

Social studies

Grade 5

Constitution Day worksheet: the Preamble and three branches

On September 17, learn what the Preamble promises and how the three branches share power.



I can explain the goals of the Preamble and the job of each branch of government.

1



A plan for a nation

On September 17, 1787, delegates meeting in Philadelphia signed the Constitution of the United States. It is the plan for how our national government works, and it is still used today. That is why we celebrate Constitution Day on September 17.

The Constitution begins with the Preamble, which starts with the words 'We the People.' These words show that the power of the government comes from the people. The Preamble lists six goals, such as to 'establish Justice' and 'secure the Blessings of Liberty.'

The Constitution splits the government into three branches. The legislative branch, Congress, makes the laws. The executive branch, led by the President, carries out the laws. The judicial branch, led by the Supreme Court, decides what laws mean and whether they follow the Constitution.

Each branch can check, or limit, the others. For example, the President can veto a law, and courts can rule a law unconstitutional. This system of checks and balances keeps any one branch from becoming too powerful.

2



Which branch?

Write each item under the right branch.



Congress

the President

the Supreme Court

makes laws

carries out laws

decides what laws mean

Legislative
Executive
Judicial

3



Preamble goals

Draw a line from each goal in the Preamble to its meaning.

☐

form a more perfect Union


☒ A. keep peace at home

☐

establish Justice


☒ B. protect the country

☐

insure domestic Tranquility


☒ C. make the states work together better

☐

provide for the common defence


☒ D. keep people free now and in the future

☐

secure the Blessings of Liberty


☒ E. create fair laws and courts

4

**Check your reading**

Circle the best answer.

1. Where was the Constitution signed?

A Boston

B Philadelphia

C Washington, D.C.

2. What do the words 'We the People' show?

A Power comes from the people.

B Only leaders can vote.

C The President writes all laws.

3. Which is an example of checks and balances?

A The President vetoes a law.

B Congress meets in a building.

C People celebrate on September 17.

5

**True or false**

Use the text. Circle True or False.

1. The Constitution was signed on September 17, 1787.

True

False

2. The Preamble begins with the words "We the People."

True

False

3. Congress carries out the laws.

True

False

4. The Supreme Court leads the judicial branch.

True

False

5. The Preamble lists ten goals.

True

False

6. Checks and balances let one branch control all the others.

True

False

6

**Key words**

Use the word bank to finish each sentence.

WORD BANK

delegates

Preamble

branches

veto

unconstitutional

1. The _____ met in Philadelphia to sign the Constitution.
2. The opening part of the Constitution is called the _____.
3. The national government is split into three _____.
4. The President can _____ a law passed by Congress.
5. A court can rule that a law is _____.

7

**From bill to law**

Write 1 to 4 in the boxes.

☐

The President signs the bill, and it becomes a law.

☐

A member of Congress writes a bill.

☐

Congress votes to pass the bill.

☐

A court may later decide if the law follows the Constitution.

8

**Think it through**

Circle the best answer.

1. The Constitution was signed in 1787. How many years before 2026 was that?

A 229

B 239

C 249

2. A new law is challenged in court. Which branch decides if it follows the Constitution?

A Legislative

B Executive

C Judicial

3. What is the main idea of paragraph 4?

☐ A Each branch can limit the others, so no branch gets too powerful.

☐ B The President makes all the laws.

☐ C Courts meet in Philadelphia.

4. In paragraph 4, "check" most nearly means...

☐ A write

☐ B limit

☐ C celebrate

9



Why balance?

Why did the writers of the Constitution split power into three branches? Use one example from the text.

How did it go?



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Answer key

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E

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A

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B

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D

secure the Blessings of Liberty



● A. keep peace at home

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Why did the writers of the Constitution split power into three branches? Use one example from the text.

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