Who Holds Power?

Read the Constitution's opening goals and trace the source of government power.

5.C.6.1 "Explain that the United States of America's government was established through a written Constitution, establishing the supreme law of the land..."

NAME _____ DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

YOUR JOB Box the sentence that names the supreme law, circle six goals from the Preamble, and underline two details that show where government power comes from.

A Plan That Limits Power

1 Can a president ignore the nation's written plan for government? No. In 1787, delegates wrote the United States Constitution. The states approved it, and the new national government began work in 1789. This written plan creates parts of the government and limits what they may do. It is the supreme law of the land. A law that conflicts with the Constitution cannot stand. Even leaders must follow it.

2 The Constitution begins with the Preamble, a short statement of goals. Its first words, "We the People," name the source of government power. The Preamble calls for a stronger union, justice, and peace at home. It also names defense, the general welfare, and liberty for people now and in the future. These goals explain why the national government exists, but they do not give it unlimited power.

3 After a severe storm, families in several states may need help. Working together to respond can support the general welfare, or well-being of the country. In our constitutional republic, voters choose representatives to make laws, and those officials must obey the Constitution. The people are the ultimate source of government power. Delegates chosen by voters in state conventions approved the Constitution, and voters can choose new representatives.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. Why can a law that conflicts with the Constitution not stand?

2. Two states disagree about how to share a river. Which two Preamble goals could guide a fair solution? Explain your choices.

3. How do the Preamble's goals address both danger and future generations?

4. Why do the words "We the People" fit a constitutional republic?

3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

Imagine an elected representative says they should be allowed to ignore the Constitution when making laws. In three or four sentences, explain how the Constitution's limits, one Preamble goal, and the people's power matter in this situation.

ANSWER KEY

Who Holds Power?

GRADE 5 · 5.C.6.1

PART 1 · READ AND MARK

Box the sentence that names the supreme law, circle six goals from the Preamble, and underline two details that show where government power comes from. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 · ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	Why can a law that conflicts with the Constitution not stand?	**The Constitution is the supreme law of the land, so other laws and leaders must follow it.**
2	Two states disagree about how to share a river. Which two Preamble goals could guide a fair solution? Explain your choices.	**Justice could guide the states toward a fair decision, and a stronger union could help them work together.**
3	How do the Preamble's goals address both danger and future generations?	**Defense addresses danger, while liberty for people now and in the future addresses future generations.**
4	Why do the words "We the People" fit a constitutional republic?	**Government power comes from the people. Delegates chosen by voters approved the Constitution, and voters choose representatives to make laws.**

PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

The representative must follow the Constitution because it is the supreme law and limits government power. Following those limits helps protect liberty, a goal named in the Preamble. Voters can choose a different representative, showing that government power comes from the people.

For question 2, accept any two relevant Preamble goals with a clear explanation. For Your Turn, accept any named goal if the student explains its connection to the situation.