

Government Differences

Compare how four Western Hemisphere countries organize government.

5.6a "Government structures, functions, and founding documents vary from place to place in the countries of the Western Hemisphere."

NAME _____

DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK _____ Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline the government leaders named in each paragraph. Circle the names of constitutional or founding documents.

Four Countries, Different Systems

- ① In the United States, the federal government has three branches. The legislative branch, Congress, makes laws. The executive branch, led by the president, carries out laws. The judicial branch, the courts, interprets laws in cases. The Constitution sets up this structure. The Declaration of Independence stated reasons for separating from Britain, and the Bill of Rights added protections for individual freedoms. These documents show ideas about limited government and rights.
- ② Canada is also a federal country, with national and provincial governments. Its Parliament includes an elected House of Commons and an appointed Senate. A prime minister leads the government, while the monarch is the formal head of state, represented in Canada by a governor general. Canada's constitutional system includes written laws, such as the Constitution Acts of 1867 and 1982, plus unwritten conventions.
- ③ Mexico and Brazil are federal republics with presidents who are both heads of state and heads of government. Mexico's Congress has two houses, and its 1917 Constitution describes the nation's government and rights. Brazil's 1988 Constitution is its current constitution. Like the United States, these countries divide power among branches, but their leaders, lawmaking bodies, and constitutional histories are not exactly the same.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE _____ Use the passage

1 What are the three branches of the United States federal government, and what does each branch do?

2 What two kinds of sources are part of Canada's constitutional system?

3 How is Canada's leadership arrangement different from the arrangement described for Mexico and Brazil?

4 Compare the constitutional sources named for Canada and Brazil.

3 YOUR TURN _____ Your own words

Compare the United States and Canada in three sentences. Give one similarity, one difference in leadership, and one difference in constitutional sources.

PART 1 • READ AND MARK

Underline the government leaders named in each paragraph. Circle the names of constitutional or founding documents. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 • ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	What are the three branches of the United States federal government, and what does each branch do?	Legislative: Congress makes laws. Executive: the president and executive agencies carry out laws. Judicial: courts interpret laws in cases.
2	What two kinds of sources are part of Canada's constitutional system?	Written laws, including the Constitution Acts of 1867 and 1982, and unwritten conventions.
3	How is Canada's leadership arrangement different from the arrangement described for Mexico and Brazil?	Canada has a prime minister who leads the government and a monarch as formal head of state. Mexico and Brazil have presidents who are both heads of state and heads of government.
4	Compare the constitutional sources named for Canada and Brazil.	Canada's system includes written Constitution Acts and unwritten conventions. Brazil's current constitution is the 1988 Constitution.

PART 3 • YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

Both countries have federal systems. The United States has a president, while Canada has a prime minister and monarch. The United States has its Constitution, while Canada has Constitution Acts and unwritten conventions.

Accept equivalent wording supported by the passage. The three-sentence comparison should include a shared federal system, a leadership difference, and a difference in constitutional sources.