

Three Branches of Government



Read the passage. Then answer the questions in full sentences.

Name _____ Date _____

The Constitution of the United States splits the federal government into three branches: the legislative, the executive and the judicial. This way, no one person or group has too much power.

The legislative branch is Congress: the Senate and the House of Representatives. Congress writes bills that can become laws, and it has the power to declare war.

The president leads the executive branch and is commander in chief of the armed forces. The vice president would take over if the president could not serve, and also runs the Senate's meetings and breaks ties in its votes.

The judicial branch is the Supreme Court and the other federal courts. They explain what laws mean. Each branch can check the others: the president can veto, or turn down, a bill from Congress; the Senate can say no to the president's choices for the Supreme Court; and the Supreme Court can overturn a law that goes against the Constitution.

1. What are the three branches of government?

2. What are the two parts of Congress?

3. Why does the Constitution split the government into three branches?

4. A Senate vote on a bill is a tie. Who breaks the tie, and which branch is that person part of?

Answer key

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1. What are the three branches of government?
The legislative, the executive and the judicial branches.
2. What are the two parts of Congress?
The Senate and the House of Representatives.
3. Why does the Constitution split the government into three branches?
So that no one person or group has too much power.
4. A Senate vote on a bill is a tie. Who breaks the tie, and which branch is that person part of?
Sample answer: the vice president, who is part of the executive branch. So a member of one branch has a vote in another.