The Bridge Decision

Trace how national officials and citizens respond to a problem.

4.P.2.1.B "Explain the structure, responsibilities, and powers exercised by officials of the national government and describe ways informed citizens can and should participate."

NAME _____ DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline one power or responsibility of each branch of the national government. Circle two ways citizens can take part.

A Bridge That Needs Repair

1. At a national park, visitors notice that a bridge on a busy trail needs repair. Who can make decisions about spending federal money to fix it? Our national government has three branches with different jobs. Congress, the lawmaking branch, includes the House of Representatives and the Senate. Its members can write and vote on a bill that provides money for repairs in national parks.

2. The president leads the executive branch. If Congress passes the park repair bill, the president can sign it into law or veto it. If it becomes law, an executive agency, such as the National Park Service, can use the money as the law allows to repair the bridge. Federal courts form the judicial branch. In a real court case, judges decide whether a law follows the Constitution.

3. People do not have to wait for a vote in Congress to speak up. An informed citizen might check the park's repair notices and read news from more than one trusted source. The citizen can share facts with a member of Congress and explain why the bridge matters. Adults can vote for members of Congress, and children can also write letters. These actions help officials hear what people need.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. How are Congress's job and the National Park Service's job different when the bridge needs repair?

2. If Congress passes the repair bill, what two choices does the president have?

3. What could federal judges decide about a repair law in a real court case?

4. How could a child learn about the bridge and then share an informed view with Congress?

3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

Imagine you want safer airplane travel across the country. Write a short message to a member of Congress that suggests one action Congress could take, explains a role for another branch, and tells how you would check facts before speaking up.

ANSWER KEY

The Bridge Decision

GRADE 4 · 4.P.2.1.B

PART 1 · READ AND MARK

Underline one power or responsibility of each branch of the national government. Circle two ways citizens can take part. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 · ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	How are Congress's job and the National Park Service's job different when the bridge needs repair?	**Congress can pass a bill that provides money for repairs. The National Park Service can use the money as the law allows to repair the bridge.**
2	If Congress passes the repair bill, what two choices does the president have?	**The president can sign the bill into law or veto it.**
3	What could federal judges decide about a repair law in a real court case?	**They could decide whether the law follows the Constitution.**
4	How could a child learn about the bridge and then share an informed view with Congress?	**A child could check park repair notices and news from more than one trusted source, then write a letter sharing facts with a member of Congress.**

PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

Dear Representative, I am concerned about airplane safety across the country. Congress could consider a law that requires stronger safety checks for airplanes. If the law passes, the president could sign it, and federal agencies could carry it out. Before asking you to support it, I would check safety reports from the Federal Aviation Administration and compare them with reports from a trusted news source.

Accept other accurate differences among the branches' roles. For the open task, accept a reasonable national action, a correct role for another branch, and a specific way to check facts.