The Government's Plan

Read how the Constitution divides and organizes government powers.

4.C.1.1.D "Explain how the Constitution of the United States of America is a written plan for establishing the shared powers of government and organizing its institutions."

NAME _____ DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline the sentence that names a power shared by national and state governments, and circle the names of the three national branches. Then number the first three sentences of the river example 1, 2, and 3 to show the branches at work.

A Plan Everyone Can Read

1. Think of a class project with a plan everyone can read. The United States has a written plan for its government: the Constitution. It tells who may do certain jobs and how government parts fit together. The plan gives power to the national government and leaves other powers to the states. For example, the national government can make coins, while states run public schools.

2. Some powers are shared. Both the national government and state governments can collect taxes to pay for their work. The Constitution also sets up three branches of the national government. Congress leads the legislative branch, which makes laws. The president leads the executive branch, which carries out laws. Federal courts belong to the judicial branch, which decides cases about laws. Each branch has a different role under the same written plan.

3. Imagine Congress passes a law to protect rivers. The president directs federal agencies to carry out that law. If people argue that the law breaks the Constitution, a federal court can decide the issue in a case. A state may also make rules to protect rivers within its borders, if those rules do not conflict with federal law. The written plan helps these governments and branches work without giving all power to one place.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. How does the Constitution divide jobs between the national government and the states? Give one example from the passage.

2. What power does the written plan let both national and state governments use? Why can they use it?

3. How do the Constitution's three national branches handle different parts of the river-law example?

4. How can a state make its own river rules while the national river law is in place?

3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

Imagine the country wants safer packaged food. In three or four sentences, explain how the Constitution's written plan could guide the three national branches and a state as they work on food safety. Include what could happen if a law is challenged.

ANSWER KEY

The Government's Plan

GRADE 4 · 4.C.1.1.D

PART 1 · READ AND MARK

Underline the sentence that names a power shared by national and state governments, and circle the names of the three national branches. Then number the first three sentences of the river example 1, 2, and 3 to show the branches at work. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 · ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	How does the Constitution divide jobs between the national government and the states? Give one example from the passage.	**It gives them different jobs. The national government can make coins, while states run public schools.**
2	What power does the written plan let both national and state governments use? Why can they use it?	**Both can collect taxes to pay for their work.**
3	How do the Constitution's three national branches handle different parts of the river-law example?	**Congress passes the law, the president directs federal agencies to carry it out, and a federal court can decide a case about whether the law follows the Constitution.**
4	How can a state make its own river rules while the national river law is in place?	**A state can make rules for rivers within its borders if those rules do not conflict with federal law.**

PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

Congress could pass a law about the safety of packaged food. The president could have federal agencies carry out the law. A federal court could decide a case about whether the law follows the Constitution. A state could add food safety rules that do not conflict with federal law.

For the marking job, accept circles around legislative, executive, and judicial, and numbers on the Congress, president, and federal court sentences in that order. For Your Turn, accept other reasonable food safety actions that keep the branches' roles distinct and do not place state rules in conflict with federal law.