

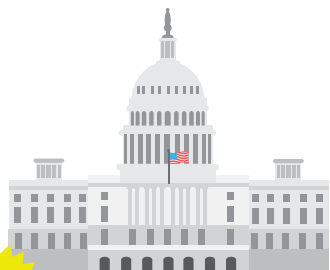
Reading a Diagram

KEY STANDARD

**RH.6-8.7**

# The Three Branches of Government

The U.S. Constitution created a national government with three branches. Each branch has its own powers and can check (or limit) the powers of the other two. Read the diagram and answer the questions.



**MAKES LAWS**

## Legislative

Congress is made up of the two chambers below. Congress writes and passes bills (proposals for new laws). Bills that are passed by both chambers and then signed by the president become law.

### Senate

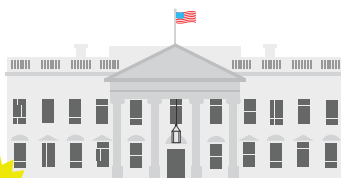
**100**  
Senators

- Senators are elected to **six-year terms**. Each state has **two** senators.
- The Senate **approves or rejects top-level nominations**, such as Supreme Court justices.

### House of Representatives

**435**  
Representatives

- Representatives are elected to **two-year terms**. The number of representatives per state is **based on each state's population**.
- Bills that deal with raising revenue (money) for the **federal budget** begin in the House.



**ENFORCES LAWS**

## Executive

This branch handles the business of government, including the enforcement of federal laws. It is led by the president, who can sign (pass into law) or veto (reject) bills passed by Congress.

### President



- The president is elected to a **four-year term**.
- He or she **nominates Supreme Court justices**, federal judges, Cabinet members, and other officials.
- The president submits a proposed **federal budget** to Congress.
- He or she is **commander in chief** of the military.

### Vice President



- The vice president is elected to a **four-year term** on the same ticket as the president. The vice president **takes over** if the president dies or leaves office.
- He or she **presides over the Senate**, casting the deciding vote in the event of a tie.

### Cabinet



- These advisers include the leaders of **15 federal departments**, such as Defense, Justice, and Education.



**EVALUATES LAWS**

## Judicial

The federal court system is headed by the U.S. Supreme Court. The Supreme Court's nine justices review cases to determine whether laws violate the Constitution, and they can overturn laws that do.

### Supreme Court

A Supreme Court justice's **term of office lasts for life**. Justices serve until death, retirement, or their removal.



The Supreme Court **hears appeals** (requests for new rulings) of decisions made by lower federal courts. **Its decisions are final.**

### Other Federal Courts



The **94 U.S. District Courts** are where federal cases are tried.

The **13 Courts of Appeals** hear cases on appeal from District Courts.

**Reading a Diagram**

## The Three Branches of Government (continued)

### Questions

1. Who can veto bills passed by Congress?
2. Which branch is responsible for enforcing federal laws?
3. How are the executive and legislative branches involved in selecting Supreme Court justices?
4. Explain how the judicial branch can limit the power of the other branches.