

Power in Three

Read how the branches share the work of government.

5.15.A “identify and explain the basic functions of the three branches of government;”

NAME _____

DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK _____ Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline the name of each branch, and circle the words that tell what that branch does, so you can compare their functions.

Sharing Government Power

- ① In the United States, power is shared among three branches of government. This arrangement helps keep one person or group from holding all the power. The legislative branch writes and passes laws. Congress is the national legislative branch. It includes the House of Representatives and the Senate. Members listen to concerns, debate ideas, and vote on bills, which are proposed laws.
- ② After Congress passes a bill, the executive branch carries out and enforces the law. The president leads this branch at the national level. Executive departments and agencies help do this work. For example, when a law requires safer drinking water, an agency can set rules, inspect water systems, and respond when the rules are not followed.
- ③ The judicial branch decides what laws mean and whether laws follow the Constitution. Courts make these decisions when people or groups disagree about a law. The Supreme Court is the highest national court. Suppose a state law is challenged in court. Judges study the law and the Constitution, then make a ruling. Judicial rulings can affect how a law is used.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE _____ Use the passage

1 What is the main function of the legislative branch? Name the national legislative body.

2 After a bill becomes a law, what does the executive branch do? Who leads this branch at the national level?

3 What does the judicial branch decide when a law is challenged in court?

4 How are the functions of the legislative, executive, and judicial branches different?

3 YOUR TURN _____ Your own words

Choose a new community problem that might need a law. Write exactly three sentences, with one sentence explaining what each branch could do about the problem.

PART 1 • READ AND MARK

Underline the name of each branch, and circle the words that tell what that branch does, so you can compare their functions. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 • ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	What is the main function of the legislative branch? Name the national legislative body.	The legislative branch writes and passes laws. Congress is the national legislative body.
2	After a bill becomes a law, what does the executive branch do? Who leads this branch at the national level?	The executive branch carries out and enforces the law. The president leads it at the national level.
3	What does the judicial branch decide when a law is challenged in court?	It decides what the law means and whether the law follows the Constitution.
4	How are the functions of the legislative, executive, and judicial branches different?	The legislative branch makes laws, the executive branch carries out and enforces laws, and the judicial branch interprets laws and decides whether they follow the Constitution.

PART 3 • YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

For a law about reducing noise near schools, the legislative branch could write and pass the law. The executive branch could enforce the new noise rules. The judicial branch could decide a case about whether the law follows the Constitution.

Accept accurate explanations that distinguish making laws, carrying out or enforcing laws, and interpreting laws or deciding whether laws follow the Constitution. For the open response, accept reasonable community problems and branch actions that match each branch's function.