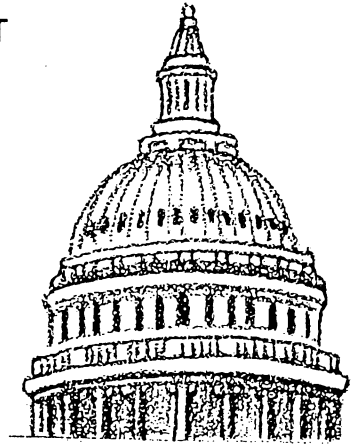


THREE BRANCHES OF GOVERNMENT

The delegates who attended the Constitutional Convention decided that the federal government should have three parts, or branches. They believed a "separation of powers" between three branches would prevent any one branch from becoming too strong. Therefore, according to the Constitution, the federal government is made up of: the legislative branch, or Congress, to make the laws; the executive branch, headed by the President, to enforce the laws; and the judicial branch, or courts, to interpret the laws.



Contest 1/Legislative Branch: Fill in as many of the missing words, names, and terms as you can in the following sentences. The first and last letters of each answer are given as clues.

- (1) The Congress of the United States, which makes the nation's l _____ s, consists of the Senate and House of Representatives.
- (2) The 100-member S _____ e is made up of 2 senators from each of the 50 states.
- (3) The House of Representatives, usually called simply the House, has 435 members. House members, or representatives, are elected from congressional districts of about equal population into which the states are divided. Every state must have at least one H _____ e seat.
- (4) The Senate and House meet in separate chambers in the Capitol Building in Washington, D.C. The building stands on C _____ I (two words), often referred to as "the Hill."
- (5) Senators and representatives occasionally meet in a joint session in the larger House of Representatives chamber, mainly to hear an address by the P _____ t or a foreign official.
- (6) The Constitution gives Congress "all legislative powers" of the federal government. At the heart of Congress's lawmaking powers is its "power of the purse" — its control over government taxing and spending. Article 1 of the Constitution lists a wide range of powers granted to Congress. These delegated, or expressed, powers include the authority to coin money, regulate trade, declare war, and raise and equip m _____ y forces.
- (7) The executive and judicial branches of government limit Congress's powers. The President may veto any bill Congress passes. Congress can override a veto only by a two-thirds vote in each chamber, which is usually difficult to do. The President's power to propose legislation acts as another check on Congress. By its power of j _____ I review, the Supreme Court may declare a law passed by Congress to be unconstitutional.
- (8) The Constitution requires the President to submit nominations of Cabinet members, federal judges, ambassadors, and other officials to the Senate for approval. Senators approve almost all nominations to the executive branch, but almost a fourth of S _____ t (two words) nominees have failed to win Senate confirmation.
- (9) The President has the power to make treaties, but a treaty requires the approval of two-thirds of the s _____ s.
- (10) An impeachment is a charge of serious misconduct in office against a federal official. The House of Representatives brings the impeachment charges against these officials. If a majority of representatives vote for impeachment, the Senate hears the case. The official can then be r _____ d from office by a two-thirds vote of the senators.

Contest 2/Executive Branch: Choose the underlined answer which best completes each of the following paragraphs.

- (1) The President nominates Cabinet members, Supreme Court justices, and other high federal officials. All such top appointments require Senate approval. The President can appoint a number of personal aides and advisers and can fill hundreds of lower jobs in the executive branch (with; without) _____ Senate approval.
- (2) The President can issue reprieves and pardons for crimes against the United States, except in impeachment. A reprieve delays the penalty for a crime. A pardon frees the offender from a sentence or the possibility of a sentence. (The Constitution; State law) _____ allows the President to grant reprieves and pardons.
- (3) The President's main duties as commander of the nation's armed services are to defend the country during wartime and to keep it strong during peacetime. The chief executive appoints all the nation's highest military officers and (determines; helps determine) _____ the size of the armed forces.
- (4) The Constitution gives the President power to appoint ambassadors, make treaties, and receive foreign diplomats. The President also (proposes legislation dealing with; determines the amount of) _____ aid to foreign countries.
- (5) The President may make executive agreements with foreign leaders. Such agreements resemble treaties (but do not; and therefore) _____ need legislative branch approval.
- (6) The President (has little influence on; greatly influences) _____ the development of many laws passed by Congress.
- (7) At the beginning of each session of Congress, the President delivers a (State of the Union Address; Legislative Agenda Address) _____ to the lawmakers. In this message, the President discusses major problems facing the nation and recommends a legislative program to solve them.
- (8) Cabinet officers and other presidential aides work to win congressional support for the President's programs. The (President; chief justice) _____ may become involved in a struggle over a key bill, speaking to members of Congress to try to win their backing.
- (9) The Constitution allows the President to veto any bill passed by Congress. If both the Senate and House re-pass the vetoed bill by a (two-thirds; three-fourths) _____ majority, the bill becomes law despite the President's disapproval.
- (10) Congress has overturned about (half; 4 percent) _____ of all vetoes.
- (11) In return for a legislator's support, a President may campaign for the reelection of a faithful party member or promise to approve a (state; federal) _____ project that will benefit a legislator's home district.
- (12) The American people rely on the chief executive to give the highest priority to serving the interests of (a state or citizen; the entire nation) _____.
- (13) Since the 1960s, Presidents have favored the use of (televised addresses; press conferences) _____ from the White House to reach large audiences.
- (14) As the leading representative of the U.S. government, the President attends historical celebrations, dedicates new buildings and national parks, presents awards to war heroes, and invites distinguished Americans to the (White House; Capitol Building) _____.
- (15) The President represents the United States in visits to other countries. In addition, the chief executive greets visiting foreign officials and often hosts formal (White House dinners; tours of Washington) _____ for them.

