Name: _____ Date: _____

Three Cousins and One Lemonade Stand

Circle group

Picture three cousins who run a lemonade stand. What if one cousin made all the rules, ran the stand and fixed every argument? That cousin could be unfair. It is safer to share the power.

So the cousins split the work in three. One cousin writes the rules, like the price and the hours. A second cousin follows the rules. This cousin makes the lemonade and takes the money. The third cousin settles arguments, like whether a rule was followed.

The United States government is set up this way too. The Constitution splits power into three branches. Congress makes the laws. The president and many workers carry out the laws. The courts say what laws mean and settle disputes.

Each branch can also check the others. This is called checks and balances. The president can say no to a bill from Congress. That is a veto. But Congress can pass the bill again if enough members vote for it. Courts can decide that a law does not fit the Constitution.

These checks keep any one branch from getting too much power.

Questions

1. What three jobs do the cousins share?

_____

_____

2. Which branch makes the laws?

_____

_____

3. What is a veto?

_____

_____

4. What can courts decide about a law?

_____

_____

5. Why is it safer for the cousins to share power?

_____

_____

6. How does a veto keep one branch from having too much power?

_____

_____

Words to know

branches: the main parts of something, like a tree or a government
Constitution: the written plan for how the United States government works
veto: a refusal to sign a bill so it does not become law
disputes: serious disagreements
balances: ways of keeping things equal so none has too much

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: _____

Three Cousins and One Lemonade Stand

Triangle group

Imagine three cousins who run a lemonade stand together. What if one cousin made every rule, ran the stand and also settled every argument? That cousin could do whatever he or she liked, even if it was unfair. It is safer to share the power.

So the cousins divide the work into three parts. One cousin writes the rules, such as the price and the hours. A second cousin carries out the rules by making the lemonade and taking the money. The third cousin settles disagreements, such as whether a rule was followed.

Our national government copies the same idea. Its plan, the Constitution, spreads power across three branches. One of them, Congress, makes the laws. The president and many workers carry out the laws. The courts decide what laws mean and settle disputes.

Each branch also has ways to check the others. This is called checks and balances. For example, the president can refuse to sign a bill that Congress passes, which is called a veto. But Congress can still pass the bill if enough members vote for it again. Courts can decide that a law does not fit the Constitution.

These checks make it hard for any one branch to take too much power. Our lemonade stand works better the same way.

Questions

1. What are the three jobs the cousins share at the lemonade stand?

_____

_____

2. Which branch of government makes the laws?

_____

_____

3. What is a veto?

_____

_____

4. What can courts decide about a law?

_____

_____

5. Why is it safer for the cousins to share power?

_____

_____

6. How does a veto keep one branch from having too much power?

_____

_____

Words to know

branches: the main parts of something, like a tree or a government
Constitution: the written plan for how the United States government works
veto: a refusal to sign a bill so it does not become law
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balances: ways of keeping things equal so none has too much

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: _____

Three Cousins and One Lemonade Stand

Square group

Imagine three cousins who operate a lemonade stand together. What would happen if one cousin made every rule, ran the stand single-handedly and also settled every argument? That cousin could do whatever he or she pleased, even if it were unfair to the others. Sharing the power is a far safer arrangement.

So the cousins divide the responsibilities into three parts. One cousin writes the rules, such as the price and the hours of business. A second cousin carries out those rules by making the lemonade and collecting the money. The third cousin resolves disagreements, for instance whether a particular rule was actually followed.

The government of the United States is organized in a similar fashion. The Constitution divides power among three branches. Congress is responsible for making the laws. The president and the many workers who assist him or her are responsible for carrying out the laws. The courts decide what laws mean and settle disputes.

Each branch also has ways of checking the others, a system known as checks and balances. For example, the president may refuse to sign a bill that Congress has passed, which is called a veto. Even so, Congress can still pass the bill if enough of its members vote for it a second time. The courts, meanwhile, can rule that a law does not fit the Constitution.

Together, these checks make it difficult for any single branch to gather too much power, just as sharing the work makes the lemonade stand run better.

Questions

1. What three responsibilities do the cousins divide among themselves?

_____

_____

2. Which branch of the government is responsible for making laws?

_____

_____

3. What is a veto, according to the passage?

_____

_____

4. What can the courts rule about a law?

_____

_____

5. Why is sharing power safer than letting one cousin do everything?

_____

_____

6. How does the veto, together with Congress's ability to vote again, limit any one branch?

_____

_____

Words to know

branches: the main parts of something, like a tree or a government
Constitution: the written plan for how the United States government works
veto: a refusal to sign a bill so it does not become law
disputes: serious disagreements
balances: ways of keeping things equal so none has too much

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: Three Cousins and One Lemonade Stand

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

Circle: Three Cousins and One Lemonade Stand

Easier · 181 words · Flesch-Kincaid grade 4

1. Writing the rules, following them and settling arguments.
2. Congress.
3. When the president says no to a bill from Congress.
4. That it does not fit the Constitution.
5. One cousin could be unfair if he or she did everything.
6. The president can stop a bill, but Congress can pass it again.

Triangle: Three Cousins and One Lemonade Stand

This passage · 214 words · Flesch-Kincaid grade 5.4

1. Writing the rules, carrying them out and settling disagreements.
2. Congress.
3. When the president refuses to sign a bill that Congress passed.
4. That it does not fit the Constitution.
5. One cousin could be unfair if he or she made, ran and judged everything.
6. The president can stop a bill, but Congress can still pass it again.

Square: Three Cousins and One Lemonade Stand

Harder · 251 words · Flesch-Kincaid grade 8.2

1. Writing the rules, carrying them out and settling disagreements.
2. Congress.
3. When the president refuses to sign a bill that Congress has passed.
4. That it does not fit the Constitution.
5. A single cousin could act unfairly if he or she made, ran and judged everything.
6. The president can stop a bill, but Congress can still pass it, so neither has the final word alone.