Who Does What?

Follow a river law through the three branches of government.

5.SS.4.6 "Identify the three branches of government and the functions and powers of each."

NAME _____ DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline the name of each branch, then circle two actions in each paragraph that show what that branch can do.

A Law for the River

1. Imagine people in several states asking the national government to protect a river that crosses state lines. In the legislative branch, Congress considers a bill that would limit harmful waste dumped into the river. Members of Congress debate its rules and vote on the bill. Congress can make federal laws, but a bill does not become law just because someone suggests it.

2. After Congress passes the bill, the president signs it, and it becomes a federal law. The president leads the executive branch, which carries out federal laws. A federal agency might inspect sites along the river to see whether people follow the new rule. The president can also veto a bill instead of signing it. An agency enforces laws, but it does not decide whether a law violates the Constitution.

3. Suppose a company argues that the river law violates the Constitution. A federal court can hear its case. Courts belong to the judicial branch, which interprets laws and decides legal disputes. Judges use the Constitution to review laws and can strike down a law that violates it. A judge does not send inspectors to the river or vote on a bill in Congress.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. A bill would set rules for keeping ocean water clean. Which branch would debate and vote on it? What power does this show?

2. A bill about safe drinking water reaches the president, who does not want to sign it. Which branch is involved, and what power can the president use?

3. A federal forest law has passed. Which branch could inspect sites to see whether people follow it? What function would that serve?

4. A company argues that a forest law breaks the Constitution. Which branch could decide the case, and what could it do if the law breaks the Constitution?

3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

Imagine Congress is considering a federal law about playground equipment sold across the country. Write three or four sentences showing one action each branch could take as the bill becomes a law and someone challenges it in court. Name all three branches.

ANSWER KEY

Who Does What?

GRADE 5 · 5.SS.4.6

PART 1 · READ AND MARK

Underline the name of each branch, then circle two actions in each paragraph that show what that branch can do. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 · ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	A bill would set rules for keeping ocean water clean. Which branch would debate and vote on it? What power does this show?	**The legislative branch would debate and vote on the bill. This shows its power to make federal laws.**
2	A bill about safe drinking water reaches the president, who does not want to sign it. Which branch is involved, and what power can the president use?	**The executive branch is involved. The president can veto the bill.**
3	A federal forest law has passed. Which branch could inspect sites to see whether people follow it? What function would that serve?	**The executive branch could inspect sites through a federal agency. The inspections would help enforce the law.**
4	A company argues that a forest law breaks the Constitution. Which branch could decide the case, and what could it do if the law breaks the Constitution?	**The judicial branch could decide the case and strike down the law if it violates the Constitution.**

PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

The legislative branch, Congress, debates and votes to pass a federal law about playground equipment. The executive branch puts the law into action after the president signs it. A federal agency checks whether companies follow the rules. When a company challenges the law, the judicial branch decides whether it follows the Constitution.

Accept other accurate actions for each branch. In Part 3, look for distinct roles in making, carrying out, and reviewing a federal law.