



Lesson Activity: Federal Checks and Balances

AP[®] U.S. Government

Duration Approximately 40 minutes

Materials Needed

- UWorld “Federal Checks and Balances” page:



(full-size included at the end of the lesson activity)

- Notebook paper and pencils
- Optional: slides presentation software—Google Slides, PowerPoint, etc.

College Board[®] Standards

- **PMI-1:** The Constitution created a competitive policy-making process to ensure the people's will is represented and that freedom is preserved.
- **PMI-1.A:** Explain the constitutional principles of separation of powers and "checks and balances".



Lesson Activity: Federal Checks and Balances

Activity Objectives

Explain "checks and balances" by creating and displaying puzzle pieces that answer the guiding questions.

Activity Instructions

1. **Place** students into small groups and assign them one of the three included questions from the UWorld "Federal Checks and Balances" page. **Ask** them to discuss their question, **recording** their group's ideas and conclusions on a piece of notebook paper or in a slide presentation:
 - **What** arguments do *Federalist 51*, *Federalist 70*, and *Federalist 78* make in favor of the separation of powers?
 - **What** are some other means of limiting government apart from the system of checks and balances?
 - **Why** does each branch exercise certain powers that are not explicitly granted in the Constitution?
2. Have each group **present** the information on their assigned question to the class. This will create jigsaw puzzle pieces of information that will come together to cover all three questions from the "Federal Checks and Balances" page.
3. Students should **take** notes while each group presents. When all small groups have finished, **ask** students to submit any presentation slides so they can be shared with the whole class (if applicable).

Possible Variations

- **Ask** students to create a slide presentation of their small group's conclusions regarding their assigned question. Have them use this to **present** their findings to their classmates at the end of the jigsaw activity.
- **Ask** students to create their own visual representation of federal checks and balances, and how it pertains to their small group's assigned question. Have them use this to **present** their findings to their classmates at the end of the jigsaw activity.

Lesson Extension

The following UWorld learning platform questions can be used for additional practice, a quick formative assessment, homework, or small group interventions: UWorld Question IDs 701734, 702320, 702321, 702469

Guiding Questions

How did Enlightenment-era principles guide American independence?

How does the Constitution embody the will of the people?

What is the purpose of the separation of powers?



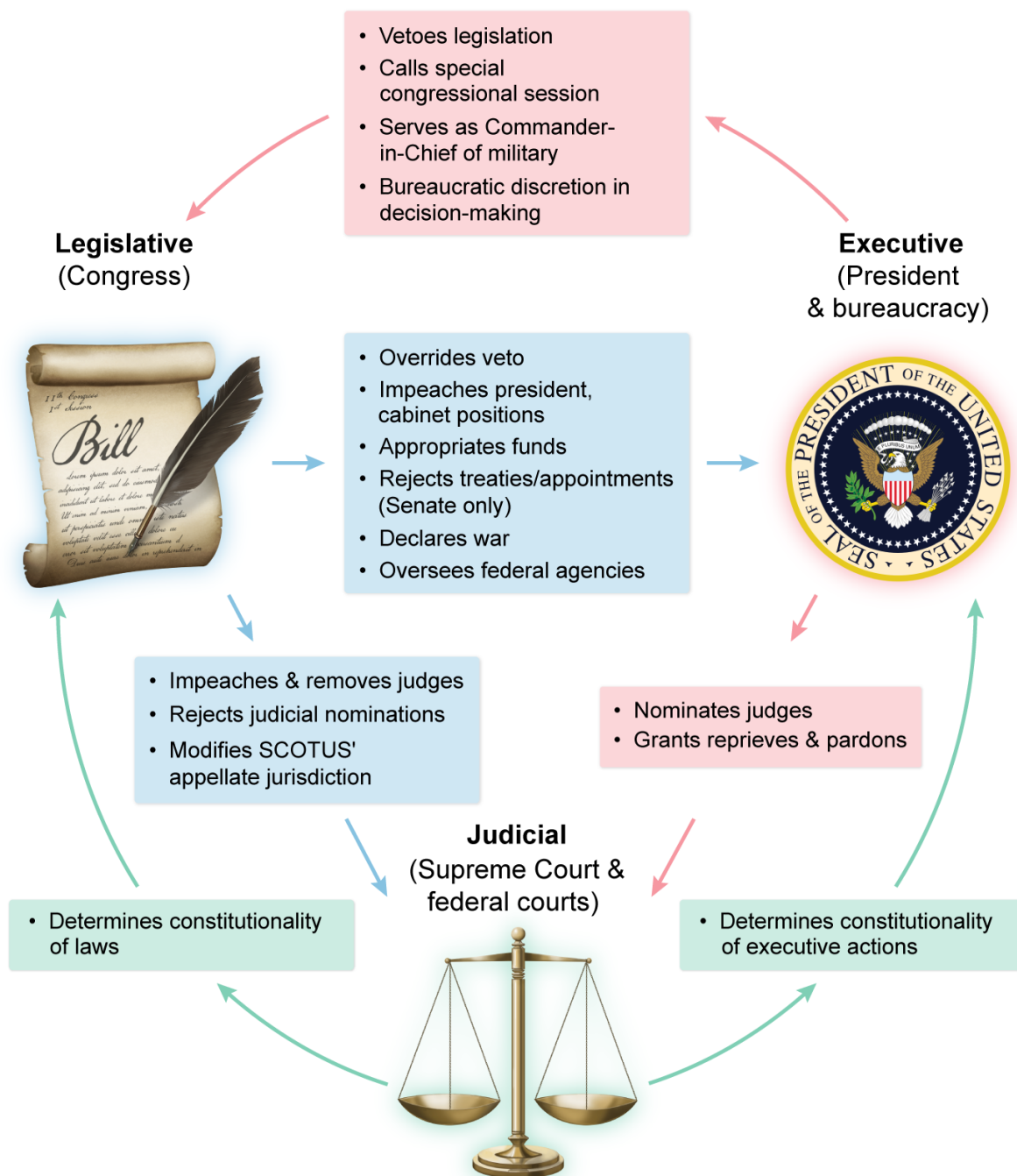
Name: _____

Class Period: _____

Date: _____

Federal Checks and Balances

Federal checks and balances





Answer Sheet

1. **What** arguments do *Federalist 51*, *Federalist 70*, and *Federalist 78* make in favor of the separation of powers?

2. **What** are some other means of limiting government apart from the system of checks and balances?

3. **Why** does each branch exercise certain powers that are not explicitly granted in the Constitution?
