Who Holds Power?

Trace how people guide and limit their government.

5.C.6.1.B "Explain how the people are the ultimate source of government power in a constitutional republic.."

NAME _____ DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline two ways people try to influence Congress, circle an action Congress can take in response, then write 1 beside voters choosing members of Congress and 2 beside members voting on a bill.

A River and a Republic

1. After a storm, Maya sees trash floating in the river near her home. She wants the national government to help protect rivers across the country. In the United States, people do not vote on every national law. Instead, voters choose members of Congress to speak for them. This is part of a constitutional republic: the people give elected leaders the power to act for them.

2. Maya talks with neighbors about the river. Some write letters asking their members of Congress for stronger rules about pollution. Others plan to vote for candidates who promise to protect clean water. Members of Congress can listen to these requests, write a bill, and vote on it. The people are the ultimate source of this power because voters choose who represents them in Congress.

3. Even leaders who win elections cannot do anything they want. The Constitution sets rules for government and protects people's rights, including the right to speak about problems and ask the government to fix them. If voters think a member of Congress has ignored them, they can choose someone else at the next election. That way, leaders must answer to the people rather than rule over them.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. Why can a member of Congress act for people who did not vote on a bill themselves?

2. How could the neighbors' letters lead to government action on river pollution?

3. How does the Constitution help people speak up about problems, even after an election?

4. How can voters show that a member of Congress still answers to them?

3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

Choose a national problem other than river pollution. In three or four sentences, explain how people could seek change, what their elected representatives could do, how the Constitution matters, and what voters could do later if they disagree with a representative.

ANSWER KEY

Who Holds Power?

GRADE 5 · 5.C.6.1.B

PART 1 · READ AND MARK

Underline two ways people try to influence Congress, circle an action Congress can take in response, then write 1 beside voters choosing members of Congress and 2 beside members voting on a bill. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 · ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	Why can a member of Congress act for people who did not vote on a bill themselves?	**Voters choose members of Congress to represent them and act on their behalf.**
2	How could the neighbors' letters lead to government action on river pollution?	**Members of Congress can listen to the requests, write a bill about pollution, and vote on it.**
3	How does the Constitution help people speak up about problems, even after an election?	**It protects their right to speak about problems and ask the government to fix them.**
4	How can voters show that a member of Congress still answers to them?	**They can choose someone else at the next election if they think the member has ignored them.**

PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

People who want safer toys could write to members of Congress and vote for candidates who support safety rules. Elected members of Congress could consider a toy safety bill. They must follow the Constitution, which protects people's right to speak up about the problem. If voters dislike how a member acted, they can choose a different representative at the next election.

Accept different national problems and ways to contact or elect representatives. Strong responses connect government action to voters and explain that the Constitution limits leaders or protects people's rights.