

Civics & Government: Separation of Powers & Checks and Balances



Name: _____ Date: _____

Part A: Constitutional Analysis. Examine how the three branches of American government interact and balance authority.

1. If the President vetoes a bill passed by both the House of Representatives and the Senate, what constitutional check can Congress exercise to enact the bill into federal law anyway?
A. Congress can override the presidential veto with a two-thirds supermajority vote in both chambers.
B. Congress can appeal to state governors to sign the bill.
C. The Speaker of the House can unilaterally sign the bill without executive consent.
D. A simple 51% majority vote in the Senate automatically nullifies any presidential veto.
2. Under the landmark Supreme Court decision in Marbury v. Madison (1803), what essential check does the Judicial Branch possess over both Congress and the President?
A. The power to declare legislative acts or executive orders unconstitutional (Judicial Review)
B. The power to author and pass federal tax legislation
C. The power to command the U.S. armed forces during declared wars
D. The power to select the Speaker of the House of Representatives
3. When the President nominates a candidate to serve as a federal judge or Cabinet secretary, which constitutional body must provide 'Advice and Consent' by voting to confirm the appointment?
A. The House of Representatives
B. The United States Senate
C. The Supreme Court Justices
D. The National Governors Association

Part B: Checks and Balances System Matrix. Identify which branch exercises each constitutional check.

Sort these items: Can impeach and remove federal judges and executive officials from office; Can veto acts of Congress and negotiate foreign treaties; Can declare laws passed by Congress unconstitutional via judicial review; Controls federal taxation, budget appropriations, and confirms judicial appointments; Appoints federal judges and grants executive pardons for federal offenses; Holds lifetime tenure during good behavior, insulating decisions from political pressure

Legislative Checks	Executive Checks	Judicial Checks