

Government Close Up

Identify how local and state governments are organized and what they do.

7.14.A “describe the structure and functions of government at municipal, county, and state levels; and”

NAME _____

DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK _____ Read it twice

YOUR JOB Circle each government-level name, underline the structures at that level, and draw a box around the functions those structures perform.

Three Levels, Shared Communities

- ① Residents of Riverton want a safer crosswalk near the library. Their municipal government, the government of a city or town, handles many services close to home. Riverton voters elect a city council, whose members make local laws called ordinances and approve a budget. The council may hold public meetings before deciding on a project. A mayor leads the city government and may sign ordinances or direct departments. City staff in departments such as public works maintain streets, collect trash, and repair local sidewalks.
- ② Beyond one town, county government serves a larger area that may include cities, towns, and rural communities. In Texas, voters elect a county judge and four commissioners who form the commissioners court. This governing body adopts a county budget and sets policies for county services. Other elected county officers may include a sheriff, who leads law enforcement in unincorporated areas, and a clerk, who keeps official records. Counties often operate courts, maintain county roads, conduct elections, and manage services that several communities use.
- ③ State government has authority across the entire state and addresses issues that reach beyond one county. Its structure includes three branches. The legislature, made up of elected representatives, writes and passes state laws and approves spending. The governor heads the executive branch, signs or vetoes bills, and directs state agencies. State courts in the judicial branch interpret laws and decide cases. State agencies may oversee public education, issue driver licenses, protect natural resources, and enforce statewide rules. Each level of government can cooperate when a problem affects the same residents.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE _____ Use the passage

1 Name one structure in Riverton's municipal government and one function it performs.

2 Who makes up a Texas commissioners court, and what does it do?

3 Why might a county provide a service that a municipal government does not provide?

4 Match each state branch to one function: legislature, executive branch, and judicial branch.

3 YOUR TURN _____ Your own words

Invent one community problem that could involve municipal, county, and state government. Complete the table to show one structure at each level and one action or function it could use to address the problem.

GOVERNMENT LEVEL	STRUCTURE	ACTION OR FUNCTION
Municipal		
County		
State		

PART 1 • READ AND MARK

Circle each government-level name, underline the structures at that level, and draw a box around the functions those structures perform. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 • ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	Name one structure in Riverton's municipal government and one function it performs.	Answers may include: The city council makes ordinances and approves a budget. The mayor leads city government, signs ordinances, or directs departments. Public works maintains streets, collects trash, and repairs sidewalks.
2	Who makes up a Texas commissioners court, and what does it do?	An elected county judge and four elected commissioners form the commissioners court. It adopts the county budget and sets policies for county services.
3	Why might a county provide a service that a municipal government does not provide?	A county serves a larger area that can include cities, towns, and rural communities, so it manages services that several communities use.
4	Match each state branch to one function: legislature, executive branch, and judicial branch.	Legislature: writes and passes state laws and approves spending. Executive branch: signs or vetoes bills and directs state agencies. Judicial branch: interprets laws and decides cases.

PART 3 • YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

GOVERNMENT LEVEL	STRUCTURE	ACTION OR FUNCTION
Municipal	City council and public works department	Approve and install drainage improvements on city streets.
County	Commissioners court	Set a county policy and fund drainage work that serves several communities.
State	State agency	Enforce statewide water rules and provide support for major flood-control work.

Accept equivalent structures and functions stated in the passage. For the open task, accept plausible government actions that match the scope of each level, recognizing that exact duties can vary by state and locality.