

Separation of Powers

Directions: Fill in the blank with the correct term. You may use your notes, book, or a dictionary if you wish. Some terms can be used more than once, some not at all. When you are finished, read the passage that follows. After reading, go back and correct your answers on this page.

separation	powers	bicameral	justices	judicial	legislative
Congress	the Senate	the House of Representatives		judiciary	
Cabinet	executive	President	Chief Executive of the U.S.		

1. The three branches of the federal government are the _____ branch, the _____ branch, and the _____ branch.
2. The House of Representatives and the Senate are divisions of _____.
3. The President is also known as the _____.
4. The chief executive of the United States is called the _____.
5. Another name for Supreme Court judges is Supreme Court _____.
6. The branch of government which makes decisions about (evaluates) the laws of the land is called the _____ branch.
7. The branch of government which makes sure that the laws are followed is called the _____ branch.
8. The branch of government which enacts laws is called the _____ branch.
9. _____ of _____ means that one person or branch of government never has all power over the citizens.
10. The people who lead the 15 federal agencies that assist the president are called the President's _____.
11. The legislative branch is _____, meaning it is divided into two parts or houses. They are _____ and _____.

Now read the following passage. Remember, when you are finished go back and correct your above answers.

After the Revolutionary War, the writers of the Constitution knew that the best system of government would be one that split its control among two or more people or groups. This idea is called **separation of powers**. They gave the new government three branches. Each one would have its own jobs and responsibilities. Also, each branch would be able to check on the others' work. This is called a system of **checks and balances**. The goal would be to make sure that the citizens' rights were always protected.

The three branches of the U.S. government are the **legislative**, **executive**, and **judicial**. The Constitution describes the duties that each branch has and the titles of the people who carry out these duties. Each branch has many sections, or divisions. Each branch must follow the Constitution at all times. The headquarters of each branch of government is in Washington D.C., the nation's capital.



Do you know? What are the three branches of United States government? Which document describes the duties of each branch?

[2]

The **executive branch** makes sure that the laws of the country are obeyed. The **President** is the head of the executive branch. He is also known as the **Chief Executive** of the country. The executive branch is very large because many people and groups are needed to help the President. The **Vice President** is the President's main helper. Others who assist are the President's **Cabinet**.

Article Two of the Constitution established the executive branch. The Constitution gives the president the powers to do many things. The President appoints federal officials and members of the Supreme Court. The President works out, or negotiates, treaties. Also, the president is **Commander in Chief** of the armed forces (military).



What do you think? Could the President complete all of the duties of the executive branch alone? Why or why not?

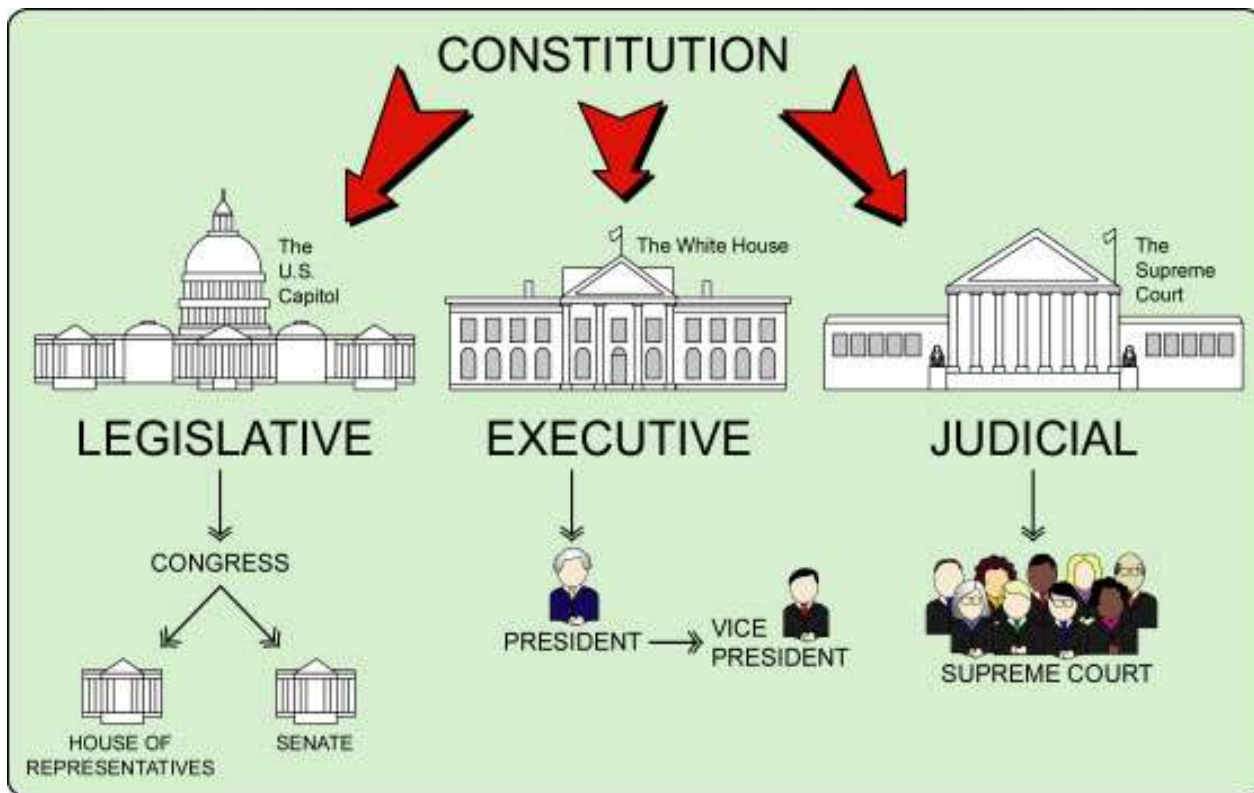
[2]

