Three Branches at Work

Read how the Constitution divides the work of government.

SS24.4.7a "Describe the system of government established by the Constitution, including the three branches of government and their functions."

NAME _____ DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline the name of each branch and circle the words that tell its job. Number the branches 1, 2, and 3 in the order they appear so you can compare their roles.

A Law for National Parks

1. Imagine a new rule to protect animals in national parks. Who could turn that idea into a federal law? The Constitution sets up a national government with three branches that have different jobs. The legislative branch makes federal laws. It is called Congress, which has two parts: the Senate and the House of Representatives. Senators and representatives discuss ideas, write bills, and vote on them.

2. After Congress passes a bill, it goes to the president. The president leads the executive branch and may sign the bill into law or veto it. This branch carries out federal laws. For example, workers in a federal agency could help protect animals in national parks by following a new law. The president does not make laws alone, and a vetoed bill can still become law if Congress votes to override the veto.

3. What happens if someone says a law breaks the Constitution? The judicial branch hears cases about laws and decides what the laws mean. Federal courts, including the Supreme Court, can decide whether a law follows the Constitution. A court does not write a new law when it decides a case. By giving each branch a different job, the Constitution keeps one branch from doing all the work of governing.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. What are the two parts of Congress, and what does the legislative branch do?

2. What can the president do with a bill from Congress, and what is the executive branch's job?

3. If someone says a law breaks the Constitution, what can the judicial branch do?

4. How do the jobs of Congress and the federal courts differ?

3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

Imagine leaders want a new federal law to keep rivers in national parks clean. Write three or four sentences explaining how each branch could play a different part, from making the law to handling a court case about it.

ANSWER KEY

Three Branches at Work

GRADE 4 · SS24.4.7a

PART 1 · READ AND MARK

Underline the name of each branch and circle the words that tell its job. Number the branches 1, 2, and 3 in the order they appear so you can compare their roles. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 · ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	What are the two parts of Congress, and what does the legislative branch do?	**Congress has the Senate and the House of Representatives. The legislative branch makes federal laws.**
2	What can the president do with a bill from Congress, and what is the executive branch's job?	**The president may sign or veto the bill. The executive branch carries out federal laws.**
3	If someone says a law breaks the Constitution, what can the judicial branch do?	**Federal courts can hear a case and decide whether the law follows the Constitution.**
4	How do the jobs of Congress and the federal courts differ?	**Congress makes federal laws. Federal courts hear cases about laws and decide what the laws mean, including whether they follow the Constitution.**

PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

Congress could write and vote on a bill to keep rivers in national parks clean. The president could sign it into law. The executive branch could carry out the law by having park workers follow it. If a case challenges the law, federal courts could decide whether it follows the Constitution.

Accept responses that correctly distinguish making laws, carrying them out, and hearing cases about them. For Your Turn, the student should give each branch a role in the new river law.