Power After the Storm

Compare how three systems divide governing authority

USG.1.5 "Compare and contrast unitary, confederate, and federal systems of government."

NAME _____ DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline the words that show where governing authority lies in each system. Then circle one detail in each paragraph that shows how the storm response could differ.

Three Ways to Rebuild

1. Imagine three coastal countries facing the same problem: a hurricane destroys bridges between towns. Each country needs emergency money and rules for rebuilding, but its constitution divides power differently. In a unitary system, the national government holds the highest authority. It can direct a nationwide bridge plan and decide how much money each district receives. District offices may organize repairs and know local roads best, but the national government can change or withdraw the authority it gave them. Local participation is possible; it does not make those districts independent governments with constitutionally protected powers.

2. In a confederate system, independent member states join together for limited common purposes. After the hurricane, each state controls its own bridges and decides whether to fund repairs. The states might authorize a joint council to coordinate a shared supply shipment, but the council relies on the members for money and action. If one state refuses to contribute, the council usually cannot simply order that state's residents to pay a national tax. Members keep the main governing authority. This arrangement protects state independence, yet it can make a quick, unified response harder when members disagree.

3. In a federal system, a constitution divides governing authority between a national government and regional governments. Both levels have powers they can exercise directly. After the hurricane, the national government might fund repairs on major routes, while each state manages local roads under its own authority. Neither level can simply erase the powers the constitution assigns to the other. Unlike a confederation, the national government does not have to ask each state for permission to use its own constitutional powers. Unlike a unitary system, states have powers the national government cannot revoke by passing an ordinary law.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. How could district offices in a unitary system and states in a federal system both manage local repairs, yet differ in their authority to do so?

2. If one member state refuses to help pay for a shared shipment, how does a confederate council's position differ from a federal national government's position when using its own constitutional powers?

3. How does the national government's ability to direct a bridge plan differ in unitary and confederate systems?

4. Both federal and confederate systems involve states. How does the authority of the national level differ between them?

3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

A group of fictional islands is planning rules for fishing waters. Choose one system and write 4 to 5 sentences explaining who could set a common fishing rule, what authority island governments would keep, and one trade-off compared with a different system.

ANSWER KEY

Power After the Storm

HIGH SCHOOL · USG.1.5

PART 1 · READ AND MARK

Underline the words that show where governing authority lies in each system. Then circle one detail in each paragraph that shows how the storm response could differ. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 · ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	How could district offices in a unitary system and states in a federal system both manage local repairs, yet differ in their authority to do so?	**Both could manage local repairs, but the unitary national government can withdraw a district's authority. A federal state's authority is protected by the constitution.**
2	If one member state refuses to help pay for a shared shipment, how does a confederate council's position differ from a federal national government's position when using its own constitutional powers?	**The confederate council relies on members for money and action and usually cannot tax that state's residents directly. A federal national government can use its own constitutional powers without each state's permission.**
3	How does the national government's ability to direct a bridge plan differ in unitary and confederate systems?	**A unitary national government can direct a nationwide plan. A confederate council has limited authority and relies on member states to act.**
4	Both federal and confederate systems involve states. How does the authority of the national level differ between them?	**In a confederation, member states keep the main authority and the joint council depends on them. In a federation, the national government has its own constitutionally assigned powers.**

PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

I would choose a federal system for the islands. The constitution could give the national government power to set fishing limits in shared waters. Island governments could set rules for docks and local markets under powers the constitution protects. Unlike a confederation, the national government could enforce its own fishing rules without asking every island for permission. The trade-off is that the islands would give up some independence to make a common rule easier to enforce.

Accept any chosen system if the response assigns authority consistently with the passage and identifies an accurate trade-off with another system. Specific fishing powers may vary because the islands' constitution is fictional.