

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

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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