

Name _____

Legislative Superstars: Exploring the Role and Structure of the Legislative Branch

Open-Ended Response Answer Key

1. Representation is crucial in the legislative branch because it ensures that the diverse voices and concerns of the American people are heard. Members of Congress represent their constituents by addressing issues and proposing legislation that reflects the interests and needs of their specific districts or states. For example, a representative from an agricultural region may focus on policies related to farming, while a senator from a coastal state might prioritize legislation related to fisheries and maritime industries.
2. The concept of checks and balances in the legislative branch means that it has the power to create laws, but the executive branch (headed by the President) can veto those laws if they believe they are not in the best interest of the country. This system prevents any one branch from having too much power and ensures that decisions are thoroughly reviewed and debated before becoming law.
3. One significant piece of legislation is the Civil Rights Act of 1964. This law aimed to end racial segregation and discrimination in the United States. It prohibits discrimination on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, or national origin in various areas, including public accommodations, education, and employment. The Civil Rights Act played a pivotal role in advancing civil rights and equality in the country.
4. The structure of the legislative branch ensures that both big and small states have a voice in the legislative process through the House of Representatives and the Senate. The House represents the population, with larger states having more representatives, while the Senate provides equal representation to all states, regardless of size. This arrangement balances the interests of individual states with the needs of the nation as a whole. For example, smaller states like Wyoming have as much influence in the Senate as larger states like California, which helps protect the interests of less populated states.

