Who Checks Power?

Sort governments by the legal limits on their rulers.

MWH.C.3.1 "Compare theories and forms of government regarding sources of authority and legitimacy. Distinguish between limited and unlimited forms of government, including the role of the citizen and the concept of individual liberty..."

NAME _____ DATE _____

LIMITED GOVERNMENT	UNLIMITED GOVERNMENT
Enforceable rules restrict a ruler's power. An independent institution can use those rules to check the ruler.	No independent institution has the legal power to stop the ruler. The ruler may listen to advice or make reforms, but those choices are not legal limits on the ruler's power.
An island's founding agreement sets a fixed term for its leader, who must leave office when the term ends.	A clan chief sets punishments without any enforceable legal restraints.

1 SORT

8 items

Circle LIMITED or UNLIMITED for each statement, then in PROVE IT choose two numbered items and explain the evidence for each choice.

1.	Parliament must approve new taxes before England's monarch can collect them.	LIMITED UNLIMITED
2.	Louis XIV claims inherited power from God, and no independent institution can legally overturn his orders.	LIMITED UNLIMITED
3.	An emperor claims Heaven gave him power; people may rebel if he rules badly, but no independent institution can legally block his orders.	LIMITED UNLIMITED
4.	A written constitution lets a court cancel a president's order that exceeds the president's powers.	LIMITED UNLIMITED
5.	A citizen can ask an independent court to review an arrest ordered by the ruler.	LIMITED UNLIMITED
6.	A legislature can remove a prime minister through a legal vote of no confidence.	LIMITED UNLIMITED
7.	Joseph II promotes religious toleration, but no independent institution can legally veto his edicts.	LIMITED UNLIMITED
8.	A constitution gives elected representatives the power to make laws; the monarch cannot make laws alone.	LIMITED UNLIMITED

2 PROVE IT

Explain your thinking

Pick two items from Part 1. For each one, tell how you knew where it belonged.

ITEM # _____ **HOW I KNEW** _____

ITEM # _____ **HOW I KNEW** _____

3 MAKE YOUR OWN

One of each

In MAKE YOUR OWN, write one new example of LIMITED government and one new example of UNLIMITED government; show whether an independent institution can legally restrict the ruler in each example.

LIMITED _____

UNLIMITED _____

CHALLENGE

In two sentences, compare how an abusive ruler can lose power under the Mandate of Heaven and under a constitutional monarchy; identify which system has an enforceable legal check.

ANSWER KEY

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HIGH SCHOOL · MWH.C.3.1

PART 1 · SORT

#	ITEM	CATEGORY	WHY
1	Parliament must approve new taxes before England's monarch can collect them.	**LIMITED**	Parliament has legal authority to withhold approval.
2	Louis XIV claims inherited power from God, and no independent institution can legally overturn his orders.	**UNLIMITED**	Divine right supports his authority, and no independent institution has a legal check on his orders.
3	An emperor claims Heaven gave him power; people may rebel if he rules badly, but no independent institution can legally block his orders.	**UNLIMITED**	The Mandate of Heaven could justify rebellion against an abusive ruler, but it provides no independent institution with a legal check on his orders.
4	A written constitution lets a court cancel a president's order that exceeds the president's powers.	**LIMITED**	A court can enforce a constitutional limit on the president.
5	A citizen can ask an independent court to review an arrest ordered by the ruler.	**LIMITED**	Court review gives a citizen a legal way to challenge the ruler's action.
6	A legislature can remove a prime minister through a legal vote of no confidence.	**LIMITED**	The legislature has a legal means to check and remove the leader.
7	Joseph II promotes religious toleration, but no independent institution can legally veto his edicts.	**UNLIMITED**	His reform does not give another institution legal power to limit his edicts.
8	A constitution gives elected representatives the power to make laws; the monarch cannot make laws alone.	**LIMITED**	The constitution legally restricts the monarch's lawmaking power.

PART 2 · PROVE IT

Accept any explanation that names the deciding feature from the rule box for the chosen item.

PART 3 · MAKE YOUR OWN (SAMPLE ANSWERS)

- **LIMITED**: A national charter requires an independent commission to certify election results before a leader takes office.
- **UNLIMITED**: A ruler can order a person's imprisonment, and no independent court has legal power to review the decision.

Challenge: Under the Mandate of Heaven, abuse could be seen as proof that an emperor lost Heaven's favor, making rebellion seem justified. In a constitutional monarchy, institutions can enforce constitutional rules to restrict or remove a monarch without relying on rebellion.

The key distinction is an enforceable legal check, not whether a ruler claims a divine source of authority or chooses to make helpful reforms. In PROVE IT, accept explanations that identify the specific legal check or its absence in each chosen item.