Power in Parts

Read how the Constitution divides federal power.

5.C.6.3.A "Explain why the Framers separated government's powers into different branches, identify the three branches of the United States of America's government (legislative, executive, judicial), and describe each branch's basic function."

NAME _____ DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

YOUR JOB Circle the names of the three branches and underline what each one does. Write 1 beside the sentence that explains why the Framers divided power.

Three Branches, Different Jobs

1. In 1787, leaders called the Framers wrote the U.S. Constitution. They knew that a government with all its power in one set of hands could threaten people's freedom. So they separated federal power among three branches. Each branch has a different job, and no single branch is meant to control everything. This plan helps prevent one person or group from gaining too much power.

2. Imagine Congress considers a bill to protect animals in national parks. Congress is part of the legislative branch, which makes federal laws. Members of the House of Representatives and the Senate discuss and vote on bills. If a bill becomes law, the executive branch carries it out. The president leads this branch and directs federal agencies that help put laws into action.

3. Suppose someone argues that the new park law conflicts with the Constitution. The judicial branch, made up of the Supreme Court and other federal courts, can hear a case about it. Federal judges interpret laws and decide whether laws follow the Constitution. Courts do not write the park law or run the agencies that carry it out. Their separate job helps keep the other branches within constitutional limits.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. Why did the Framers give power to three branches instead of one person or group?

2. If Congress votes on the national park bill, which branch is doing its job, and what is that job?

3. After the park bill becomes law, which branch carries it out, and who leads that branch?

4. If someone says the park law conflicts with the Constitution, which branch could hear the case, and what could it decide?

3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

Imagine lawmakers want to reduce pollution in rivers that cross state borders. Write four sentences: explain one possible job for each branch in this situation, then explain why the Framers kept those jobs separate.

ANSWER KEY

Power in Parts

GRADE 5 · 5.C.6.3.A

PART 1 · READ AND MARK

Circle the names of the three branches and underline what each one does. Write 1 beside the sentence that explains why the Framers divided power. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 · ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	Why did the Framers give power to three branches instead of one person or group?	**They wanted to prevent one person or group from gaining too much power and threatening people's freedom.**
2	If Congress votes on the national park bill, which branch is doing its job, and what is that job?	**The legislative branch is doing its job of making federal laws.**
3	After the park bill becomes law, which branch carries it out, and who leads that branch?	**The executive branch carries out the law, and the president leads that branch.**
4	If someone says the park law conflicts with the Constitution, which branch could hear the case, and what could it decide?	**The judicial branch could hear the case and decide whether the law follows the Constitution.**

PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

Congress, in the legislative branch, could make a federal law to reduce pollution in rivers that cross state borders. The president, who leads the executive branch, could direct federal agencies to carry out the law. Federal courts in the judicial branch could decide whether the law follows the Constitution if a case is brought. Keeping these jobs separate helps stop any one branch from gaining too much power.

For Part 3, accept other plausible ways the branches could address river pollution. The response should give each branch its correct function and explain that separating power helps prevent any one branch from gaining too much control.