

Shared Power, Strong Nation

How federalism joins local choices and national action.

SS.7.CG.3.2 "Explain the advantages of a federal system of government over other systems in balancing local sovereignty with national unity and protecting against authoritarianism."

NAME _____

DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK _____ Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline one detail that shows state power, circle one detail that shows national unity, and number two details that show limits on power. Use your marks to explain why shared power can protect both local choices and the country.

Power at Two Levels

- ① In a federal system of government, power is shared between the national government and state governments. The national government handles matters that affect the whole country, such as national defense, money, and treaties. States govern many local concerns, including public schools, roads, and rules for local elections. This division lets a state respond to its own people and conditions. A farming state, for example, may make different school schedules or water policies than a crowded urban state.
- ② Sharing power can balance local sovereignty with national unity. Local sovereignty means states can make decisions in areas reserved to them. National unity means people in every state belong to one country and follow the same Constitution. When an issue crosses state borders, a national rule can help. For example, one state cannot make its own treaty with another country. At the same time, states can test different approaches to transportation or education, and other states can learn from the results.
- ③ Federalism can also protect against authoritarianism, rule by one person or a small group with unchecked power. Because authority is divided, no single level of government controls every decision. State governments can raise concerns, challenge national actions in court, and carry out powers the Constitution leaves to them. The national government can also prevent a state from violating rights protected by the Constitution. Courts review disputes between levels. These checks make it harder for any one government to take complete control, while keeping the country united.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE _____ Use the passage

1 How does the passage describe the division of power between the national government and state governments? Give one responsibility for each level.

2 How can federalism balance local sovereignty with national unity? Use two details from the passage.

3 Why is making treaties a national responsibility rather than a state responsibility?

4 According to the passage, how does divided authority make authoritarianism less likely? Give two ways.

3 YOUR TURN _____ Your own words

Several states face a drought, but their farms, cities, and climates have different water needs. Write 4 or 5 sentences explaining what the national government should do and what state governments should do. Explain how your plan protects national unity, local sovereignty, and limits on power.

PART 1 • READ AND MARK

Underline one detail that shows state power, circle one detail that shows national unity, and number two details that show limits on power. Use your marks to explain why shared power can protect both local choices and the country. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 • ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	How does the passage describe the division of power between the national government and state governments? Give one responsibility for each level.	The national government handles nationwide matters, such as defense, money, or treaties. States handle local concerns, such as schools, roads, or local election rules.
2	How can federalism balance local sovereignty with national unity? Use two details from the passage.	States make decisions in areas reserved to them, which supports local sovereignty. People in every state are part of one country and follow the same Constitution, and national rules can address issues that cross state borders.
3	Why is making treaties a national responsibility rather than a state responsibility?	Treaties involve relationships with other countries, so one national policy helps the country act as one united nation.
4	According to the passage, how does divided authority make authoritarianism less likely? Give two ways.	No single level of government controls every decision. States can challenge national actions in court, the national government can protect constitutional rights, and courts can review disputes between levels.

PART 3 • YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

The national government should set a fair rule for sharing water among states and protect people's right to safe drinking water. Each state should choose conservation methods that fit its farms, cities, and climate. This keeps the country working together during the drought while allowing local decisions. Dividing these powers prevents either level from controlling every water decision.

Accept answers that accurately distinguish nationwide needs from state-level choices and explain both unity and local sovereignty. For protection against authoritarianism, accept a clear explanation that divided powers, court challenges, or constitutional limits prevent one level from gaining complete control.