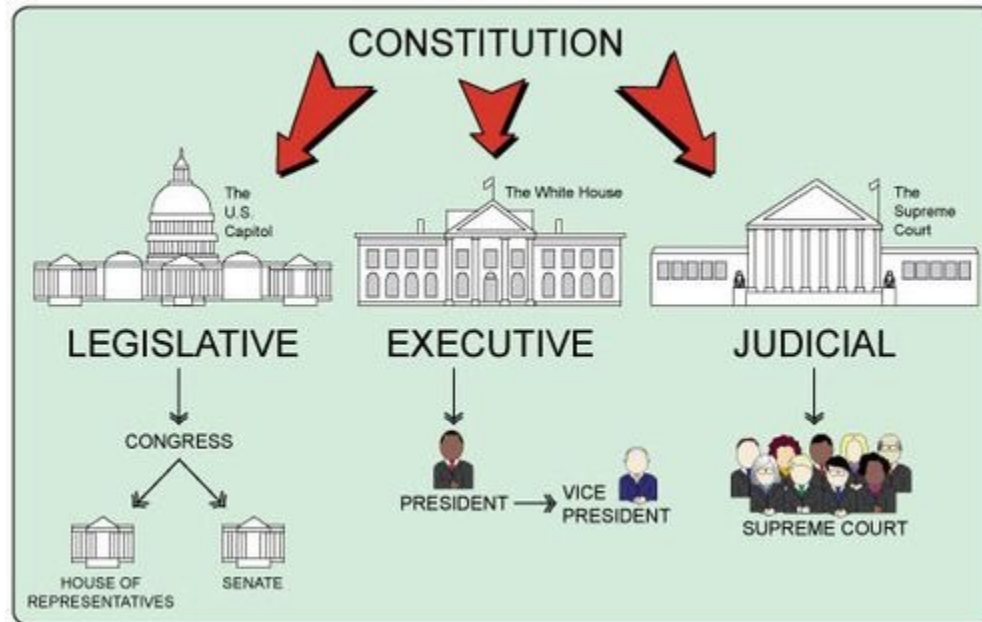


# The Three Branches of Government

by ReadWorks



The United States Constitution was written over two hundred years ago. It explains how the United States government should work. The people who wrote the Constitution did not want one person or group to have too much power. That was why they divided the government into three parts, known as branches.

The branches are the legislative, the executive, and the judicial. Each branch has its own responsibilities. The branches work together, but they also check each other to make sure no branch has too much power.

The legislative branch includes the United States Congress. Congress is made up of the House of Representatives and the Senate. Voters in each state elect their representation in the House and their senators. Those men and women go to Washington, D.C., to make laws.

The executive branch has the power to carry out the laws. It includes the president, the vice president, and their group of advisers called the Cabinet. Every four years, Americans vote to elect a president and a vice president.

The judicial branch decides on the meanings of the laws and whether laws break the rules of the Constitution. This branch includes the United States Supreme Court. Nine justices serve on the Supreme Court. The president appoints the justices, and the Senate approves them. The justices' job is to decide if the country's laws go against the Constitution.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

1. What are the three branches of the U.S. government?

- A. Congress, the Supreme Court, and the Senate
- B. the president, the House of Representatives, and the Senate
- C. legislative, executive, and judicial

2. This article describes the three branches of government and their responsibilities.

Which branch does it describe first?

- A. the executive branch
- B. the judicial branch
- C. the legislative branch

3. Read these sentences from the text.

"The people who wrote the Constitution did not want one person or group to have too much power. That was why they divided the government into three parts, known as branches."

What can you conclude based on this evidence?

- A. The three branches of the government do not have the same amount of power.
- B. The people who wrote the Constitution wanted every American to help make laws.
- C. The people who wrote the Constitution did not want to have just one branch of government.

4. Which is an example of how one branch of government can be affected by the other branches?

- A. The executive branch includes the president, the vice president, and the Cabinet.
- B. Justices on the Supreme Court are appointed by the president and approved by the Senate.
- C. Voters in each state elect their representation in the House and their senators to go to Congress.

5. What is the main idea of this article?

- A. The U.S. Constitution is the law of the land, and it lays out rules for the government and rights for the American people.
- B. The judicial branch decides on the meanings of the laws and whether laws break the rules of the U.S. Constitution.
- C. The U.S. Constitution says that the country must have a Congress, a Supreme Court, and a president.

6. Read these sentences from the text.

"The United States Constitution was written over two hundred years ago. It explains how the United States government should work. The people who wrote the Constitution did not want one person or group to have too much power. That was why they divided the government into three parts, known as branches."

Why does the author begin this article by talking about the U.S. Constitution?

- A. to give the reader background information about why there are three branches of government
- B. to explain to the reader why the U.S. Constitution is the most important piece of writing in history
- C. to help the reader learn more about the history of the United States

7. Choose the answer that best completes this sentence.

The legislative branch of government has the power to make laws, \_\_\_\_\_ the executive branch carries those laws out.

- A. so
- B. because
- C. but

8. Why did the people who wrote the Constitution divide the government into three branches?

9. How do Supreme Court justices get their jobs?

10. Do the three branches of government have to work together for the government to be successful? Why or why not? Use evidence from the text to support your answer.