Name: _____ Date: _____

The Three Branches of Government

Circle group

The United States government has three parts. They are called branches. Each branch has its own job. The rules for the branches are in the Constitution. It is the most important set of laws in the country.

The legislative branch makes the laws. It is called Congress. It has two parts, the Senate and the House of Representatives. Voters choose who is in Congress.

The executive branch carries out the laws. The President leads it. The Vice President and lots of workers in government offices help.

The judicial branch decides what laws mean. It is made up of the Supreme Court and other federal courts. Judges decide if a law was followed. They decide if a law agrees with the Constitution.

Why split the power in three? The people who wrote the Constitution did not want one person or group to have too much power. So each branch can check the others. Congress can pass a law. The President can say no and not sign it. The courts can decide that a law does not agree with the Constitution. This is called checks and balances.

Questions

1. What are the three branches?

_____

_____

2. Which branch makes the laws? What is it called?

_____

_____

3. What are the two parts of Congress?

_____

_____

4. Who leads the executive branch?

_____

_____

5. What does the judicial branch do?

_____

_____

6. Why was the power split into three branches?

_____

_____

7. Give one way a branch can check another.

_____

_____

Words to know

branch: one of the three main parts of the government
Constitution: the most important set of laws in the United States
legislative: having to do with making laws
executive: having to do with carrying out laws
judicial: having to do with courts and judges
checks and balances: the way each branch can limit the power of the others

Talk together (every group has these)

1. Find one fact that every group read. How did your sheet say it?
2. What did your sheet tell you that you think another group's did not? Ask them.
3. What is one question about this topic that none of the sheets answered?

Name: _____ Date: _____

The Three Branches of Government

Triangle group

The United States government is divided into three parts, called branches. Each branch has its own job. The rules for the branches are written in the Constitution, the most important set of laws in the country.

The legislative branch makes the laws. It is called Congress, and it has two parts, the Senate and the House of Representatives. Voters choose the members of Congress.

The executive branch carries out the laws. The President leads this branch, with help from the Vice President and many workers who run government offices.

The judicial branch decides what laws mean. It is made up of the Supreme Court and other federal courts. Judges decide whether a law was followed and whether it agrees with the Constitution.

Why split the power in three? The writers of the Constitution did not want any one person or group to have too much of it. So each branch can check the others. Congress can pass a law, and the President can refuse to sign it. The courts can decide that a law does not agree with the Constitution. This system is called checks and balances.

Questions

1. What are the three branches of the United States government?

_____

_____

2. Which branch makes the laws, and what is it called?

_____

_____

3. What are the two parts of Congress?

_____

_____

4. Who leads the executive branch?

_____

_____

5. What does the judicial branch do?

_____

_____

6. Why did the writers of the Constitution split the power into three branches?

_____

_____

7. What is an example of one branch checking another?

_____

_____

Words to know

branch: one of the three main parts of the government
Constitution: the most important set of laws in the United States
legislative: having to do with making laws
executive: having to do with carrying out laws
judicial: having to do with courts and judges
checks and balances: the way each branch can limit the power of the others

Talk together (every group has these)

1. Find one fact that every group read. How did your sheet say it?
2. What did your sheet tell you that you think another group's did not? Ask them.
3. What is one question about this topic that none of the sheets answered?

Name: _____ Date: _____

The Three Branches of Government

Square group

The government of the United States is divided into three separate parts, known as branches, and each branch carries its own distinct responsibilities. The rules governing the branches are written in the Constitution, the most important set of laws in the nation.

The legislative branch is responsible for making laws. Known as Congress, it consists of two chambers: the Senate and the House of Representatives. Members of Congress are elected by voters.

The executive branch carries out, or enforces, the laws. The President leads this branch, assisted by the Vice President and by numerous employees who operate government agencies.

The judicial branch interprets the meaning of laws. It is composed of the Supreme Court and other federal courts. Judges determine whether a law was obeyed and whether it is consistent with the Constitution.

Why divide authority among three branches? The authors of the Constitution were determined that no single individual or group should possess excessive power. Consequently, each branch has the ability to check the others. Congress can pass a law, but the President can refuse to sign it. Similarly, the courts can rule that a law conflicts with the Constitution. This arrangement is called checks and balances.

Questions

1. Name the three branches of the United States government.

_____

_____

2. Which branch is responsible for making laws, and by what name is it known?

_____

_____

3. What are the two chambers of Congress?

_____

_____

4. Who leads the executive branch?

_____

_____

5. Describe the responsibilities of the judicial branch.

_____

_____

6. What motivated the authors of the Constitution to divide authority among three branches?

_____

_____

7. Provide an example of one branch checking another.

_____

_____

Words to know

branch: one of the three main parts of the government
Constitution: the most important set of laws in the United States
legislative: having to do with making laws
executive: having to do with carrying out laws
judicial: having to do with courts and judges
checks and balances: the way each branch can limit the power of the others

Talk together (every group has these)

1. Find one fact that every group read. How did your sheet say it?
2. What did your sheet tell you that you think another group's did not? Ask them.
3. What is one question about this topic that none of the sheets answered?

For the teacher: The Three Branches of Government

Each student sheet carries a shape, not a level. The same topic and facts, written three ways.

Circle: The Three Branches of Government

Easier · 185 words · Flesch-Kincaid grade 3.9

1. The legislative, executive, and judicial branches.
2. The legislative branch. It is called Congress.
3. The Senate and the House of Representatives.
4. The President.
5. It decides what laws mean and if a law agrees with the Constitution.
6. So no one person or group would have too much power.
7. The President can say no to a law Congress passed, or the courts can decide a law does not agree with the Constitution.

Triangle: The Three Branches of Government

This passage · 187 words · Flesch-Kincaid grade 5.5

1. The legislative, executive, and judicial branches.
2. The legislative branch, which is called Congress.
3. The Senate and the House of Representatives.
4. The President.
5. It decides what laws mean, and whether a law agrees with the Constitution.
6. They did not want any one person or group to have too much power.
7. The President can refuse to sign a law Congress passed, or the courts can decide that a law does not agree with the Constitution.

Square: The Three Branches of Government

Harder · 198 words · Flesch-Kincaid grade 9.1

1. The legislative, executive, and judicial branches.
2. The legislative branch, known as Congress.
3. The Senate and the House of Representatives.
4. The President.
5. It interprets the meaning of laws and determines whether a law is consistent with the Constitution.
6. They wanted to make sure no single person or group could possess too much power.
7. The President can refuse to sign a law Congress passed, or the courts can rule that a law conflicts with the Constitution.