Latino/a/x and multicultural literature at Northern Arizona University. Monica lives with her family in Arizona. Her website is monicabrown.net.

About the Illustrator

MIRELLE ORTEGA is an illustrator and concept artist currently living in California. She's originally from the southeast of Mexico, and has a passion for storytelling, sci-fi, film, TV, color, and culture. Mirelle has a BFA from the Tecnológico de Monterrey (Monterrey, Mexico) in digital art and 3D animation and an MFA from Academy of Art University in San Francisco. She is fluent in Spanish and English. Visit her online at mirelleortega.com.

Educator's Guide

Introduction Questions

Begin the lesson by developing background knowledge and promote anticipation by posing the following questions.

Ask students if they have ever heard of Julián and Joaquin Castro.

- For students who have, ask: *What do you know about Julián and Joaquin Castro?*
- For students who have not, show them the cover of the book and ask: *Based on the cover, who do you think Julián and Joaquin Castro are? What do you think they do for a living? What is that building behind them?*
- *What do you think the title Small Room, Big Dreams means?*

Ask students if they have heard of the words politics and politician.

- *Do you know what the word politics means?* (politics is the study or work that the government does. A person who runs for a government office/job is called a politician.)
- *What is a politician?* (Listen to answers and then explain if necessary that politicians are people who are elected to run a city, state, or country. They may vote on and pass laws that help their community and keep people safe.)
- *How do politicians get their jobs?* (By being elected by a group of people. People vote for the person they think will do the best job and who will pass laws that they themselves support.)

Ask students if they know what it means to vote.

- *What does the word "vote" mean?* (When you vote, you choose between two or more people. Sometimes we can vote on ideas or laws that we want to see working because we think that they will be good for our community.)
- *What is a law?* (Laws are rules that we have to follow to keep us safe, our property safe, or help our community be successful. Some examples of laws are:
Federal laws: U.S. citizens ages 18 and older have the right to vote.
Local laws: In some parks, pets must be on a leash.)
- *What is a community?* (A group of people living in a certain area OR a group of people with similar likes and interests.)

VIDEOS:

Laws, Rights, and Responsibility: (for young students) :: <https://youtu.be/TyP09S0UEzA>

Voting for Kids | Why Voting is Important? - Election day :: <https://youtu.be/GrG7zBUDiqQ>

Educator's Guide

Introduction Questions Continued...

Begin the lesson by developing background knowledge and promote anticipation by posing the following questions.

Exploring the Covers

- Talk about the title of the book, *Small Room, Big Dreams: The Journey of Julián and Joaquín Castro*. Ask students what they think this book will most likely be about and whom the book might be about. *What do you think might happen? What information do you think you might learn? What makes you think that?*
- Look at the two people on the cover. *What do you notice about them? Why do you think they look so much alike?*
- Look at the background image. *What is behind them? Look at the architecture, or design of the building. What kind of building do you think it might be?*
- Read about the author, Monica Brown, on the back flap. *Why do you think she wrote this book? Does it give you more insight about what the story will be about?*
Visit Brown's website: www.monicabrown.net. Click on the link "Biography" to learn more about her. Then click on the link "Books." *How many books has she written? Do you see any that you might enjoy reading? Which ones?*
- Read about the illustrator, Mirelle Ortega, on the back flap of the book. *Why do you think she was chosen to illustrate this book?*
Visit Ortega's website: <https://www.mirelleortega.com>. Click on some of the examples of her work. *What do you think of her work?*

Create a Purpose for Research

Have students read to determine:

- *Who are Julián and Joaquín Castro?*
- *With whom did Julián and Joaquín's story begin?*
- *How did their mother teach them that participating in the community through politics was important?*
- *Who shared a room with the twins when they were young?*
- *How were the boys able to afford to go to Stanford University?*
- *When he became mayor of San Antonio, what did Julián fight for?*
- *In what ways have both Julián and Joaquín made a difference in people's lives? How did they accomplish this?*

Educator's Guide

Discussion Questions

After students have read the article and watched the video, assess and develop their comprehension by discussing as a class the following or similar questions. Encourage students to refer to passages in the article or video to support their responses. Students may reference their annotations to answer questions or find passages to support their responses.

