



★ CHECKS AND BALANCES ★

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.

Powers of the Legislative Branch (Congress)

Major power — *Makes the laws*

Powers over the Executive

- Can override the President's veto
- Can impeach and remove the President
- Can refuse to confirm presidential appointment
- Can refuse to ratify presidential treaties

Powers over the Judicial

- Can create lower federal courts
- Can refuse to confirm judicial appointments
- Can propose constitutional amendments
- Can impeach and remove judges

Powers of the Executive Branch (President)

Major Power — *Carries out the laws*

Powers over the Congress

- Can veto bills
- Can call special sessions of Congress
- Can recommend laws

Powers over the Judicial

- Appoints Supreme Court and federal judges
- Can grant reprieves and pardons

Powers of the Judicial Branch (Supreme Court)

Major Powers

- *Interprets the laws*
- *Punishes lawbreakers*

Powers over the Congress

- Can declare laws unconstitutional

Powers over the Executive

- Can rule that laws or executive acts are unconstitutional

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 L OVER J
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 J OVER E
12. Propose an amendment _____
13. Confirm appointments _____
14. Ratify treaties _____
15. Declare the president's actions unconstitutional _____

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