The **legislative branch** makes laws for the nation. In the United States the legislative branch is called **Congress**. Congress is **bicameral**, it has two parts - the **House of Representatives** and the **Senate**. Each section of Congress has a leader who oversees the law-making process. The **Speaker of the House** is the leader of the House of Representatives, The **Vice President** serves as President of the Senate, but there is also the **President Pro-Tempore** who presides when the Vice President is not there (which is most of the time).

Article One of the Constitution established the legislative branch and gives Congress several jobs to do. Congress can: (1) tax citizens, (2) borrow money, (3) print money, (4) pay

the country's debts, (5) set up the federal courts, (6) declare war, (7) raise and army, and (8) have post offices.

The **judicial branch** answers questions about the meaning of laws and whether or not they follow the constitution. The highest court in the judicial branch is called the **Supreme Court**. Nine judges, or **justices**, make decisions about laws and other court matters. The head of the Supreme Court is called the **Chief Justice**. No person or court can overrule the decisions of the US Supreme Court - its decision is always final. The federal court system is made up of : (1) The Supreme Court of the United States, (2) twelve U.S. Courts of Appeals, (3) the lower federal courts. Article Three of the Constitution established the judicial branch.



Now go back and correct your answers on the previous page, then, answer the true/false questions on the next page.

Directions: Circle the word "True" if the statement is true. Circle the word "False" if the statement is false, then, cross out the incorrect part of the statement AND write the word(s) that make it correct on the line.

1. After the Revolutionary War, the writers of the Constitution wanted one person to have all the power.
True **False** _____
2. The main goal of separation of powers is to make sure that no person or group has all the power in the government.
True **False** _____
3. The main job of the executive branch of the government is to make sure that all the laws are obeyed.
True **False** _____
4. The President's main helper is the Chief Justice of the Supreme Court.
True **False** _____
5. The judicial branch must make sure that all laws agree with the Constitution.
True **False** _____
6. The head of the Supreme Court is called the Superior Judge.
True **False** _____
7. The House of Representatives and the Senate make the laws for the country.
True **False** _____
8. In the United States, the executive branch is called Congress.
True **False** _____
9. The President's Cabinet is in the Oval Office and holds his important papers.
True **False** _____
10. One of the President's jobs is to be in charge of the Army, Navy, Marines, and Air Force.
True **False** _____
11. The Supreme Court has the power to tax the people.
True **False** _____
12. One of the twelve Courts of Appeals can overturn the decisions of the Supreme Court.
True **False** _____

DIRECTIONS: Use the terms in the list to answer each question. Each term may be used more than once or not at all.

Executive Branch Legislative Branch Judicial Branch President Vice-President

a. The President of the United States is the head of this branch of government.

b. This branch of government write, debates, and passes new laws.

c. This branch of government has the authority to print money and declare war.

d. This person is the President of the Senate.

e. This person is the leader of the executive branch of the US.

f. This branch of government answers questions about the U.S. Constitution.

g. This leader appoints Supreme Court Justices.

h. Explain why a senator or congressman should have a good understanding of business and how to use money. _____

_____ [2]

i. In which branch of government would being an attorney (lawyer) be the greatest help? Why? _____

_____ [2]

j. Explain why the President of the US needs to have a great ability to understand people and to encourage them to get along with each other. _____

_____ [2]