Literal Comprehension

1. *Who was Victoriana? Why did she cross the border between Mexico and the United States?*
2. *How old was she and who did she cross the border with?*
3. *What do you think the word "barrio" means?*
4. *What other name did Victoriana use?*
5. *Was Mamo's life easy or hard? What did she do to help support her family?*
6. *Who was Rosie? What did she learn?*
7. *How did Rosie want to help her community?*
8. *What does it mean when it says she ran "for San Antonio City Council"?*
9. *Who did Julián and Joaquin share their room with when they were little?*
10. *What would Mamo do every night before bed?*
11. *Where would Julián and Joaquin walk with Mamo?*
12. *Rosie knew education was really important. What did she give Julián and Joaquin for every A they got on their report cards?*
13. *What did the twins do when they finished their homework?*
14. *What type of volunteer work did Rosie do?*
15. *How did the twins graduate from high school early?*
16. *How did they pay for college?*
17. *Why were the boys sad on their flight to California where they would go to college?*
18. *What did the twins do for a living after college?*
19. *When Julián became mayor of San Antonio, what was one thing he fought for?*
20. *Joaquin was elected to the Texas House of Representatives. What issues did he support?*
21. *Why did President Obama call Julián?*
22. *What was Julián's job as Secretary of Housing and Urban Development?*
23. *Joaquin then went on to become a Congressman in the U.S. House of Representatives. Who did he fight for?*
24. *Which brother ran for the office of President of the United States? Did he win?*
25. *When Julián went on stage to talk to millions of people, what did he say was his big dream?*

Educator's Guide

Digging Deeper

Develop critical thinking skills with these higher level thinking questions.

1. *Why do you think Monica Brown started this story about twin brothers by telling us about their grandmother?*
2. *How do you think Victoriana felt leaving behind the only place she'd ever known to go with her sister to a new country?*
3. *What sort of disadvantages did the Castros have growing up? What challenges did they have to overcome?*
4. *Why do you think the Castro brothers decided to go into politics? What do you think they are trying to achieve?*

Reader's Response

Develop deeper connections to the reading passage and subject matter by asking students the following questions. If your class uses journals, have them write their responses in them, or simply discuss as a class being sure to engage every student. You may also have students write up their responses in their notebooks or in a Word Doc to submit online.

1. *How did you feel after reading this book? Think about all the things that both brothers have accomplished so far in their lives.*
2. *What sort of challenges did the Castros face growing up? How did they overcome them?*
3. *How are the Castros make a difference in their communities?*
4. *Did this book make you think about other books or stories? Which ones?*
5. *We often hear that one person can make a huge difference. Did you believe that before you read this book? Do you believe it now? Name some other people who have made a big impact on their community or our world.*

Educator's Guide

Extend the Learning

Activities to integrate their reading experiences with other subject areas.

LANGUAGE ARTS

- **Have students design a campaign poster.** Students should imagine that they are running for office. Have them first decide what government position they want to be elected to, and then have them create 1 to 3 posters.
Here are several links for you to pull up in the classroom that have examples of kid campaign posters:
LINKS:
 - <https://www.pinterest.com/havaughan120800/campaign-posters-for-kids/>
 - <https://www.adobe.com/express/learn/blog/the-campaign-poster-8-iconic-examples-from-yesterday-and-today>
- **Compare and contrast the Castro brothers.** Use [our Venn diagram \(LA1\)](#) to record their similarities and accomplishments.
- **Learn the vocabulary.** Have students create a list of vocabulary words with which they are not familiar. When they are finished, ask them to write the definitions next to each word. Or, [print our vocabulary page \(V1\)](#) and have the students fill in the definition/description of these words that are specific to the story. You may prefer to use our [Word Wall cards \(V2\)](#) with younger children.
- **Write what you've learned.** Ask older students write a paragraph about one or both brothers using [our writing pages \(W1, W2\)](#).

