

Lesson Plan: Understanding U.S. Government Shutdowns (Teacher Version)

Answer Key – Vocabulary Practice

1. budget
2. shutdown
3. essential services
4. Treasury bond
5. trust fund
6. debt ceiling
7. deficit
8. appropriations
9. default
10. stimulus
11. kick the can down the road
12. belt-tightening
13. playing chicken
14. gridlock
15. shutdown showdown

Answer Key – Comprehension Questions

1. Yes, more than 20 times since 1980.
2. A shutdown happens when Congress and the President cannot agree on a budget.
3. Essential workers such as military, border patrol, and airport security.
4. National parks, museums, passport/visa offices, and other non-essential services.
5. Banks, investors, foreign governments, pension funds, and Americans indirectly through savings.
6. Surplus Social Security funds are invested in Treasury bonds; technically borrowed but must be repaid.
7. Workers lose pay, families face stress, and many public services are disrupted.

Suggested Homework Short Answer (Japan)

In Japan, a government shutdown like in the U.S. is unlikely because the budget process is different. Japan has a parliamentary system, and the ruling party usually controls both spending and lawmaking. If there is a delay, temporary measures are passed to keep the government running. While Japan faces debt challenges, services like healthcare and pensions are not interrupted in the same way as a U.S. shutdown.