Branches of Government Worksheet

Grade 6 – 7 civics · how power is divided

Name: Date: Score: / 26

Three jobs, deliberately kept apart

Every government has to do three different things with a law: decide what it should say, put it into practice, and work out what it means when people disagree. Most countries give those three jobs to three separate parts of government.

The **legislative** branch makes the laws. The **executive** branch carries them out day to day. The **judicial** branch decides what a law means and whether it has been broken — including when the accused is the government itself.

Keeping them apart is the point. If one group wrote the rules, enforced them and judged the cases, nothing would stop it doing as it liked. Because each branch can check the other two, power has to be negotiated rather than simply taken. That arrangement is called the **separation of powers**, and the principle behind it — that the law applies to leaders as well as to everyone else — is the **rule of law**.

Part A — Vocabulary match each term to its meaning (8 marks)

1. Legislative branch	_____	A. The basic rules setting out how a country is governed
2. Executive branch	_____	B. The part of government that makes laws
3. Judicial branch	_____	C. The part that interprets laws and settles disputes
4. Constitution	_____	D. A direct public vote on a single question
5. Rule of law	_____	E. The principle that everyone, including leaders, obeys the law
6. Separation of powers	_____	F. Splitting government so no one part holds it all
7. Election	_____	G. The part that carries out and enforces laws
8. Referendum	_____	H. A vote in which citizens choose their representatives

Part B — Fill in the blanks (6 marks)

1. The branch that makes laws is the _____ branch.

2. The branch that enforces laws is the _____ branch.

3. The branch that interprets laws is the _____ branch.

4. Dividing power between branches is called the _____ of powers.

5. The idea that leaders must obey the law too is the rule of _____.

6. A country’s basic set of governing rules is its _____.

Part C — Which branch? write legislative, executive or judicial (6 marks)

What is happening	Branch
Debating and passing a new law on road safety	
A court deciding whether a new law breaks the constitution	
A government department running the national health service	
A parliament voting on next year’s budget	
A judge sentencing someone found guilty of theft	
A minister signing an agreement with another country	

Part D — Think it through (6 marks)

1. Give one reason why the branch that makes a law should not also be the branch that decides what it means.

2. A leader says the law does not apply to them because they were elected. Which principle does that break, and why does it matter?

3. Name one job your national government does that you rely on, and say which branch is responsible for it.

Branches of Government Worksheet — Answer Key

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Part A — Vocabulary

1. **Legislative branch** → B
2. **Executive branch** → G
3. **Judicial branch** → C
4. **Constitution** → A
5. **Rule of law** → E
6. **Separation of powers** → F
7. **Election** → H
8. **Referendum** → D

Part B — Fill in the blanks

1. **legislative**
2. **executive**
3. **judicial**
4. **separation**
5. **law**
6. **constitution**

Part C — Which branch?

1. Debating and passing a new law on road safety → **Legislative**
2. A court deciding whether a new law breaks the constitution → **Judicial**
3. A government department running the national health service → **Executive**
4. A parliament voting on next year’s budget → **Legislative**
5. A judge sentencing someone found guilty of theft → **Judicial**
6. A minister signing an agreement with another country → **Executive**

> **The test:** is the law being written, applied or interpreted? Writing is legislative, applying is executive, interpreting is judicial.

Part D — Think it through

1. **A body that both wrote a law and judged it could simply decide the law meant whatever suited it.**
   Separating the two means the meaning is settled by someone with no stake in having written it.
2. **It breaks the rule of law.**
   Being elected gives a leader authority under the law, not above it. A leader who can ignore the law cannot be held to account between elections, and the courts lose any power to restrain them.
3. **Any reasonable example with the right branch.**
   Schools, roads, hospitals and policing are run by the executive; the funding for them is voted by the legislature; disputes about them are settled by the courts. Accept an answer that names one service and matches it sensibly.