HISTORY

Have students read and then:

- **Make a timeline of Julián and Joaquin's lives.** Use [our downloadable timeline cards \(H1, H2\)](#) to create a timeline of the twin's lives. Cut out the cards, then referencing the book, place them in the order they happened. Exact dates are not necessary. Approximate with deductive reasoning.
- **Learn about Barack Obama.** The 44th U.S. president, Barack Obama, is mentioned in this book. Have students read this brief biography and write what they've learned about him using [our writing page \(W3\)](#).
LINK:
 - <https://www.whitehouse.gov/about-the-white-house/presidents/barack-obama/>

Educator's Guide

Extend the Learning

Activities to integrate their reading experiences with other subject areas.

GEOGRAPHY

Ask students if they know where San Antonio, Texas is.

- *What is Texas? (It's a state.) Where is Texas located? (In the southern U.S.)*
- *What do you know about Texas? (Answers will vary.)*

****Handout the maps of North America, the United States, and Texas (M1, M2, M3).**

- *On which continent is the United States located?*
- *Find the United States on your map of North America and outline it in blue. Be sure to include Alaska & Hawaii.*
- *Which oceans run along the United States' coastlines?*
- *Which countries border the United States?*
- *Find Texas on your map of the United States and outline it in purple.*
- *Look at your Texas map. Find San Antonio and circle it in red.*
- *Stanford University is located in California. Find it on the map and outline it in orange.*
- *Harvard University is in Massachusetts. Find it on the map and outline it in green.*
- *After becoming a Congressman and cabinet member, the brothers worked in Washington, D.C. our nation's capital. Find D.C. on the map and draw a star on top of it.*

CIVICS

- **Learn about the three branches of government.** *Use our worksheet (C1) to learn a little bit about what a government is and the three branches of our government.*
- **Learn about Congress.** *Use our worksheet (C2) to learn about the two groups that make up Congress. Remember, Joaquin Castro is in the U.S. House of Representatives.*

