

Documents and Power

Read how key documents explain rights, rules, and government jobs.

4.13 "Government. The student understands important ideas in historical documents of Texas and the United States. The student is expected to: identify the purposes and explain the importance of the Texas Declaration of Independence and the Texas..."

NAME _____

DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK _____ Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline each statement that tells a document's purpose or importance. Circle each sentence that tells what a Texas government branch does.

Words That Guide Government

- ① In 1836, Texas leaders wrote the Texas Declaration of Independence. It explained why Texas wanted to separate from Mexico and become free to govern itself. The document told the world that the people believed their rights had been harmed. Its importance was clear: it announced Texas as an independent republic and gave reasons for creating a new government.
- ② The Texas Constitution, adopted in 1876, is the plan for Texas government. It protects some rights and divides government power among three branches. The legislative branch makes laws. The executive branch carries out laws and leads state agencies. The judicial branch interprets laws and decides court cases. This division helps keep one branch from holding all government power.
- ③ The Declaration of Independence said that the colonies should be free from Great Britain. Its intent was to explain the colonists' reasons for independence and their belief that people have rights. The U.S. Constitution created a national government and set its powers. The Bill of Rights added protections, such as freedom of speech and religion. Together, these documents guide government and protect people's rights.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE Use the passage

1 What was the purpose of the Texas Declaration of Independence, and why was it important?

2 How does the Texas Constitution help keep one branch from having all government power?

3 What does each Texas government branch do?

4 How are the Declaration of Independence and the U.S. Constitution different?

3 YOUR TURN Your own words

Imagine your town is writing a constitution. Write four sentences that name one right to protect and explain the job of each of the three government branches in your town.

PART 1 • READ AND MARK

Underline each statement that tells a document's purpose or importance. Circle each sentence that tells what a Texas government branch does. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 • ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	What was the purpose of the Texas Declaration of Independence, and why was it important?	It explained why Texas wanted to separate from Mexico and govern itself. It announced Texas as an independent republic and gave reasons for a new government.
2	How does the Texas Constitution help keep one branch from having all government power?	It divides government power among the legislative, executive, and judicial branches.
3	What does each Texas government branch do?	The legislative branch makes laws. The executive branch carries out laws and leads state agencies. The judicial branch interprets laws and decides court cases.
4	How are the Declaration of Independence and the U.S. Constitution different?	The Declaration of Independence explained reasons for freedom from Great Britain and belief in rights. The U.S. Constitution created a national government and set its powers.

PART 3 • YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

Our town constitution protects the right to speak at town meetings. The legislative branch makes town rules. The executive branch carries out the rules and leads town workers. The judicial branch decides whether rules were followed fairly.

Accept equivalent explanations of each document's purpose, meaning, and importance when they match the passage. For the open response, accept a reasonable protected right and accurate functions for all three branches.