

Fayette County Public Schools
8th Grade Social Studies
Benchmark Assessment
Spring 2025

8.C.CP.2 Explain the origins, functions and structure of government, with reference to the Declaration of Independence, Articles of Confederation, U.S. Constitution, Bill of Rights and other founding documents, and their impacts on citizens.

The Articles of Confederation were replaced by the Constitution of the United States in 1789:

Background

The Articles of Confederation, the first constitution of the United States, had weaknesses that became apparent after the Revolutionary War. These included the inability to raise funds, regulate trade, or control commerce without state agreement. The central government also lacked the power to enforce its authority.

Constitutional Convention

In 1787, delegates from across the country met in Philadelphia to revise the Articles of Confederation. However, they decided that the Articles could not be fixed and instead drafted a new Constitution.

New Constitution

The Constitution established a stronger national government with a chief executive (the president), courts, and taxing powers. The Constitution was ratified by the necessary number of states and went into effect on March 4, 1789.

1. What was the primary reason for revising and eventually replacing the Articles of Confederation?
 - A. To reduce the power of the national government and increase the power of individual states.
 - B. To establish a unicameral legislature with equal representation among the states.
 - C. To address weaknesses in the central government's ability to enforce laws and collect taxes
 - D. To eliminate state governments and establish a solely federal form of government.
2. The U.S. Constitution replaced the Articles of Confederation. What is the primary function of the Constitution?
 - A. To declare independence from Britain
 - B. To outline the structure and powers of the federal government
 - C. To regulate international trade
 - D. To detail the rights of states to secede from the Union

Bill of Rights - The Really Brief Version

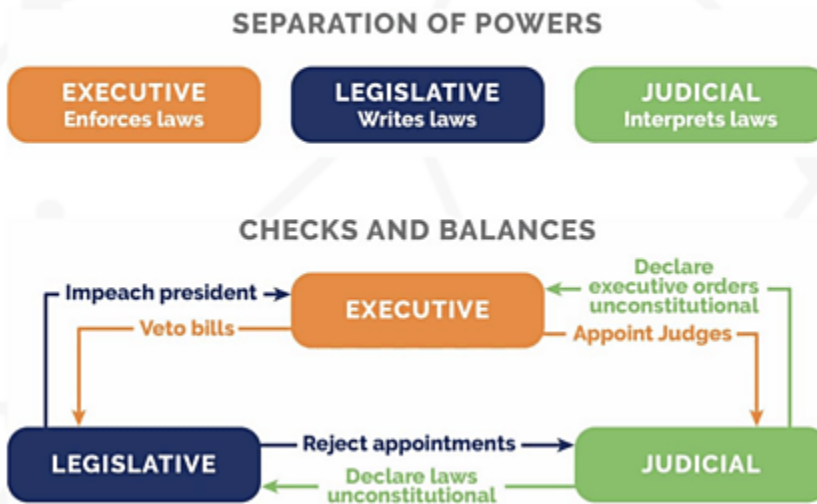
The first ten amendments to the U.S. Constitution are summarized below.

1	Freedom of religion, speech, press, assembly, and petition.
2	Right to keep and bear arms in order to maintain a well regulated militia.
3	No quartering of soldiers.
4	Freedom from unreasonable searches and seizures.
5	Right to due process of law, freedom from self-incrimination, double jeopardy.
6	Rights of accused persons, e.g., right to a speedy and public trial.
7	Right of trial by jury in civil cases.
8	Freedom from excessive bail, cruel and unusual punishments.
9	Other rights of the people.
10	Powers reserved to the states.

3. How does the Bill of Rights impact citizens?
- A. It grants the government the power to control the economy
 - B. It protects citizens' rights and freedoms from government interference
 - C. It allows states to nullify federal laws
 - D. It limits the powers of state governments

8.C.CP.1 Analyze the origin and purposes of rule of law, popular sovereignty, federalism, separation of powers and checks and balances.

FIGURE 1: BREAKDOWN OF CHECKS AND BALANCES WITH SEPARATION OF POWERS



4. What does the system of checks and balances in the U.S. Constitution ensure?

- A. That the President has the final say in all matters
- B. That no single branch of government becomes too powerful
- C. That states have more power than the federal government
- D. That the military controls the government

Some key aspects of popular sovereignty:

- **Individual rights: Popular sovereignty encourages the recognition of individual rights and the idea that individuals have autonomy.**
- **Government representation: A government must represent the needs and ideas of the people it governs.**
- **Right to resist: The people have the right to resist tyrannical regimes.**
- **Right to change laws and religion: The people have the right to change their laws and religion.**

