

Power in Texas

Read how Texas divides government jobs among three branches.

4.13.B “identify and explain the basic functions of the three branches of government according to the Texas Constitution; and”

NAME _____

DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK _____ Read it twice

YOUR JOB Circle the name of each branch, then underline the words that tell what job that branch does.

Three Jobs, One State

- ① Texas has a state constitution, a set of rules for state government. It divides government power among three branches so no one group has all the power. The legislative branch makes laws for Texas. Texans elect lawmakers to the Texas Legislature, which has the House of Representatives and the Senate. Lawmakers may discuss, change, and vote on a bill before it can become a law.
- ② The executive branch carries out, or enforces, state laws. The governor leads this branch and can sign or veto bills passed by the Legislature. State agencies in the executive branch help put laws into action. For example, an agency may help enforce rules that protect public health. This branch does not make laws, but it helps make sure laws are followed.
- ③ The judicial branch explains what laws mean and decides cases when people disagree about laws. Texas courts are part of this branch. Judges may decide whether a law follows the Texas Constitution. They also decide cases, such as a disagreement about a state rule. The judicial branch does not write laws or enforce them. Its job is to apply the Constitution and laws fairly in court.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE _____ Use the passage

1 Which branch makes Texas laws? Name the two parts of the Texas Legislature.

2 What is the executive branch's basic job? Give one way the governor can act on a bill.

3 Which branch decides whether a law follows the Texas Constitution? Explain what else this branch does.

4 Why does the Texas Constitution divide government power among three branches?

3 YOUR TURN _____ Your own words

Imagine Texas lawmakers propose a law requiring cyclists under age 16 to wear helmets. Write exactly three sentences that explain one job for the legislative branch, one job for the executive branch, and one job for the judicial branch related to this law.

PART 1 • READ AND MARK

Circle the name of each branch, then underline the words that tell what job that branch does. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 • ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	Which branch makes Texas laws? Name the two parts of the Texas Legislature.	The legislative branch makes laws. The Texas Legislature includes the House of Representatives and the Senate.
2	What is the executive branch's basic job? Give one way the governor can act on a bill.	The executive branch enforces state laws. The governor can sign or veto a bill passed by the Legislature.
3	Which branch decides whether a law follows the Texas Constitution? Explain what else this branch does.	The judicial branch decides whether a law follows the Texas Constitution. It explains laws and decides cases in court.
4	Why does the Texas Constitution divide government power among three branches?	It divides power so that no one group has all the power.

PART 3 • YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

The legislative branch could discuss and vote on the helmet bill. The executive branch could enforce the new helmet law after it is passed. The judicial branch could decide a court case about what the law means or whether it follows the Texas Constitution.

Accept three sentences that correctly connect making laws to the legislative branch, enforcing laws to the executive branch, and interpreting laws or deciding cases to the judicial branch. Students may use a different reasonable law-related example.