

The Constitution: A More Perfect Union

How has the Constitution created “a more perfect Union”?

PREVIEW

Read the quotation and answer the questions that follow.

If men were angels, no government would be necessary.

—James Madison

1. In your own words, what is Madison saying?
2. According to Madison, why are governments necessary?
3. Do you agree with Madison? Why or why not?

READING NOTES

Key Content Terms

As you complete the Reading Notes, use these terms in your answers.

popular sovereignty

judicial review

majority rule

legislative branch

checks and balances

interest group

executive branch

interstate commerce

judicial branch

federalism

Section 2

Read the Preamble to the Constitution below. In your own words, briefly explain what the framers meant by each phrase listed in the chart. An example is done for you.

We the People of the United States, in Order to form a more perfect Union, establish Justice, insure domestic Tranquility, provide for the common defence, promote the general Welfare, and secure the Blessings of Liberty to ourselves and our Posterity, do ordain and establish this Constitution for the United States of America.

“We the People” **The Constitution bases its authority on the people.**

“form a more perfect Union”

“establish Justice”

“insure domestic Tranquility”

“provide for the common defence”

“promote the general Welfare”

“secure the Blessings of Liberty”

Sections 3 to 5

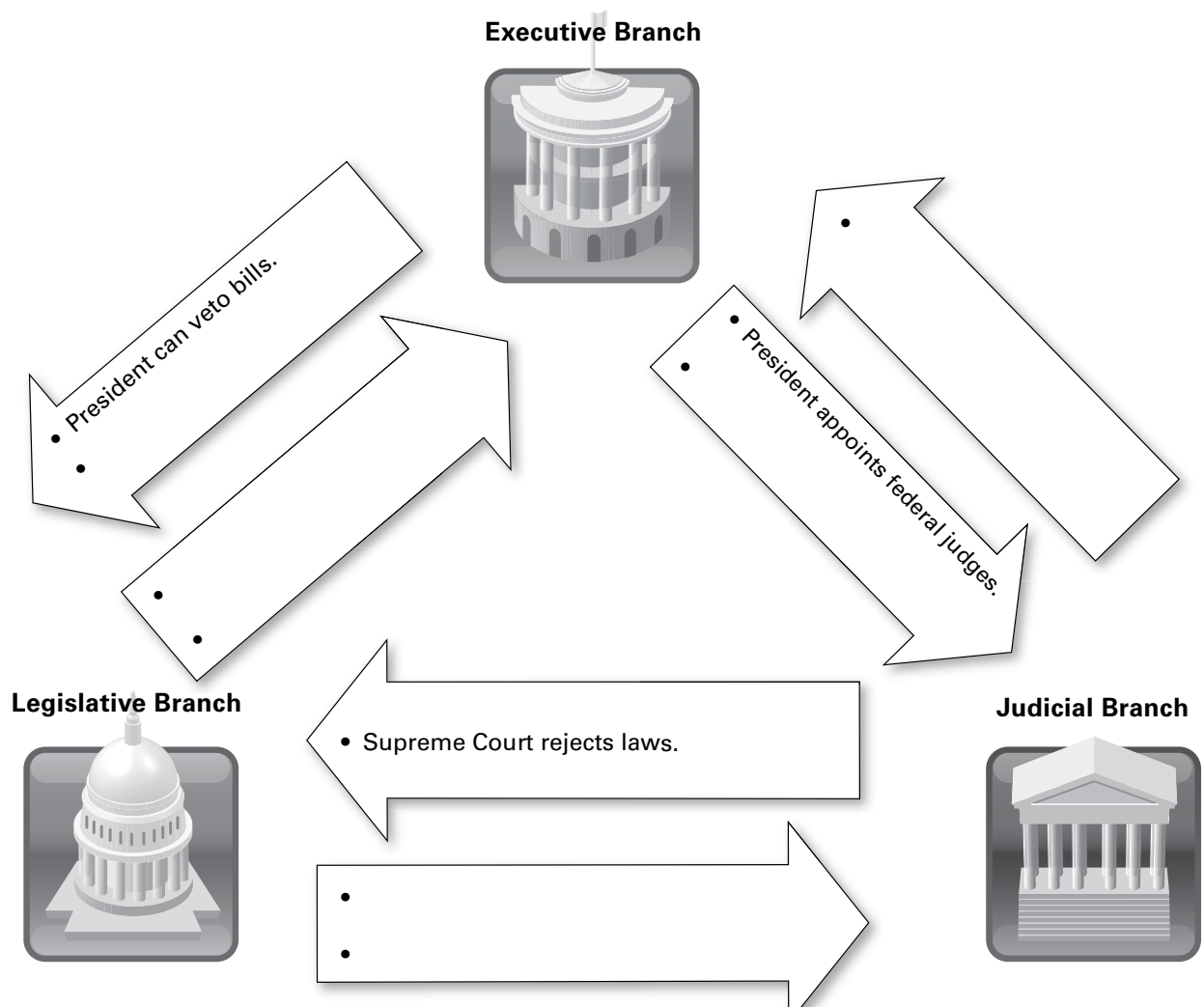
For each of Sections 3 to 5, draw a simple illustration at the top of the column to represent that branch of government. Then complete the column.