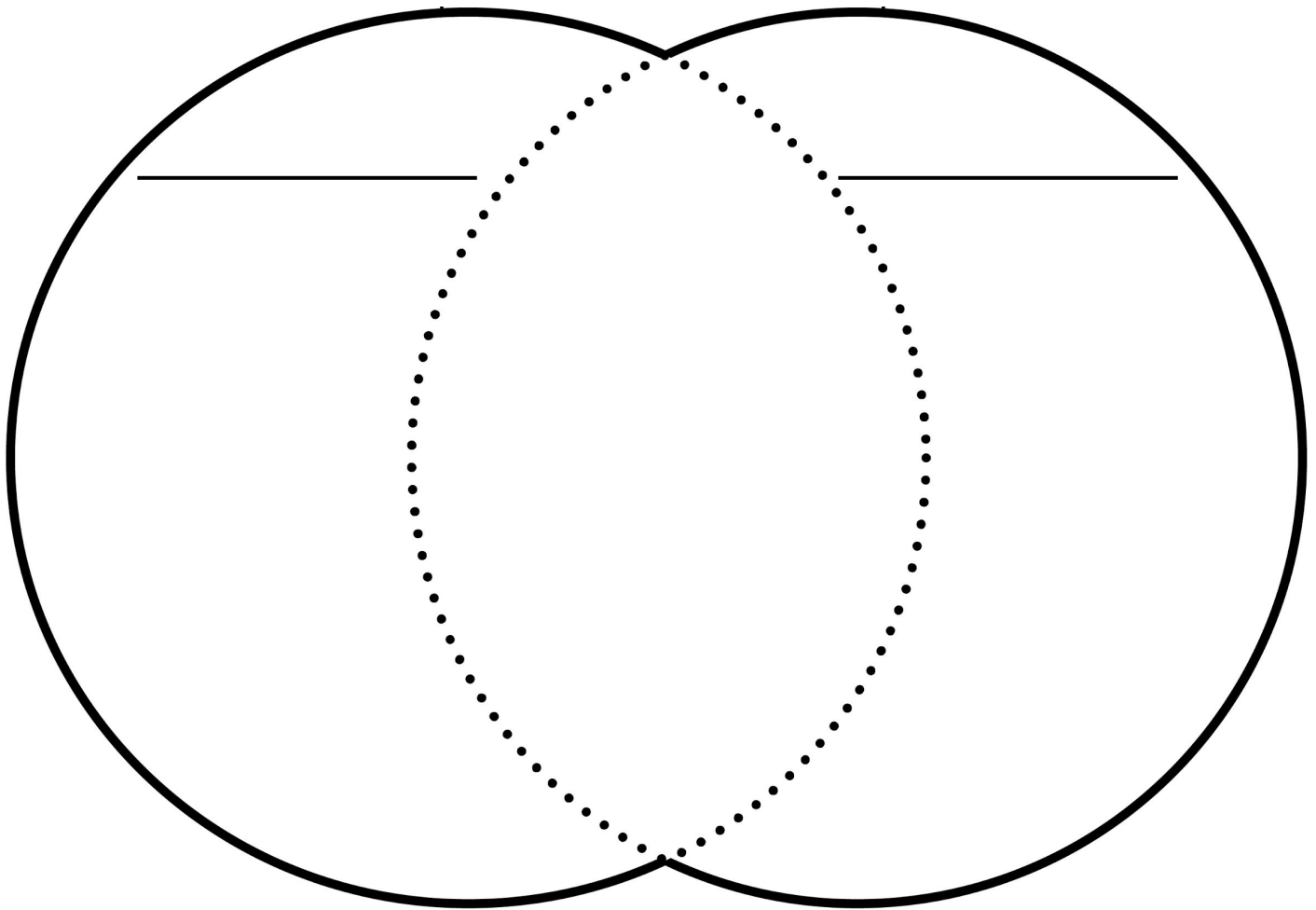
Websites

- *Icivics.org :: a remarkable site created by retired Justice Sandra Day O'Connor (for 3rd grade and up)*

Name: _____

Julián or Joaquín?

What are the differences and similarities between the two brothers? Write their names at the top of the circles, then write the qualities, characteristics, or accomplishments they share in the middle section. Write their unique qualities and accomplishments in the space under each name.



Vocabulary

Use a dictionary to find the definitions to these words found in Small Room, Big Dreams.

1. Politics: _____

2. Politician: _____

3. Community: _____

4. Vote: _____

5. Elect: _____

6. Law: _____

7. Migration: _____

8. Immigrant: _____

9. Demonstration: _____

10. Campaign: _____

11. Congress: _____

12. Justice: _____

Word Wall

politics

politician

law

community

vote

elect

mayor

government

lawyer

cabinet



This image shows a blank sheet of white paper with horizontal ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page. There are no margins, text, or other markings on the paper.



[illegible]

Timeline

Print on (colored) cardstock. Cut along the solid lines then place the cards in the order that they occurred to complete a timeline of Julián and Joaquin's lives.

Exact dates are not necessary, use the book and deductive reasoning to approximate the order.

Description Cards

Joaquin is elected to the Texas House of Representatives.	The twins share a room with their grandmother.	Julián becomes mayor of San Antonio.
Julián and Joaquin attend Harvard Law School.	Julián runs for President of the United States.	Julián and Joaquin attend Stanford University.
The brothers graduate early from Jefferson High School.	The Castro brothers win their first election.	Julián becomes the youngest person elected to the city council of San Antonio.
Julián and Joaquin are born.	The twins play in the courtyard outside the Plaza de Armas.	Joaquin becomes a Congressman.
President Barack Obama asks Julián to be the Secretary of Housing and Urban Development.		

Timeline Title Card

Use this card with your timeline.

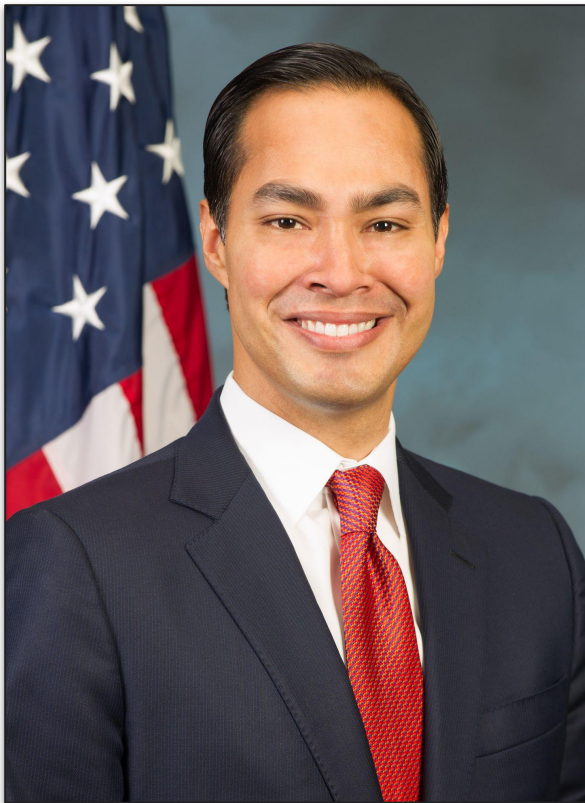
Print on cardstock.

