A Trail Petition

Trace a constitutional right from a petition to a possible law.

5.P.2.1.C "Examine the principles of the Constitution of the United States of America, including how laws are made in a democratic society and are used to protect individual rights."

NAME _____ DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

YOUR JOB Read the passage, then underline the sentence that names Maya's constitutional right, circle the steps a bill can take to become a law, and box one way the branches of government limit each other's power.

Speaking Up for a Trail

1. At a national park, Maya and her neighbors hear that a walking trail may close. They write a peaceful petition asking the federal park office to keep it open. The First Amendment protects their right to ask the government for change. This is called the right to petition. The Constitution also gives people a voice in government by letting them choose lawmakers in elections.

2. Maya learns that some people worry federal officials might punish those who speak up. She asks an elected member of Congress to support a bill that would give people a way to report such punishment. A bill is a plan for a law. Members of the House of Representatives and the Senate debate and vote on it. Both chambers must pass the same bill before it goes to the president.

3. The president can sign the bill into law or veto it. Congress can still make it law by overriding a veto with a two-thirds vote in each chamber. If the law passes, courts can decide cases about how it is used and whether it follows the Constitution. These separate jobs keep one part of government from having all the power. The new law would help protect the right to petition.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. Which action by Maya uses a constitutional right? Name the right.

2. How could Maya's request to a member of Congress help turn her concern into a law?

3. If the president vetoes the bill, what can Congress do? How does this show that power is shared?

4. How would the proposed law help protect the right to petition? What could courts decide if the law passes?

3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

Imagine students want a federally run museum to open on weekends. Write four sentences explaining how they could ask for change using a constitutional right, how a bill could become law, and how a court could check the law if a case arose.

ANSWER KEY

A Trail Petition

GRADE 5 · 5.P.2.1.C

PART 1 · READ AND MARK

Read the passage, then underline the sentence that names Maya's constitutional right, circle the steps a bill can take to become a law, and box one way the branches of government limit each other's power. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 · ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	Which action by Maya uses a constitutional right? Name the right.	**Maya writes a peaceful petition asking the federal park office to keep the trail open. She uses the right to petition.**
2	How could Maya's request to a member of Congress help turn her concern into a law?	**The member could support a bill giving people a way to report punishment for speaking up. The House and Senate would each need to pass the same bill.**
3	If the president vetoes the bill, what can Congress do? How does this show that power is shared?	**Congress can override the veto with a two-thirds vote in each chamber. The president can reject a bill, but Congress can still make it law.**
4	How would the proposed law help protect the right to petition? What could courts decide if the law passes?	**The law would let people report federal officials who punish them for speaking up. Courts could decide cases about how the law is used and whether it follows the Constitution.**

PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

Students could send a peaceful petition asking the federal government to open the museum on weekends. A member of Congress could introduce a bill about museum hours, and both chambers would need to pass it. The president could sign the bill into law, or Congress could override a veto. If a case about the law came to court, judges could decide whether it follows the Constitution.

Accept other accurate descriptions of peaceful petitions and the bill's path through Congress and the president. For the open task, look for a court's role in deciding a case about the law, not a claim that courts approve every new law.