

Power By Design

Read how the Texas Constitution limits power and protects rights.

7.13 "Government. The student understands the basic principles reflected in the Texas Constitution. The student is expected to: identify how the Texas Constitution reflects the principles of limited government, republicanism..."

NAME _____

DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK _____ Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline each of the seven constitutional principles named in the passage. Circle one nearby detail that shows each principle in action.

Texas Government Has Boundaries

- ① Texas has a written constitution, the highest law of the state. It reflects popular sovereignty because the people approve constitutional changes through elections. It also reflects republicanism because voters elect representatives to make many public decisions. Limited government means officials must follow constitutional rules instead of using unlimited power. Article I, the Texas Bill of Rights, protects individual rights such as religious freedom, free speech, and due process. These protections set boundaries on what state government may do.
- ② Texas uses separation of powers by dividing state government into legislative, executive, and judicial branches. The legislature writes laws, the governor and other executive officials carry them out, and courts interpret them. Checks and balances keep one branch from acting alone. For example, a governor may veto a bill, but the legislature can override that veto with a two-thirds vote in each chamber. Courts can rule that a law violates the constitution. Like the U.S. Constitution, Texas uses these limits on power.
- ③ Federalism divides power between the national and state governments. Texas manages areas such as public education and state elections, while the national government handles matters such as declaring war. Texas laws must follow the U.S. Constitution. Both constitutions include bills of rights that protect freedoms, including speech, religion, and fair legal procedures. The Texas Bill of Rights also specifically recognizes certain rights of crime victims. Texas has a longer, more detailed constitution, but both documents limit government and protect individual rights.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE _____ Use the passage

1 Which principle is shown when Texans elect representatives, and which principle is shown when people approve constitutional changes?

2 How do the three branches and the veto example show separation of powers, checks and balances, and limited government?

3 According to the passage, how does federalism divide responsibilities, and what rule applies to Texas laws?

4 Name one protection shared by the Texas and U.S. Bills of Rights. Then name one protection specifically identified in the passage as part of the Texas Bill of Rights.

3 YOUR TURN _____ Your own words

Invent a fictional Texas law. In exactly four sentences, explain how it involves two constitutional principles, name one check on power, and compare its effect on a Texas and U.S. Bill of Rights protection.

PART 1 • READ AND MARK

Underline each of the seven constitutional principles named in the passage. Circle one nearby detail that shows each principle in action. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 • ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	Which principle is shown when Texans elect representatives, and which principle is shown when people approve constitutional changes?	Electing representatives shows republicanism. Approving constitutional changes shows popular sovereignty.
2	How do the three branches and the veto example show separation of powers, checks and balances, and limited government?	Different branches have different jobs, showing separation of powers. The governor can veto a bill and the legislature can override the veto, showing checks and balances. These limits keep officials from having unlimited power.
3	According to the passage, how does federalism divide responsibilities, and what rule applies to Texas laws?	Texas manages areas such as public education and state elections, while the national government handles matters such as declaring war. Texas laws must follow the U.S. Constitution.
4	Name one protection shared by the Texas and U.S. Bills of Rights. Then name one protection specifically identified in the passage as part of the Texas Bill of Rights.	Shared protections include free speech, religious freedom, or fair legal procedures. The Texas Bill of Rights specifically recognizes certain rights of crime victims.

PART 3 • YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

A Texas law bans all peaceful criticism of state officials. This law violates individual rights and limited government because both the Texas and U.S. Bills of Rights protect free speech. A Texas court could rule that the law violates the Texas Constitution, which is a check on lawmakers. The state could not enforce the law if it conflicts with the U.S. Constitution.

Accept equivalent explanations and accurate examples of shared rights named in the passage. For the open task, confirm that the response has exactly four sentences, identifies two principles, includes a check, and accurately compares Texas and U.S. rights protections.