Cut along the solid lines.

Place your Title Card above the timeline.

Then use yarn to connect all the other cards together to form your timeline.

Timeline of the Lives of Politicians Julián and Joaquin Castro





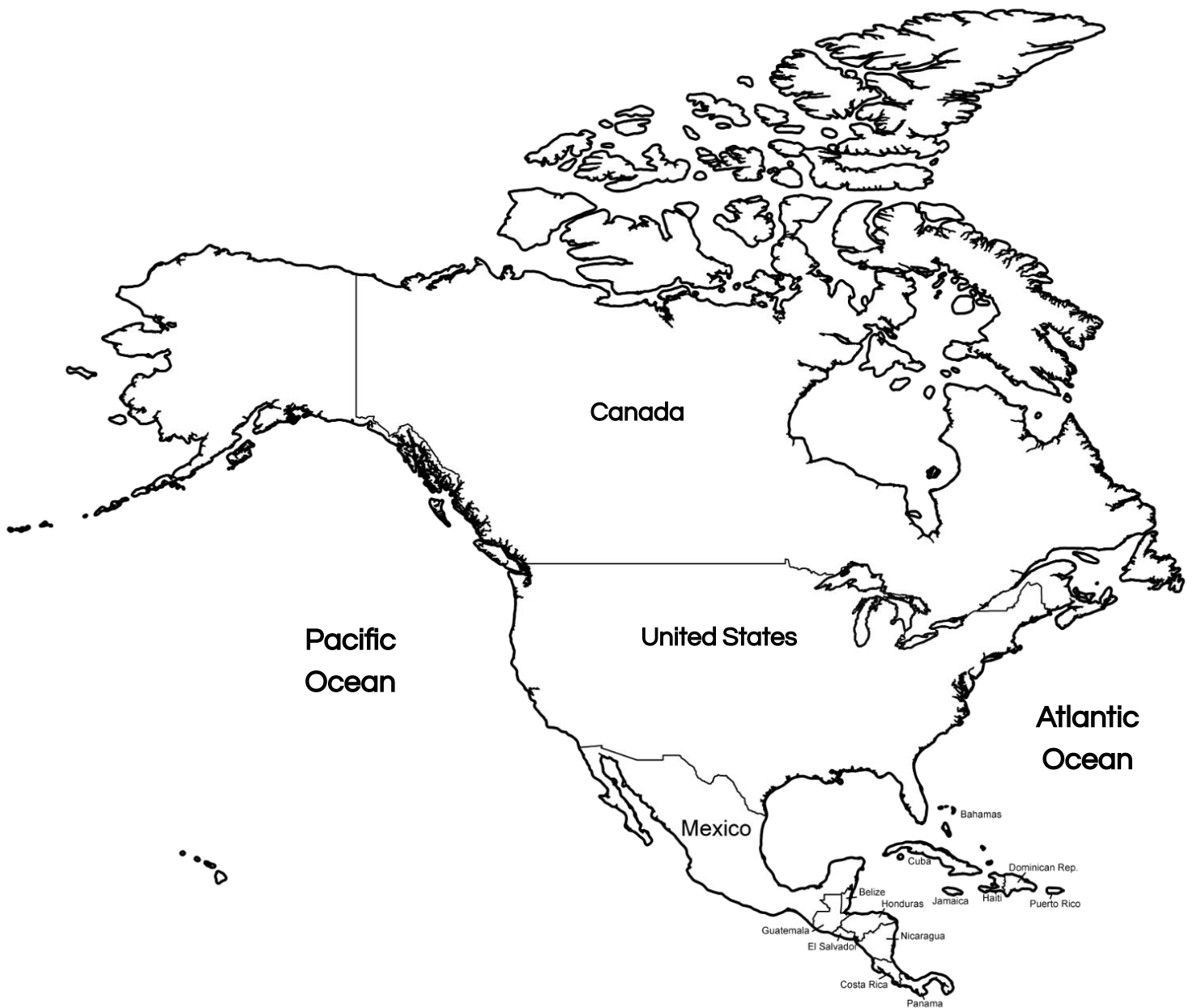
This image shows a blank sheet of white paper with horizontal ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page. There are no margins, text, or other markings on the paper.

