

Three Branch Blueprint

Read how the Constitution organizes national power.

SS.5.CG.3.1 "Describe the organizational structure and powers of the national government as defined in Articles I, II, and III of the U.S. Constitution."

NAME _____

DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK _____ Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline each branch name, circle each Article number, and number the main power named for each branch 1, 2, or 3. Your marks will show how the Constitution divides national government power.

Power in Three Parts

- ① The Constitution divides the national government into three branches. Articles I, II, and III explain how the branches are organized and what each can do. Article I creates the legislative branch, called Congress. Congress has two parts, the Senate and the House of Representatives. Members of Congress represent people and states. Their main job is to make national laws, including laws about taxes and spending.
- ② Article II creates the executive branch. The president leads this branch and carries out national laws. The president can sign a bill into law or veto it. A veto sends the bill back to Congress. The president is commander in chief of the armed forces and can make treaties, although the Senate must approve treaties. The president also chooses certain officials and federal judges, with Senate approval.
- ③ Article III creates the judicial branch. This branch includes the Supreme Court and other federal courts created by Congress. Courts hear cases involving federal laws, the Constitution, or disagreements between states. Judges decide how laws apply in cases. The Supreme Court may decide whether a law follows the Constitution. Separate powers help prevent one branch from controlling all national decisions. This system is called checks and balances.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE _____ Use the passage

1 How is Congress organized, and what is its main job?

2 What are two ways the president can act on a bill?

3 What kinds of cases do federal courts hear, and what may the Supreme Court decide?

4 How do separate powers help keep one branch from controlling all national decisions?

3 YOUR TURN _____ Your own words

Create a national-government situation different from the examples in the passage. In exactly two sentences, name the branch that should act first and explain the power it would use.

PART 1 • READ AND MARK

Underline each branch name, circle each Article number, and number the main power named for each branch 1, 2, or 3. Your marks will show how the Constitution divides national government power. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 • ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	How is Congress organized, and what is its main job?	Congress has the Senate and the House of Representatives. Its main job is to make national laws.
2	What are two ways the president can act on a bill?	The president can sign a bill into law or veto it. A veto sends the bill back to Congress.
3	What kinds of cases do federal courts hear, and what may the Supreme Court decide?	Federal courts hear cases involving federal laws, the Constitution, or disagreements between states. The Supreme Court may decide whether a law follows the Constitution.
4	How do separate powers help keep one branch from controlling all national decisions?	Separate powers divide government work among the branches, helping prevent any one branch from controlling all national decisions.

PART 3 • YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

Congress should act first when people want a national law requiring seat belts on school buses that cross state lines. Article I gives Congress the power to make national laws.

Accept equivalent descriptions of each branch's organization and powers when they match the passage. For Your Turn, accept any realistic situation that correctly matches a branch to one of its stated powers and uses exactly two sentences.