Who Holds Power?

Compare how two neighboring countries organize national leadership.

6.C.5.1.B "Compare different forms of constitutional republics, exemplified by the constitutional republic of the United States of America and the constitutional monarchy of Canada."

NAME _____ DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline two ways the countries are alike. Circle one difference about the head of state in each country, then write U or C beside each circle to show which country it describes.

Two Neighbors, Different Leaders

1 A student in Detroit and a student across the river in Windsor, Canada, both watch a national election. In each country, voters choose people to make laws, and a constitution sets rules that limit government power. Courts can review whether laws follow those rules. Neither country lets one leader make every decision alone. Yet the countries organize their top leaders in different ways. The United States is a constitutional republic with an elected president. Canada is a constitutional monarchy, where a king is head of state under constitutional rules.

2 In the United States, voters elect members of Congress, who make federal laws. Voters also choose electors who select the president. The president is both head of state, a symbol of the country, and head of government, the leader who directs the national executive branch. The president does not need the support of a majority in Congress to stay in office. Congress and the president have separate powers: Congress can pass a bill, and the president can veto it. Congress can override that veto with enough votes.

3 In Canada, voters elect members of the House of Commons, one part of Parliament. The prime minister leads the government and needs enough support in the House to win key votes. The monarch is head of state but does not run the government. A governor general usually carries out the monarch's formal duties in Canada, such as giving royal assent to bills Parliament has passed. If the government loses the House's support, the prime minister may resign or ask for an election. Elected lawmakers still shape laws.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. How do voters help choose lawmakers in both countries?

2. Who is head of state in each country, and how does each person's role in government differ?

3. How does support from elected lawmakers matter differently to the U.S. president and Canada's prime minister?

4. What different actions can follow a bill passed by Congress or Parliament?

3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

Imagine your class is choosing between a president who can stay without the class council's support and a prime minister who needs that support. Write four sentences recommending one plan, comparing what could happen if the council withdraws support, and proposing a rule to limit power in either plan.

ANSWER KEY

Who Holds Power?

GRADE 6 · 6.C.5.1.B

PART 1 · READ AND MARK

Underline two ways the countries are alike. Circle one difference about the head of state in each country, then write U or C beside each circle to show which country it describes. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 · ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	How do voters help choose lawmakers in both countries?	**U.S. voters elect members of Congress, while Canadian voters elect members of the House of Commons.**
2	Who is head of state in each country, and how does each person's role in government differ?	**The U.S. president is head of state and leads the government. Canada's monarch is head of state but does not run the government.**
3	How does support from elected lawmakers matter differently to the U.S. president and Canada's prime minister?	**The U.S. president does not need majority support in Congress to stay in office. Canada's prime minister needs enough House support to win key votes and may resign or ask for an election if the government loses that support.**
4	What different actions can follow a bill passed by Congress or Parliament?	**The U.S. president can veto a bill passed by Congress, while Canada's governor general gives royal assent to a bill passed by Parliament.**

PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

I recommend a class prime minister because the council could replace a leader who loses its support. A class president, like the U.S. president, could stay even if the council disagreed. The class prime minister would need the council's support to keep leading, as Canada's prime minister needs support in the House. Either plan should have written rules limiting the leader's powers, much like both countries have constitutions.

Accept either class leadership plan if the recommendation is supported by an accurate comparison and includes a workable limit on power. For question 4, students need only identify the veto and royal assent, not explain every step in passing a law.