Name:

[illegible]

North America Map

Listen carefully to your teacher or parent and follow the directions they give for using this map.



Map of the Continental United States

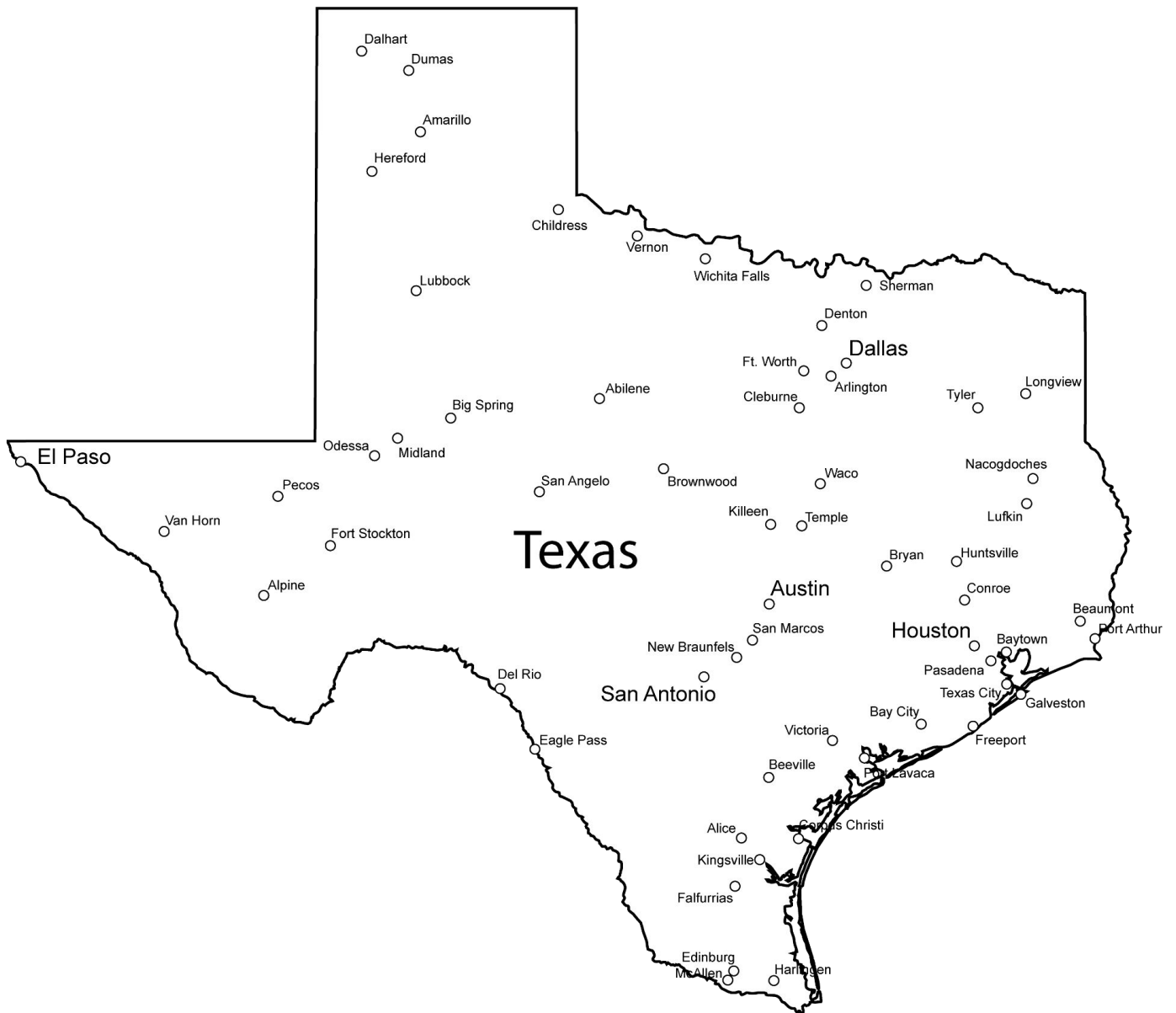
Listen carefully to your teacher or parent and follow the directions they give for using this map.