The System of Checks and Balances

The delegates to the Constitutional Convention did not want any one of the three branches of government to become too powerful. For this reason, the system of "checks and balances" was established. This system allows one branch to limit, or "check," the power of another branch.

Listed below are important powers of the executive, legislative, and judicial branches. Use the information to answer the questions which follow.

<p align="center"><u>Executive Branch</u> (President)</p>	<p align="center"><u>Legislative Branch</u> (Congress)</p>	<p align="center"><u>Judicial Branch</u> (Courts)</p>
<p>(1) may sign or veto bills (proposed laws)</p> <p>(2) appoints judges, ambassadors, Cabinet members, and other officials</p>	<p>(1) writes bills and sends them to the President</p> <p>(2) can pass a law over the President's veto by a 2/3 vote in both the Senate and House of Representatives</p> <p>(3) a. House can impeach (charge with misconduct) the President by a majority vote (over half its members) b. the Senate then can remove the President by a 2/3 vote</p> <p>(4) approves or disapproves appointments made by the President</p> <p>(5) can remove judges and other officials for improper behavior</p>	<p>(1) decides whether laws have been broken</p> <p>(2) may declare a law unconstitutional (the power of "judicial review")</p>

Directions: Each question has two parts. Fill in the space in part **a** with the name of the branch — executive, legislative, or judicial — which has the power being described. Fill in the space in part **b** with the branch which can check the power of the first branch.

- (1) a. A law is written by the _____ branch and signed by the President.
b. The law is declared unconstitutional by the _____ branch.
- (2) a. A Supreme Court judge is appointed by the _____ branch.
b. The _____ branch votes to remove the judge for misconduct.
- (3) a. A candidate for Secretary of State is nominated by the _____ branch.
b. The _____ branch decides not to approve of the President's choice.
- (4) a. A bill is passed by the _____ branch.
b. The _____ branch vetoes it.
- (5) a. The _____ branch vetoes a bill.
b. The bill becomes a law when 2/3 of the members of each house of the _____ branch approves it.

Three Branches of Government

True/False

- (1) _____ The delegates who attended the Constitutional Convention believed a "separation of powers" between three branches of government would prevent any one branch from becoming too strong.
- (2) _____ The Congress of the United States, which makes the nation's laws, consists of the Senate and House of Representatives.
- (3) _____ The Senate is made up of 4 senators from each of the 50 states.
- (4) _____ Members of the House of Representatives are elected from congressional districts of about equal population into which the states are divided.
- (5) _____ At the center of Congress's lawmaking powers is its "power of the purse" — its control over government taxing and spending.
- (6) _____ A reprimand is a charge of serious misconduct in office against a federal official.
- (7) _____ The President nominates Cabinet members, Supreme Court justices, and other high federal officials.
- (8) _____ The President's main duties as commander of the nation's armed services are to defend the country during wartime and to keep it strong during peacetime.
- (9) _____ In the State of the Union Address to Congress, the President discusses major problems facing the nation and recommends a legislative program to solve them.
- (10) _____ The President may become involved in a struggle over a key bill, speaking to members of Congress to try to win their backing.
- (11) _____ The Constitution allows the President to veto any bill passed by Congress.
- (12) _____ Congress has overturned about half of all vetoes.
- (13) _____ Since the 1960s, Presidents have favored the use of press conferences from the White House to reach large audiences.
- (14) _____ The Supreme Court has seven members — a chief justice and six associate justices.
- (15) _____ The Constitution sets no qualifications for justices, but states that they shall be appointed by the President, with the advice and consent of the House of Representatives.
- (16) _____ The most important cases decided by the Supreme Court are those which require the justices to interpret the Constitution or the laws enacted by Congress.
- (17) _____ The Supreme Court's power to decide whether a federal or state law or executive action is constitutional is known as judicial review.
- (18) _____ The system of "checks and balances" was established to allow one branch to limit the power of another branch.
- (19) _____ A law written by the legislative branch and signed by the President can be declared unconstitutional by the executive branch.
- (20) _____ If the President vetoes a bill, it still can become a law if 2/3 of the members of both the Senate and House approve it.