

## LEGISLATIVE BRANCH (Congress)

writes the laws

confirms presidential appointments

approves treaties

appropriates money

declares war

may reject presidential appointments

may reject treaties

may withhold funding for presidential initiatives

may impeach president

may override a veto

proposes laws

administers the laws

## EXECUTIVE BRANCH (President)

may declare executive actions unconstitutional

interprets the Constitution

commands armed forces

appoints ambassadors and other officials

conducts foreign policy

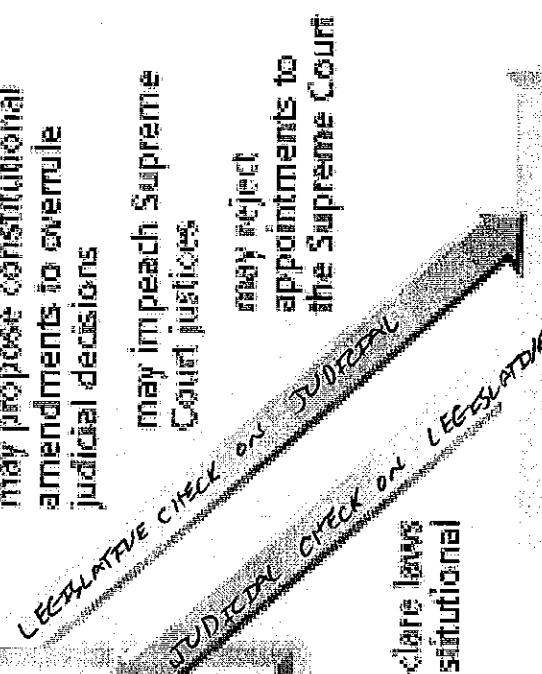
makes treaties

## JUDICIAL BRANCH (Supreme Court)

interprets the Constitution

and other laws

reviews lower-court decisions



<b>Powers of the Legislative Branch (Congress)</b>	
<b>Major Power</b>	— Makes the laws
<b>Powers over the Executive</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>— Can override the President's veto</li> <li>— Can impeach and remove the President</li> <li>— Can refuse to confirm presidential appointments</li> <li>— Can propose constitutional amendments</li> <li>— Can impeach and remove judges</li> </ul>
<b>Powers over the Judicial</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>— Can refuse to ratify presidential treaties</li> <li>— Can refuse to confirm federal appointments</li> <li>— Can create lower federal courts</li> <li>— Can veto bills</li> <li>— Can call special sessions of Congress</li> <li>— Can recommend laws</li> <li>— Appoints Supreme Court and federal judges</li> <li>— Can grant reprieves and pardons</li> </ul>
<b>Powers of the Executive Branch (President)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>— Carries out the laws</li> <li>— Major Power</li> </ul>
<b>Powers over the Congress</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>— Can veto bills</li> <li>— Can call special sessions of Congress</li> <li>— Can recommend laws</li> <li>— Appoints Supreme Court and federal judges</li> <li>— Can grant reprieves and pardons</li> </ul>
<b>Powers of the Judicial</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>— Can interpret the laws</li> <li>— Major Powers</li> </ul>
<b>Powers of the Constitutional Branch (Supreme Court)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>— Can rule that laws or executive acts are unconstitutional</li> <li>— Can declare laws unconstitutional</li> <li>— Powers over the Congress</li> <li>— Powers over the Executive</li> </ul>

To make sure that no one branch of government became too powerful, the framers gave each branch specific powers. In addition, each branch of government has some control over the actions of the other branches. The control one branch has over another is called the system of checks and balances. This system is illustrated in the diagram on this page.

## \* CHECKS AND BALANCES \*

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Period \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

## **The Constitution- Checks and Balances**

*The system of checks and balances in the Constitution is shown in the diagram on page 283 of your text. Study this diagram and then answer the questions below.*

- 1- How can the legislative branch check the judicial branch? (**3 ways**)
  - 2- The executive branch makes treaties and appoints top-ranking federal officials. How does the legislative branch control these decisions?
  - 3- List **three** more ways in which the legislative branch can check the executive branch.
  - 4- What is the main check the judicial branch has on the legislative branch?
  - 5- List **two** ways in which the legislative branch affects who acts as judges.
  - 6- Name **two** important powers the executive branch has to check the legislative branch?
  - 7- Explain how the legislative branch can use amendments to the Constitution to balance power between Congress and the Supreme Court?

## CHECKS AND BALANCES

**Directions:** Listed below are specific checks by which one branch of government can exert some control over another branch. Write who is applying the check on whom in the space provided. Use "E" for executive, "J" for judicial, and "L" for legislative. For example, E over J (executive over judicial) or J over L (judicial over legislative).

1. Remove judges from office
2. Veto bills
3. Appoint judges
4. Override veto
5. Call special sessions
6. Control appropriations *of money*
7. Fail to enforce a court order
8. Declare a law unconstitutional
9. Grant a reprieve (*PARDON*)
10. Replace some existing courts
11. Set free a person being held by the FBI
12. Propose an amendment
13. Confirm appointments
14. Ratify treaties
15. Declare the president's actions unconstitutional

L OVER J

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J OVER E

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Which branch of government do you think is the most powerful? Explain your answer.

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