Name: _____

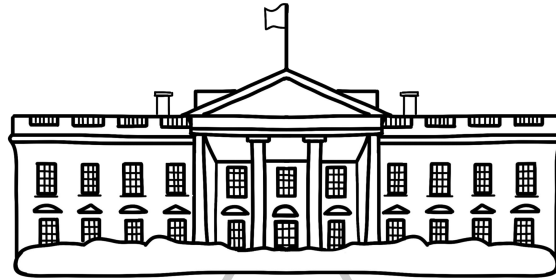
Texas Map

Listen carefully to your teacher or parent and follow the directions they give for using this map.



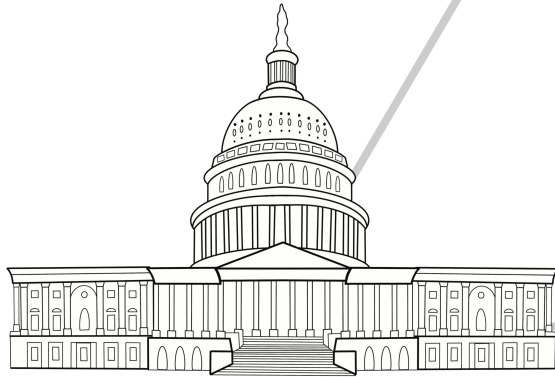
Our Three Branches of Government

The government is a system of rules and the people who make them. The job of the people in government is to protect the citizens and their rights. We have three branches of government. Each branch has a specific job to do.



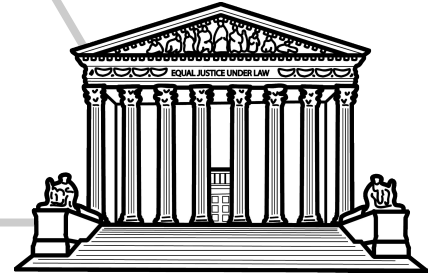
The Executive Branch

The President and the cabinet carry out the laws.



The Legislative Branch

Congress makes laws.



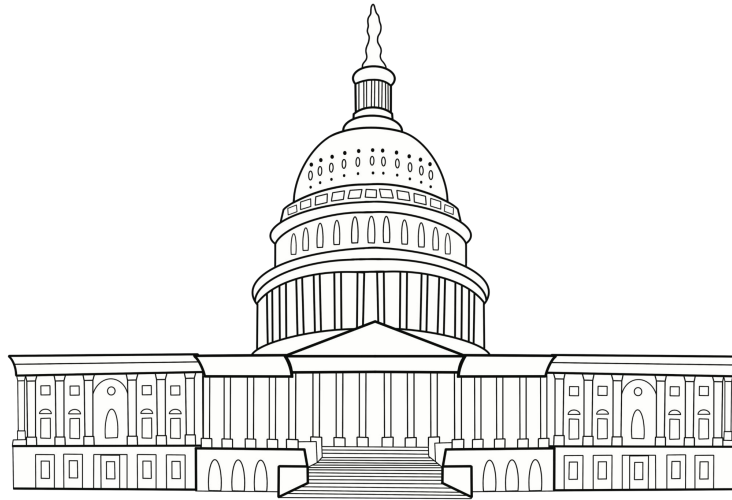
The Judicial Branch

The Supreme Court examines laws.

Notes:

U.S. Congress

Congress is made up of two parts:
the **U.S. Senate** and the **U.S. House of Representatives**.



The House of Representatives

- There are 435 members; the number of representatives each state gets depends on the number of people living in that state.
- They represent the people, not the states.
- They serve 2-year terms.

The Senate

- There are 100 senators; two from each state.
- They represent the states, not the people.
- They serve 6-year terms. There are no term limits.

Notes:
