Who Controls the Crossing?

Trace authority across local, state, and national governments.

SS24.USG.13 "Outline how the federal system of the United States divides powers between national and state governments. 13a Compare specific functions, organizations, and purposes of local and state governments..."

NAME _____ DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline each government's job, circle each national role, and number the two local choices that require state authority.

A Route Across Borders

1. After heavy rain, a bridge on a county road near the Alabama-Georgia line closes. An Alabama county commission manages its county roads and could plan repairs. Inside a city, an elected city council makes local ordinances and budgets for city streets instead. Alabama's state transportation department oversees state highways, while Georgia handles its own state routes. These governments serve different areas, but a replacement crossing would require decisions beyond any one county's borders.

2. The Constitution leaves many local matters to states but gives Congress power to regulate interstate commerce. If the closed crossing carries interstate traffic, federal transportation grants might help fund a replacement, subject to federal conditions. Alabama and Georgia can coordinate construction through an interstate agreement; some such agreements need Congress's consent. Federal courts can also settle legal disputes between states. National authority thus supports cooperation and sets rules for travel and trade across state lines.

3. The county cannot simply invent a new bridge tax. Under Dillon's Rule, a local government needs authority granted by the state, and Alabama's 1901 Constitution provides counties only limited home rule. The county commission may need a state law or constitutional authorization to levy a particular tax; the legislature may have to approve a local measure. State law also controls which road or land-use regulations the county may adopt. A city has more delegated powers in some areas, but state law still limits them.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. How do the county commission's and city council's road responsibilities differ?

2. Give two ways the national government could affect the crossing or relations between Alabama and Georgia.

3. Why might the county need state action before creating a bridge tax?

4. How does state authority affect a county road rule, even if the rule addresses a local problem?

3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

A proposed freight route links an Alabama county road, a city street, and a Mississippi state highway. In one paragraph, assign jobs to local and state governments, explain one national role, and analyze how Alabama's limited home rule affects a funding choice and a traffic rule.

ANSWER KEY

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GRADE 12 · SS24.USG.13

PART 1 · READ AND MARK

Underline each government's job, circle each national role, and number the two local choices that require state authority. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 · ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	How do the county commission's and city council's road responsibilities differ?	**The county commission manages county roads; the city council budgets for city streets.**
2	Give two ways the national government could affect the crossing or relations between Alabama and Georgia.	**Federal grants could help fund the crossing, and Congress's consent may be needed for some interstate agreements. Also accept federal regulation of interstate commerce or federal courts settling a dispute between states.**
3	Why might the county need state action before creating a bridge tax?	**Dillon's Rule and Alabama's limited county home rule mean the county needs authority from state law or the state constitution to levy a particular tax.**
4	How does state authority affect a county road rule, even if the rule addresses a local problem?	**The county may adopt only road regulations that state law authorizes.**

PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

The Alabama county commission would manage its county road, while the city council would decide how to maintain its city street. Alabama and Mississippi transportation agencies would coordinate work on their state highways. Congress could regulate interstate freight traffic, and federal grants might support eligible highway improvements. The county could not create a freight-route tax without authority from state law or the state constitution because its home rule is limited. It would also need state authority to set a special truck rule on its road, and that rule must comply with applicable federal law.

Accept other accurate national roles from the passage. For the open task, look for distinct county, city, and state responsibilities plus separate explanations of authority for funding and regulation.