# Power in Common

Why national and state governments share authority

**USG.C.3.4.D** "Describe the reasons why the Framers established concurrent powers, comparing examples exercised by both the national and state governments."

NAME _____ DATE _____

## 1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

**YOUR JOB** Underline two reasons the Framers shared powers, and circle three powers both governments can use. Write N beside one national example and S beside one state example of each circled power.

### Who Can Act After a Hurricane?

1. After a hurricane, a town needs repairs to its roads and a nearby military base. Who can raise money to help? The Constitution gives some powers to both the national government and state governments. These are called concurrent powers. The Framers created this overlap because a national government needed enough authority to address problems across states, while states needed room to meet local needs. If only one level could collect taxes, the other might struggle to pay for its responsibilities. Shared powers let each level act within its own area of responsibility, even when both respond to the same crisis.

2. Taxation shows how this works in practice. Congress can impose federal taxes, such as income taxes, to fund national responsibilities, including disaster aid sent to several states. A state legislature can impose state taxes to pay for state responsibilities, such as local emergency crews and road repairs. Both governments raise revenue through taxes, but they decide how to use it under their separate responsibilities. The Framers did not want the national government to depend entirely on state payments, as it had under the Articles of Confederation. Nor did they want states unable to fund services close to home.

3. Borrowing money is another shared power. The national government can borrow to finance a project that connects multiple states, while a state can issue bonds to build schools within its borders. Both take on debt, but their projects serve different populations. Both levels also create courts: federal courts decide cases under federal law, and state courts decide many cases under state law. This overlap gives each government tools to carry out its duties. It does not mean their laws are always identical. When a valid federal law conflicts with a state law, the Constitution makes federal law supreme.

## 2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. How can both governments use taxes after a disaster, and why did the Framers want each to have that power?

2. Compare the national and state borrowing examples. How does each project fit that government's responsibilities?

3. How do the court examples show that both levels need authority to carry out their duties?

4. What common reason explains why the Framers gave these powers to both levels instead of only one? Use one contrast from the passage.

## 3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

A growing city needs a transit hub that connects local buses to trains crossing state lines. Explain how each level of government could use the same concurrent power to help, compare what each would support, and explain why the Framers gave both levels that power.

ANSWER KEY

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HIGH SCHOOL · USG.C.3.4.D

## PART 1 · READ AND MARK

Underline two reasons the Framers shared powers, and circle three powers both governments can use. Write N beside one national example and S beside one state example of each circled power. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

## PART 2 · ANSWERS

| # | QUESTION | ANSWER |
|---|---|---|
| 1 | How can both governments use taxes after a disaster, and why did the Framers want each to have that power? | **The national government can tax to fund aid across states, while a state can tax to fund local crews and road repairs. Each needs its own revenue to carry out its responsibilities.** |
| 2 | Compare the national and state borrowing examples. How does each project fit that government's responsibilities? | **The national government can borrow for a project connecting states. A state can issue bonds for schools within its borders.** |
| 3 | How do the court examples show that both levels need authority to carry out their duties? | **Federal courts decide cases under federal law, while state courts decide many cases under state law. Each government needs courts for matters within its responsibilities.** |
| 4 | What common reason explains why the Framers gave these powers to both levels instead of only one? Use one contrast from the passage. | **Both levels need tools to meet their different responsibilities. For example, national borrowing can support a project connecting states, while state borrowing can support schools.** |

## PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

The national government could collect taxes to help fund rail connections between states. The state government could collect taxes to improve bus stops and access roads near the hub. Both use taxation, but one supports travel across state lines while the other meets local needs. The Framers gave both governments taxing power so each could pay for its own responsibilities.

Accept any accurate comparison of how both levels exercise a shared power to meet different responsibilities. For the open task, students may use taxation or borrowing if they explain a plausible role for each level.