5. Why is the concept of popular sovereignty important in a democracy?

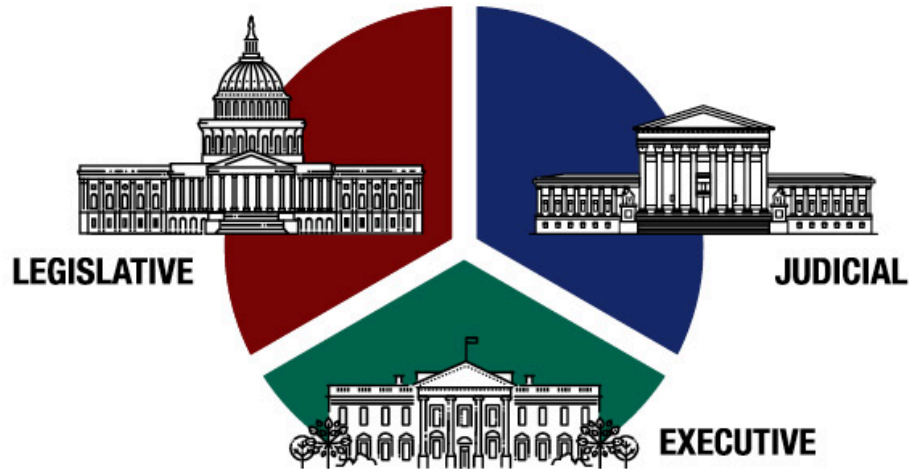
- A. It ensures that only a few people have power.
- B. It means that the government is controlled by the people.
- C. It allows the government to ignore the needs of its citizens.
- D. It ensures that the military has the final say in government matters.

6. Which example best illustrates federalism in the United States?

- A. The President vetoing a law passed by Congress.
- B. States having the power to create their own laws, separate from federal laws.
- C. The Supreme Court ruling on the constitutionality of a law.
- D. Congress impeaching a President.

8.C.CP.3 Explain how a system of checks and balances is intended to prevent a concentration of power in one branch.

Separation of Powers



THE LEGISLATIVE BRANCH enacts the laws of the country and raises and distributes the money necessary to operate the government, known as "The Power of the Purse."

THE JUDICIAL BRANCH interprets the U.S. Constitution and bylaws and rules on disputes brought before it by citizens, states, or other branches of government.

THE EXECUTIVE BRANCH implements and administers the laws and public policies enacted and funded by the Legislative Branch.

Use the graphic to answer 7-9

7. How can the Judicial Branch check the powers of the Legislative Branch?

- A. By vetoing legislation, such as Washington vetoing the reallocation of Representatives in 1792.
- B. By passing laws, such as the proposal and ratification of the Bill of Rights.
- C. By declaring laws unconstitutional, as seen in *Marbury v. Madison* (1803).
- D. By appointing officials, as Jefferson had selected three Supreme Court Justices during his presidency.

8. How can the Executive Branch check the Judicial Branch?

- A. By passing new laws.
- B. By vetoing court decisions.
- C. By nominating judges to the federal courts.
- D. By declaring laws unconstitutional.

9. Congress overriding President Andrew Jackson's veto of the Second Bank of the United States is one example of what form of checks and balances?

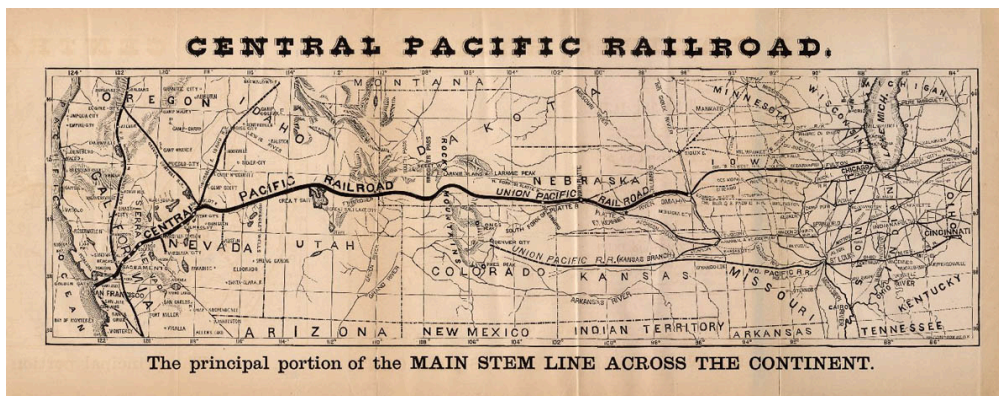
- A. The Legislative Branch checking the Executive Branch
- B. The Executive Branch checking the Legislative Branch
- C. The Judicial Branch checking the Executive Branch
- D. The Executive Branch checking the Judicial Branch

8.G.MM.1 Interpret how political, environmental, social and economic factors led to both forced and voluntary migration in the United States from the Colonial Era to Reconstruction from 1600-1877.



10. What was a major economic factor that motivated many Americans to move west during the mid-1800s?

- A. Discovery of gold in California in 1848
- B. Establishment of public schools
- C. The invention of the steam engine
- D. The formation of labor unions



11. How did the Transcontinental Railroad impact westward migration in the United States?

- A. It made travel to the western territories quicker and safer
- B. It limited the movement of people to the west
- C. It caused many people to move back east
- D. It was only used for transporting goods



12. What environmental factor influenced the forced migration of indigenous people (Native Americans) known as the Trail of Tears?

- A. The religious idea that God wanted settlers to move westward.
- B. The desire for settlers to take natural resources from the land where tribes of the Southeast lived.
- C. The desire of Native Americans to move westward and settle new lands.
- D. The construction of the Erie Canal, which expanded access to the Great Lakes.