

Power Plan

Read how the Constitution organizes and limits the federal government.

3.9.b “explaining how the Constitution supports the structure of the United States government;”

NAME _____

DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK _____ Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline each sentence that tells a branch's job. Then write 1, 2, and 3 in the margin beside the legislative, executive, and judicial branch paragraphs, in that order, to show how the Constitution organizes government.

A Plan for Government

- ① The Constitution is the highest law of the United States. It creates the federal government and divides its work among three branches. The legislative branch makes laws. It is called Congress, and it has two parts, the House of Representatives and the Senate. Having two parts means that both the House and the Senate must agree before a bill can go to the president.
- ② The executive branch carries out laws. The president leads this branch and may sign a bill into law or veto it. A veto sends the bill back to Congress. Congress can override a veto only when two thirds of the House and two thirds of the Senate vote for the bill. This rule gives Congress a way to check the president's power.
- ③ The judicial branch includes the Supreme Court and other federal courts. Courts decide cases and explain what laws mean. They can decide that a law or government action does not follow the Constitution. The Constitution gives each branch its own work and ways to limit the others. This structure helps keep any one branch from holding all the power.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE _____ Use the passage

1 What does the Constitution do to keep all federal power from being in one place?

2 How does the Constitution organize Congress before a bill can go to the president?

3 Explain exactly how Congress can check a presidential veto.

4 How can the judicial branch check a law or government action?

3 YOUR TURN _____ Your own words

Imagine that Congress proposes a new law. Write three sentences explaining what Congress, the president, and a federal court could each do. Include one way that one branch can limit another branch.

PART 1 • READ AND MARK

Underline each sentence that tells a branch's job. Then write 1, 2, and 3 in the margin beside the legislative, executive, and judicial branch paragraphs, in that order, to show how the Constitution organizes government. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 • ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	What does the Constitution do to keep all federal power from being in one place?	It divides the work of the federal government among three branches.
2	How does the Constitution organize Congress before a bill can go to the president?	Congress has the House of Representatives and the Senate, and both must agree on the bill.
3	Explain exactly how Congress can check a presidential veto.	Congress can override the veto only if two thirds of the House and two thirds of the Senate vote for the bill.
4	How can the judicial branch check a law or government action?	Federal courts can decide that a law or government action does not follow the Constitution.

PART 3 • YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

Congress can make a bill, and both the House and Senate must agree before sending it to the president. The president can sign the bill or veto it, but Congress can override the veto only when two thirds of each chamber votes for it. A federal court can decide whether the new law follows the Constitution.

Accept equivalent explanations that identify the three branches, their different jobs, and a correct check on power. For the veto check, students must state that two thirds of both the House and the Senate are needed.