Who Does What?

Follow a river law through the three branches of government.

5.C.5 "Identify the three branches of the United States government, and explain the functions of each."

NAME _____ DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline the name of each branch of government. Circle the words that tell what each branch does.

A Law for the River

1. A river runs through several states. Families fish in it, and towns use its water. What if people want a national rule to limit pollution? The legislative branch, Congress, can write and pass a law about water pollution. Congress has two parts, the House of Representatives and the Senate. Both parts must approve a bill before it can go to the president.

2. Suppose Congress passes a bill about keeping rivers clean, and the president signs it into law. The executive branch, led by the president, carries out and enforces federal laws. Federal agencies do much of this work. For example, the Environmental Protection Agency, or EPA, may check whether a factory follows a water pollution rule. The agency can take action when a rule is broken.

3. Now imagine a factory and an agency disagree about what that law means. The judicial branch, made up of federal courts, can hear a case and interpret the law. Courts can also decide whether a law follows the Constitution. The Supreme Court is the highest federal court. A judge does not write a new river law or run the EPA while deciding a case.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. Which branch can write and pass a national water pollution law? What must both parts of Congress do before a bill goes to the president?

2. Which branch checks whether a factory follows a water pollution rule? Name an agency that may do this work.

3. If a factory and an agency disagree about what a law means, which branch can hear their case? What does that branch do with the law?

4. How is a federal court's job in a river-law case different from Congress's job?

3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

A group wants a new federal law to protect sea turtles on beaches. Write three sentences, one for each branch, explaining how it could make, enforce, or interpret the law if a dispute happens.

ANSWER KEY

Who Does What?

GRADE 5 · 5.C.5

PART 1 · READ AND MARK

Underline the name of each branch of government. Circle the words that tell what each branch does. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 · ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	Which branch can write and pass a national water pollution law? What must both parts of Congress do before a bill goes to the president?	**The legislative branch can write and pass the law. The House of Representatives and the Senate must both approve the bill.**
2	Which branch checks whether a factory follows a water pollution rule? Name an agency that may do this work.	**The executive branch enforces the rule. The EPA may check whether the factory follows it.**
3	If a factory and an agency disagree about what a law means, which branch can hear their case? What does that branch do with the law?	**The judicial branch can hear the case and interpret the law.**
4	How is a federal court's job in a river-law case different from Congress's job?	**A federal court interprets the law or decides whether it follows the Constitution. Congress writes and passes laws.**

PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

The legislative branch could write and pass a law that protects sea turtle nests. The executive branch could have a federal agency check that people follow the law. If people disagree about what the law means, the judicial branch could hear a case and interpret it.

Accept answers that correctly connect Congress with making laws, the president and federal agencies with enforcing laws, and federal courts with interpreting laws or deciding whether they follow the Constitution.