River Rules

How laws and agreements guide a government's choices

6.P.2.1.C "Examine the impact of constitutions, laws, treaties, and international agreements on the limits of government, including the concepts of sovereignty and the rule of law."

NAME _____ DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

YOUR JOB As you read, underline each rule or agreement that limits what Luma's leaders can do. Circle one action that Luma can choose for itself.

A Wall Beside the River

1. Imagine two independent countries, Luma and Vela, beside the same river. Luma's leaders want to build a wall to keep floodwater away from homes. The wall would cross land owned by several families. Luma's constitution, its highest law, says the government must give owners notice and a fair hearing before taking their land. A leader cannot skip these steps because the flood is frightening. This limit is an example of the rule of law: officials must obey the law, too.

2. The wall could also change how much water flows into Vela. Luma's flood safety law requires engineers to check the wall's effects before construction begins. A treaty that Luma and Vela signed requires each country to warn the other before building anything that might change the river's flow. A treaty is an agreement between countries that they agree to follow. Luma's leaders can choose where to build inside Luma, but they cannot ignore either the national law or the treaty they accepted.

3. Both countries also signed an international agreement to share river measurements every month. Unlike their treaty, this plan states that it is voluntary, not legally required. Vela asks for this month's numbers early so it can prepare for flooding. Luma may decide whether to send them early, but it must still send any warning the treaty requires. This shows sovereignty: each country governs itself, yet each can choose to make commitments to another country. Neither country's leaders can treat a voluntary plan as permission to break a law.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. How does Luma's constitution limit what its leaders can do before taking land for the wall?

2. What must happen under Luma's flood safety law before construction begins, and why does that limit the government?

3. Luma governs itself. Why must it still warn Vela before building the wall?

4. How is sending river measurements early different from sending a warning before building?

3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

Invent a different plan to protect homes along the river. In four sentences, describe how your plan could affect a family's land and Vela, explain a required step under Luma's constitution or flood safety law and a required treaty step, describe a choice under the voluntary agreement, and connect your plan to sovereignty and the rule of law.

River Rules

PART 1 · READ AND MARK

As you read, underline each rule or agreement that limits what Luma's leaders can do. Circle one action that Luma can choose for itself. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 · ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	How does Luma's constitution limit what its leaders can do before taking land for the wall?	**Leaders must give the owners notice and a fair hearing before taking their land. They cannot skip those steps because of the flood.**
2	What must happen under Luma's flood safety law before construction begins, and why does that limit the government?	**Engineers must check the wall's effects. Leaders cannot begin construction without that check.**
3	Luma governs itself. Why must it still warn Vela before building the wall?	**Luma accepted a treaty requiring a warning before building anything that might change the river's flow.**
4	How is sending river measurements early different from sending a warning before building?	**Luma may choose whether to send measurements early under the voluntary agreement. The treaty requires a warning before building.**

PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

Luma could dig a new channel across a family's land to carry floodwater away from homes, but it might send more water into Vela. Luma must give the family notice and a fair hearing before taking its land, and engineers must check the channel's effects before construction. Under the treaty, Luma must warn Vela before building; under the voluntary agreement, Luma could share its river measurements early. Luma is sovereign and can choose its project, but the rule of law means its leaders must follow the constitution, flood safety law, and treaty.

Accept plans other than a channel if the stated effects make the chosen limits apply. The response should distinguish the required treaty warning from the voluntary choice to share measurements early.