	3 Legislative Branch		4 Executive Branch	5 Judicial Branch
	Congress House Senate		Office of the President	Supreme Court
Number of Members				
Length of Term				
Are members elected or appointed?				
Age Requirement				
Citizenship Requirement				
Two or More Powers of This Branch of Government				

Section 6

1. Why did the framers develop a system of checks and balances?

2. Complete the diagram by writing each of the following checks and balances in the correct arrow.
 - Congress can impeach the president.
 - President calls special sessions of Congress.
 - Supreme Court can declare executive actions unconstitutional.
 - President nominates Supreme Court justices.
 - Congress can override vetoes.
 - Congress can impeach federal judges.
 - Congress approves Supreme Court justices.



Section 7

1. Why did the framers make it possible to change the Constitution but difficult to do so?

2. Create a simple flowchart showing one way that a constitutional amendment can be proposed and ratified.

Section 8

1. Why did the framers establish a federal system of government for the United States?

2. What power does the commerce clause give the national government?

3. What advantages were there to having the states share a common market?

Section 9

1. Describe the principle of majority rule.
2. Create and label drawings that show two ways people can participate in government.

R E A D I N G F U R T H E R

Preparing to Write: Analyzing a Primary Source Letter

Abigail Adams supported women's rights by words and example. She showed the world that women could be educated, manage a farm, run the home of a president, and more.

In a letter to her husband, John Adams, on March 31, 1776, she urged him to “remember the ladies.” Later, on May 7, she wrote,

I cannot say that I think you are very generous to the ladies; for, whilst you are proclaiming peace and good-will to men, emancipating [freeing] all nations, you insist upon retaining an absolute power over wives.

But you must remember that . . . notwithstanding all your wise laws and maxims [sayings], we have it in our power, not only to free ourselves, but to subdue our masters, and without violence, throw both your natural and legal authority at our feet.

What did Abigail Adams caution her husband against doing?

What did Adams say women had the power to do?

Writing a Letter to the Editor

Suppose you were a woman or a man living in the late 1700s. You agree with Abigail Adams, and you want to promote women's rights. Write a strong letter to the editor of a local newspaper. Try to persuade people to adopt your views.

In your letter, be sure to state a well-defined thesis. (This is your position statement, a clear and knowledgeable proposal.) Support your thesis with detailed examples and sound reasoning. Use correct letter format, spelling, and grammar.

Use this rubric to evaluate your letter. Make changes in your letter if you need to.

Score	Description
3	The letter has a strong thesis and supporting details. It is written in correct letter format. There are no spelling or grammar errors.
2	The letter has a thesis and some supporting details. It is written in letter format. There are few spelling or grammar errors.
1	The letter does not have a thesis or supporting details. It is not written in letter format. There are many spelling or grammar errors.