

# The Three Branches of Government

Our country’s Founding Fathers, the writers of the U.S. Constitution, wanted to create a strong national government. They also wanted to make sure that one person or group did not have too much power. That’s why they separated the government’s powers into three branches: the executive, the legislative and the judicial.

Use the information below to answer the questions.

<p style="text-align: center;"><b>LEGISLATIVE</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>CONGRESS</b></p> <hr/> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>Senators and Representatives</b></p> <p>The members of Congress—100 senators and 435 representatives—write bills, then vote on whether or not the bills should become laws. Other duties include collecting and spending money from taxes and declaring war.</p> 	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>EXECUTIVE</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>The President, Vice President and Cabinet members</b></p> <p>The President signs bills into laws or vetoes, or rejects, them. But Congress can override, or cancel, a Presidential veto. If two-thirds of all Congress members vote for the bill, it can still become a law. The President also appoints Supreme Court justices, conducts foreign affairs, negotiates treaties and is the commander-in-chief of the U.S. armed forces.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>JUDICIAL</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>Supreme Court Justices</b></p> <p>The Supreme Court is the highest court in the country. Its nine justices, or judges, decide if laws agree with the U.S. Constitution. The Supreme Court can declare laws unconstitutional.</p> 
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1. Which Presidential candidate won last week’s election? \_\_\_\_\_  
 To which branch of government does he belong? \_\_\_\_\_

2. What do you think is the President’s most important job? Explain your choice.  
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3. Last week, voters elected 435 lawmakers to serve in the House of Representatives. In 34 states, voters also elected senators. What is one of the responsibilities of the legislative branch?  
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4. **True or false:** Congress decides if laws agree with the U.S. Constitution. \_\_\_\_\_

5. Why did the writers of the Constitution separate the government’s power into three branches? Do you think this step was necessary? Why or why not?  
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**BONUS:** Give an example of how one branch of government checks or limits the power of the other branches.