

Name _____



Power Puzzle

In 1787, a group of leaders known as the Founding Fathers gathered in Philadelphia to write the U.S. Constitution. They wanted to create a strong but fair government. They had learned from history that too much power in one person's hands could lead to problems. They looked at what had happened in England, where kings had ruled with absolute power, making unfair

laws without listening to the people. The Founding Fathers also remembered how the American colonists had fought a war for independence to escape that kind of rule.

At the same time, they did not want a government that was too weak. The first system they had created, under the Articles of Confederation, did not work well. It did not have a strong leader or a way to settle disputes between states. This made it hard for the government to make decisions.

To solve these problems, the Founding Fathers designed a system of government with three branches: the Legislative Branch (Congress), the Executive Branch (the President), and the Judicial Branch (the courts). Each branch had its own responsibilities. Congress made laws, the President carried them out, and the courts decided if laws were fair. But the Founding Fathers went even further. They created a system of checks and balances so that no branch could become too powerful.

For example, Congress could make laws, but the President could veto (reject) them. However, Congress could override the veto with enough votes. The President could pick judges, but the Senate had to approve them. The Supreme Court could decide if a law was unconstitutional, meaning it went against the Constitution.

This system of checks and balances ensured that power was shared and controlled. It protected the rights of citizens and made sure the government worked fairly. Even today, this system helps keep our government balanced, just as the Founding Fathers intended.