Four Federal Designs

Compare how federal organizations are led and what they do.

SS24.USG.5d "Compare and contrast the structures of the federal bureaucracy, including cabinet departments, independent regulatory commissions, government corporations, and independent executive agencies."

NAME _____ DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline each organization's leader or governing group, and circle its main job. Number the four different types of federal organization so you can compare their structures.

One Storm, Four Structures

1 When a hurricane approaches, federal offices may share a goal without sharing a structure. The Department of Commerce, a cabinet department, contains the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, which issues weather forecasts. A cabinet secretary leads Commerce and serves in the president's Cabinet. NASA, an independent executive agency outside any cabinet department, supplies satellite observations used in storm monitoring. An administrator leads NASA. Both organizations carry out federal work, but one sits within a department headed by a secretary, while the other stands on its own.

2 A warning must also reach people quickly. The Federal Communications Commission, or FCC, is an independent regulatory commission that sets and enforces rules for communications providers, including rules related to wireless emergency alerts. Several commissioners lead it rather than a single cabinet secretary. They serve staggered terms, a design that limits rapid turnover. NASA and the FCC both stand outside cabinet departments, but the FCC regulates private communications providers, while NASA conducts research and operates space missions that can support storm monitoring.

3 After a storm, mail still matters. The United States Postal Service, or USPS, is a government corporation that provides mail service through a businesslike structure and earns much of its operating revenue from postage and other sales. A board oversees USPS and selects its postmaster general. Unlike the FCC, USPS mainly provides a service rather than setting rules for an industry. Unlike NASA, it uses sales revenue as a major funding source. Each organization has a different leadership and purpose, even when its work helps the same communities.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. How do Commerce and NASA differ in their place within the bureaucracy and in their leadership?

2. NASA and the FCC both stand outside cabinet departments. How does their work differ?

3. How do the FCC and USPS differ in both leadership and main purpose?

4. What makes USPS different from NASA in how it gets money and what it does?

3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

A storm-response team calls Commerce, NASA, the FCC, and USPS “four cabinet departments.” Write four or five sentences correcting the claim. Then argue which two are most alike and which two differ most in structure, using passage details to support both choices.

ANSWER KEY

Four Federal Designs

GRADE 12 · SS24.USG.5d

PART 1 · READ AND MARK

Underline each organization's leader or governing group, and circle its main job. Number the four different types of federal organization so you can compare their structures. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 · ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	How do Commerce and NASA differ in their place within the bureaucracy and in their leadership?	**Commerce is a cabinet department led by a secretary. NASA is outside cabinet departments and is led by an administrator.**
2	NASA and the FCC both stand outside cabinet departments. How does their work differ?	**NASA conducts research and operates space missions; the FCC sets and enforces rules for communications providers.**
3	How do the FCC and USPS differ in both leadership and main purpose?	**Commissioners lead the FCC, which regulates communications providers. A board oversees USPS and selects its postmaster general; USPS provides mail service.**
4	What makes USPS different from NASA in how it gets money and what it does?	**USPS earns much of its operating revenue from sales and provides mail service. NASA conducts research and space missions; the passage does not identify sales as a major NASA funding source.**

PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

Only Commerce is a cabinet department, led by a secretary; NASA is an independent executive agency led by an administrator. The FCC is an independent regulatory commission led by several commissioners, while USPS is a government corporation overseen by a board that selects its postmaster general. NASA and the FCC are most alike because both stand outside cabinet departments. Commerce and USPS differ most in leadership because a secretary leads Commerce, while a board oversees USPS and chooses its postmaster general.

Accept different choices for the most alike and most different pairs if the student accurately identifies all four structures and supports both comparisons with passage details.