

Two Constitutions

Compare how national and state constitutions organize government.

SS.7.CG.3.12 "Compare the U.S. and Florida constitutions."

NAME _____

DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK _____ Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline details that show a similarity between the U.S. and Florida constitutions. Circle details that show a difference, then number one detail that explains why the U.S. Constitution has greater authority.

A National Plan and a State Plan

- ① The U.S. Constitution and the Florida Constitution are written plans for government. Each begins with a statement of purposes and sets limits on government power. Both divide power among legislative, executive, and judicial branches. Both also protect important rights. The U.S. Constitution is the highest law in the nation. Florida's constitution governs the state, but it cannot conflict with the U.S. Constitution. Courts can review laws when people claim that a law violates constitutional rights.
- ② The national Constitution creates Congress, a president, and federal courts. It lists certain powers of Congress, such as regulating interstate commerce and declaring war. Florida's constitution creates the Florida Legislature, a governor, and state courts. Florida has a Senate and House of Representatives, like Congress. However, the Florida Constitution includes more detail about state concerns. It addresses public education, elections, local governments, taxation, and the state budget. These details help organize services that affect Floridians each day.
- ③ Constitutions can change, but each uses its own amendment process. An amendment to the U.S. Constitution must be proposed by Congress or a national convention, then ratified by three-fourths of the states. Florida amendments may reach voters through several methods, including proposals from the Legislature and citizen initiatives. Most proposed Florida amendments need approval from 60 percent of voters. The U.S. Constitution has 27 amendments. Florida's current constitution was adopted in 1968 and has been amended many times.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE _____ Use the passage

1 Name one way both constitutions organize government branches.

2 Compare the kinds of details in the U.S. Constitution and the Florida Constitution. Give one example from each.

3 Why may Florida's constitution not conflict with the U.S. Constitution?

4 Describe one difference between the amendment processes for the two constitutions.

3 YOUR TURN _____ Your own words

Write exactly four sentences for a new Florida resident. Explain two similarities and one difference between the constitutions, then explain why Florida must follow the U.S. Constitution.

PART 1 • READ AND MARK

Underline details that show a similarity between the U.S. and Florida constitutions. Circle details that show a difference, then number one detail that explains why the U.S. Constitution has greater authority. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 • ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	Name one way both constitutions organize government branches.	Both divide power among legislative, executive, and judicial branches.
2	Compare the kinds of details in the U.S. Constitution and the Florida Constitution. Give one example from each.	The U.S. Constitution lists national powers, such as regulating interstate commerce or declaring war. The Florida Constitution gives details about state concerns, such as education, elections, local governments, taxation, or the state budget.
3	Why may Florida's constitution not conflict with the U.S. Constitution?	The U.S. Constitution is the highest law in the nation, so Florida's constitution must follow it.
4	Describe one difference between the amendment processes for the two constitutions.	A U.S. amendment must be ratified by three-fourths of the states after proposal. Florida amendments can reach voters through several methods, including Legislature proposals and citizen initiatives, and most need 60 percent voter approval.

PART 3 • YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

Both constitutions divide government power among three branches and protect rights. The U.S. Constitution creates the national government, while Florida's constitution creates state government. Florida's constitution gives more details about education and local government. Florida must follow the U.S. Constitution because the national Constitution is the highest law.

Accept equivalent comparisons supported by the passage. For Part 3, students should include two accurate similarities, one accurate difference, and an explanation of the U.S. Constitution's higher authority.