Power, Split Three Ways

Read, mark, and compare the rules that limit federal power.

8.C.4.2.B "Explain why the Framers of the Constitution of the United States of America separated governmental powers among three branches (separation of powers), comparing the qualifications, terms of office..."

NAME _____ DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline the job of each branch, circle each rule about terms of office, and box each process for removing an official. Use your marks to compare how the branches share and limit power.

Why Divide the Power?

1. Imagine a rule that lets one leader write a law, carry it out, and decide whether the leader broke it. That leader could protect their own choices. The Framers divided federal power to make this harder. Congress makes laws, the President carries them out, and federal courts interpret laws when deciding cases. These jobs belong to the legislative, executive, and judicial branches. The branches can also limit one another. For example, Congress can pass a law, but the President can veto it. Dividing power helps prevent its misuse.

2. Different entry rules and terms also shape power. A House member must be at least 25, have been a U.S. citizen for seven years, and live in the state represented. House members serve two-year terms. A senator must be at least 30, have been a citizen for nine years, and live in the state represented. Senators serve six-year terms. The President must be a natural-born citizen, at least 35, and a U.S. resident for 14 years. Presidents serve four-year terms and can be elected no more than twice.

3. Federal judges follow a different path. The Constitution sets no minimum age, citizenship period, or state residency requirement for them. The President nominates federal judges, and the Senate confirms them. They serve during good behavior, with no fixed term, so they can decide cases without worrying about the next election. Each house of Congress can expel one of its members by a two-thirds vote. The House can impeach a President or federal judge, and the Senate can remove that official after a two-thirds vote to convict. These limits help keep any branch accountable.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. Why did the Framers give lawmaking, carrying out laws, and deciding cases to different branches instead of one leader?

2. Compare the minimum ages and term lengths for House members and senators. Which can voters replace more often?

3. How do the President's qualifications and term differ from those of federal judges? Give one difference of each kind.

4. Compare the votes needed to remove a member of Congress with the steps for removing a President or federal judge. Who takes action?

3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

A student council proposes letting one person write rules, carry them out, and settle complaints. In four or five sentences, explain why the Framers would object, propose three separate roles, and use a comparison of federal officials' terms or removal rules to explain how your plan limits power.

ANSWER KEY

Power, Split Three Ways

GRADE 8 · 8.C.4.2.B

PART 1 · READ AND MARK

Underline the job of each branch, circle each rule about terms of office, and box each process for removing an official. Use your marks to compare how the branches share and limit 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 lawmaking, carrying out laws, and deciding cases to different branches instead of one leader?	**Separating these jobs makes it harder for one leader to misuse power or protect their own choices.**
2	Compare the minimum ages and term lengths for House members and senators. Which can voters replace more often?	**House members must be at least 25 and serve two-year terms. Senators must be at least 30 and serve six-year terms. Voters can replace House members more often.**
3	How do the President's qualifications and term differ from those of federal judges? Give one difference of each kind.	**The President must be a natural-born citizen; the Constitution sets no citizenship requirement for federal judges. Presidents serve four-year terms and can be elected no more than twice, while federal judges have no fixed term and serve during good behavior.**
4	Compare the votes needed to remove a member of Congress with the steps for removing a President or federal judge. Who takes action?	**A member of Congress can be expelled by a two-thirds vote of that member's own house. For a President or federal judge, the House impeaches the official, and the Senate removes the official if two-thirds vote to convict.**

PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

The Framers would object because one student could write unfair rules and then protect them. A council could write rules, a student president could carry them out, and a student panel could settle complaints. Council writers could face voters more often than the student president, much as House members have two-year terms while the U.S. President has a four-year term. More frequent elections would give students a way to replace council writers who misuse their power.

Accept other reasonable sets of three separate roles. The response should connect divided responsibilities to preventing misuse of power and accurately compare federal terms or removal rules.