Who Makes the Law?

Read how voters and elected leaders share a role in government.

5.SS.4.11 "Explain how the United States is a republic."

NAME _____ DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline how voters choose their representatives, circle how representatives help make laws, then write 1 and 2 beside those marked parts to show the order.

A Safer Trail

1. Imagine that a national park needs safer hiking trails. A new law for all national parks could require stronger trail signs. In the United States, voters do not gather to vote on every national law. Instead, they elect people to represent them in Congress. Voters in each state elect senators, and voters in each House district elect a representative. These elected people speak for their voters while considering the whole country.

2. A voter might write to a member of Congress about unsafe trails. Members can propose a bill, discuss it, and vote on it. Both the House and Senate must pass the same bill before it goes to the president. If the president signs it, the bill becomes a law. Members must make decisions, even when voters disagree with each other.

3. This way of governing is called a republic: people choose representatives to make decisions for them. It is different from having every voter decide every law directly. The Constitution sets rules for the government and protects people's rights, so elected leaders cannot simply do anything they want. At the next election, voters can choose whether to keep a member of Congress or elect someone else. That gives voters a way to hold representatives accountable.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. Why do voters elect members of Congress instead of voting on the park-sign law themselves?

2. How could a voter bring up the trail problem, and what could members of Congress do about it?

3. Why could one member of Congress not make the park-sign bill a law alone?

4. How do the Constitution and elections each limit the power of elected leaders?

3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

A classmate says, "For a national food-safety law, every voter must vote on the law." Write three or four sentences explaining what would happen in a republic instead. Include what voters do, what elected people do, and one way voters can hold them responsible.

ANSWER KEY

Who Makes the Law?

GRADE 5 · 5.SS.4.11

PART 1 · READ AND MARK

Underline how voters choose their representatives, circle how representatives help make laws, then write 1 and 2 beside those marked parts to show the order. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 · ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	Why do voters elect members of Congress instead of voting on the park-sign law themselves?	**In a republic, voters elect representatives to make decisions about laws for them.**
2	How could a voter bring up the trail problem, and what could members of Congress do about it?	**A voter could write to a member of Congress. Members could propose, discuss, and vote on a bill.**
3	Why could one member of Congress not make the park-sign bill a law alone?	**Both the House and Senate must pass the same bill before it goes to the president, who can sign it into law.**
4	How do the Constitution and elections each limit the power of elected leaders?	**The Constitution sets rules for government and protects rights. At an election, voters can replace a member of Congress.**

PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

Voters elect members of Congress instead of voting on each national food-safety law. Those members can discuss a food-safety bill and vote on it in the House and Senate. The president can sign a bill passed by both parts of Congress into law. At the next election, voters can replace members of Congress whose decisions they dislike.

Accept answers that explain that voters choose representatives who help make laws, rather than voting on every law themselves. For the open task, students may name elections as a way to hold representatives responsible.