



Constitutional Principles and Structures: SS.7.CG.3.3
Articles I, II, and III
READING #2

Name: _____

Date: _____



SS.7.CG.3.3 Benchmark Clarification 2: Students will compare the roles and responsibilities of the three branches of the national government.

Each branch of the U.S. government has its own set of jobs and responsibilities. Also, the Constitution sets up a system of **checks and balances** that allows each branch to limit the power of the others. This system prevents one branch from becoming too powerful. Below is a chart that describes one of the roles of government and illustrates the system of checks and balances.

Branch of Government	Role: Making Laws
Legislative	The legislative branch makes the laws; Congress can override a presidential veto with two-thirds (2/3) of each house voting to do so.
Executive	The executive branch enforces the laws; the president can veto a law if the president does not want a bill to become law.
Judicial	The judicial branch interprets the laws; the Supreme Court may determine that a law is not legal under the Constitution and may strike down the law.

bill - a proposal for a law

checks and balances - a principle of the federal government, according to the U.S. Constitution, that allows each branch of government to limit the power of the other branches

Congress - the national legislative body of the U.S., consisting of the Senate, or upper house, and the House of Representatives, or lower house

executive branch - the branch of government that enforces the laws made by the legislative branch

judicial branch - the branch of government that interprets the laws made by the legislative branch

legislative branch - the branch of government that creates laws

U.S. Supreme Court - the highest court of the United States; it sits at the top of the federal court system

veto - a decision by an executive authority such as a president or governor to reject a law passed by the legislative branch