Three Branches, Two Constitutions

Trace how Indiana's branches worked together and changed over time

IS.2.3 "Analyze and compare the major functions, responsibilities, and relationships of the legislative (Article 4), executive (Article 5), and judicial branches (Article 7) of state government as written in the 1816 and 1851 Indiana Constitutions."

NAME _____ DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline one duty of each branch, circle three changes from 1816 to 1851, and number the branches in the order they could act on the bridge proposal. Use your marks to compare what changed with what stayed the same.

A Bridge Bill Across Two Constitutions

1. In both Indiana constitutions, the General Assembly, made up of a House and a Senate, made state laws and decided how state money would be spent. Imagine a proposal to repair a dangerous bridge. Legislators could debate the cost, revise the proposal, and vote on a bill. Under the 1816 Constitution, they met annually. Article 4 of the 1851 Constitution instead called for regular sessions every two years. That change reduced how often lawmakers gathered for regular sessions, but it did not move lawmaking to the governor or the courts. The governor still depended on legislators to pass a bridge bill.

2. The governor led the executive branch under both constitutions and was charged with seeing that laws were carried out. In the bridge example, the governor could sign the bill or return it to lawmakers with objections. The General Assembly could reconsider a returned bill and pass it despite those objections. Article 5 of the 1851 Constitution gave the governor a four-year term; under the 1816 Constitution, the term was three years. A longer term changed how long a governor could serve after one election, not who made laws. The executive branch could carry out an approved bridge law but could not pass one on its own.

3. If a dispute arose over the bridge law, courts could hear a case and interpret the law. Under the 1816 Constitution, the governor appointed Supreme Court judges with the Senate's consent. Article 7 of the 1851 Constitution instead provided for voters to elect Supreme Court judges. Both constitutions placed judicial work in courts, not in the governor's office or the General Assembly. The new selection method changed who chose the judges, while the courts' basic job of resolving legal disputes remained. Thus one bridge issue could involve lawmakers making a law, a governor carrying it out, and judges deciding a case.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. How did the schedule for regular legislative sessions change from 1816 to 1851, and what lawmaking responsibility stayed the same?

2. How did the governor's term change, and why did that change not give the governor the General Assembly's job?

3. Compare how Supreme Court judges were chosen in 1816 and 1851. Which branches took part in the 1816 method?

4. If the bridge bill became law and later caused a legal dispute, how would the work of all three branches differ?

3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

Write six sentences about a proposed state law requiring safety checks at public swimming pools. Explain how all three branches would take part if the bill passed and someone later challenged it, then explain two changes from 1816 to 1851 that would shape the process.

ANSWER KEY

Three Branches, Two Constitutions

HIGH SCHOOL · IS.2.3

PART 1 · READ AND MARK

Underline one duty of each branch, circle three changes from 1816 to 1851, and number the branches in the order they could act on the bridge proposal. Use your marks to compare what changed with what stayed the same. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 · ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	How did the schedule for regular legislative sessions change from 1816 to 1851, and what lawmaking responsibility stayed the same?	**Sessions changed from annual meetings to meetings every two years. The General Assembly still made state laws.**
2	How did the governor's term change, and why did that change not give the governor the General Assembly's job?	**The term increased from three to four years. The governor still carried out laws and could not pass a law alone.**
3	Compare how Supreme Court judges were chosen in 1816 and 1851. Which branches took part in the 1816 method?	**In 1816, the governor appointed them with the Senate's consent, involving the executive and legislative branches. In 1851, voters elected them.**
4	If the bridge bill became law and later caused a legal dispute, how would the work of all three branches differ?	**The General Assembly would make the bridge law, the governor's executive branch would carry it out, and courts would hear the dispute and interpret the law.**

PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

The General Assembly would debate and pass a bill requiring safety checks at public swimming pools. The governor could sign it or return it with objections, and legislators could reconsider it. If it became law, the executive branch would carry out the checks. If someone challenged the law in court, judges would hear the case and interpret it. Under the 1816 Constitution, lawmakers met annually, but under the 1851 Constitution, their regular sessions were every two years. In 1816, the governor appointed Supreme Court judges with the Senate's consent, while in 1851, voters elected them.

Accept any two accurate changes described in the passage: legislative session frequency, governor's term length, or Supreme Court judge selection. The six-sentence response should distinguish making, carrying out, and interpreting a law.