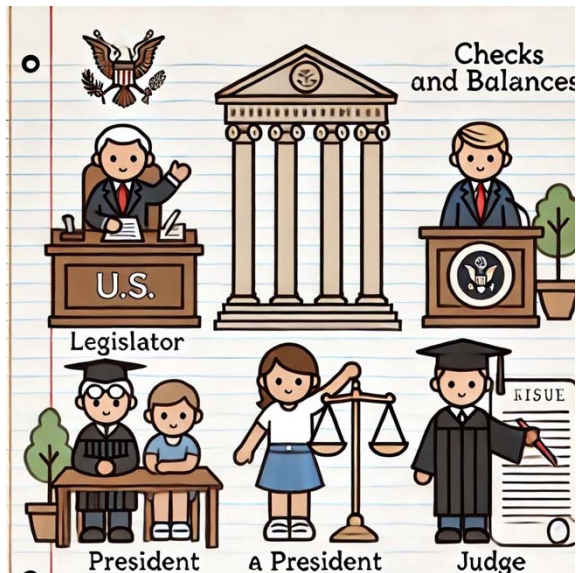


Name _____



Political Power

The system of checks and balances helps make sure that no one branch of government becomes too powerful. Over time, different political parties have used this system to either block or support government decisions. This system has helped shape the way laws are made and how leaders govern.

Political Parties and Checks and Balances

In the United States, different political parties often have different ideas about how the country should be run. Some believe the President should have more power, while others think Congress should have more control. Because of checks and balances, parties must work together to pass laws and create policies.

For example, when one political party controls Congress and another controls the Presidency, it can be harder to pass laws. This is because Congress can reject the President's ideas, and the President can veto laws passed by Congress. This forces both sides to negotiate and find solutions that more people agree with.

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Congress vs. The President

In 1996, President Bill Clinton, a Democrat, vetoed a law passed by the Republican-controlled Congress. The law would have required the government to spend less money on programs. Congress tried to override the veto, but they did not have enough votes. This showed how the President can block laws that Congress wants.

The Supreme Court and Presidential Power

In 1952, during the Korean War, President Harry Truman ordered the government to take over steel factories to prevent a worker strike. The Supreme Court ruled that he did not have the power to do this, because only Congress could make such decisions. This case proved that the Judicial Branch can limit the President's power.

Congress and the Courts

In 1937, President Franklin D. Roosevelt wanted to add more judges to the Supreme Court to help pass his policies. But Congress refused, saying this would give him too much power. This example showed how Congress can stop the President from changing the courts to benefit their political party.

Why This Matters

The system of checks and balances makes sure no one party or leader has too much power. While political parties may not always agree, this system encourages cooperation and protects democracy.

