

State Power Paths

Read how three branches share state government power.

CE.3.a “describing the structure and powers of the state government (the three branches of government);”

NAME _____

DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK _____ Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline each sentence that tells a branch's job, and circle words or phrases that show one branch limiting or checking another branch.

How State Government Works

- ① Every state has its own government, guided by a state constitution. Like the national government, a state government divides power among three branches. This structure helps prevent one person or group from controlling every decision. State leaders deal with issues close to home, such as public schools, state roads, licenses, parks, and laws that protect people. Although state governments share a basic design, each state's constitution can give officials somewhat different duties and limits as well.
- ② The legislative branch makes state laws. In most states, the legislature has two houses, a senate and a house of delegates or representatives. Lawmakers listen to people, debate ideas, write bills, and vote. A bill that passes the legislature usually goes to the governor. The governor may sign it into law or veto it. In many states, legislators can override a veto with a large enough vote. The legislative branch also approves a state budget, which directs how state money will be spent.
- ③ The executive branch carries out state laws. Its chief leader is usually the governor, who can propose a budget, lead state agencies, and respond to emergencies within the powers of state law. Other executive officials may manage elections, transportation, or public safety. The judicial branch interprets laws and decides court cases. State judges decide whether laws or government actions follow the state constitution. Courts can settle disputes and protect legal rights. Each branch has separate jobs, yet the branches can check one another's power.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE _____ Use the passage

1 Why does a state government divide power among three branches?

2 What does the legislative branch do with a bill, and what can the governor do after the bill passes?

3 Give one responsibility of the executive branch and one responsibility of the judicial branch.

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

3 YOUR TURN _____ Your own words

Write exactly 3 sentences about a proposed state law requiring bicycle helmets. Explain one job for the legislative branch, one job for the executive branch, and one job for the judicial branch.

PART 1 • READ AND MARK

Underline each sentence that tells a branch's job, and circle words or phrases that show one branch limiting or checking another branch. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 • ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	Why does a state government divide power among three branches?	It helps prevent one person or group from controlling every decision.
2	What does the legislative branch do with a bill, and what can the governor do after the bill passes?	The legislative branch debates, writes, and votes on bills. After a bill passes, the governor may sign it into law or veto it.
3	Give one responsibility of the executive branch and one responsibility of the judicial branch.	The executive branch carries out state laws, leads state agencies, or responds to emergencies. The judicial branch interprets laws and decides court cases.
4	How can the judicial branch check a law or government action?	State judges can decide whether a law or government action follows the state constitution.

PART 3 • YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

The legislative branch could debate and vote on a bicycle-helmet bill. The governor could sign the bill or veto it after the legislature passes it. If a court case challenged the law, the judicial branch could decide whether it follows the state constitution.

Accept accurate branch roles that match the passage and clearly connect each branch to the proposed law. For the open response, require exactly three sentences, with one accurate role for each branch.