Three Branches of U.S. Government

Use this key to check answers and read the explanations.

1. Which branch of the federal government contains Congress and makes federal laws?
   - A. Legislative
   - B. Executive
   - C. Judicial
   - D. State government

   Correct answer: A. Legislative

   Congress is part of the legislative branch. It considers and passes legislation.

2. Which federal branch includes the president and the departments that carry out federal laws?
   - A. Judicial
   - B. Legislative
   - C. Executive
   - D. Municipal government

   Correct answer: C. Executive

   The president leads the executive branch, which includes the federal departments and agencies that administer laws.

3. Which branch includes the federal courts and interprets federal law when deciding cases?
   - A. Legislative
   - B. Judicial
   - C. Executive
   - D. State legislatures

   Correct answer: B. Judicial

   The federal courts form the judicial branch.

4. What are the two chambers of the U.S. Congress?
   - A. Senate and Cabinet
   - B. Supreme Court and federal district courts
   - C. White House and Cabinet
   - D. House of Representatives and Senate

   Correct answer: D. House of Representatives and Senate

   Congress is made up of the House of Representatives and the Senate.

5. Federal employees in the Department of Agriculture run a program created by a law. Which branch is administering that program?

A. Legislative
B. Executive
C. Judicial
D. State government

Correct answer: B. Executive
The Department of Agriculture is a federal executive department. It carries out programs enacted into law.

6. Which chamber of Congress chooses the Speaker?

A. House of Representatives
B. Senate
C. Supreme Court
D. The two chambers together

Correct answer: A. House of Representatives
Article I provides for the House of Representatives to choose its Speaker and other officers.

7. Which order shows the two chambers' roles if a federal official is impeached and tried?

A. The Supreme Court votes to impeach. The Senate holds the trial.
B. The Senate votes to impeach. The House holds the trial.
C. The House votes to impeach. The Supreme Court holds the trial.
D. The House votes to impeach. The Senate holds the trial.

Correct answer: D. The House votes to impeach. The Senate holds the trial.
Article I gives the House the power of impeachment and the Senate the power to try impeachments.

8. The president negotiates a treaty. Under the Constitution, which chamber can give advice and consent by a two-thirds vote of members present?

A. Both chambers combined as one body
B. House of Representatives
C. Senate
D. Supreme Court

Correct answer: C. Senate
Article II gives the Senate the treaty advice-and-consent role and specifies the two-thirds threshold for senators present.

9. In which chamber must a federal bill for raising revenue originate?

A. House of Representatives
B. Senate
C. Supreme Court
D. Presidential Cabinet

Correct answer: A. House of Representatives
The Origination Clause places revenue bills in the House first. The Senate can propose or agree to amendments.

10. Who provides Congress with information about the State of the Union under Article II?

A. A state governor
B. Chief justice
C. Speaker of the House
D. President

Correct answer: D. President
The Constitution directs the president to give Congress information about the State of the Union.

11. In a real case, a federal court must decide whether part of a law conflicts with the Constitution. Which term describes that function?

A. Congressional redistricting
B. A presidential veto
C. Judicial review
D. Executive appointment

Correct answer: C. Judicial review
Judicial review allows courts deciding cases to assess constitutionality.

12. Under the usual constitutional term lengths, which office has a six-year term?

A. U.S. representative
B. U.S. senator
C. President
D. Federal judge on an Article III court

Correct answer: B. U.S. senator
Senators serve six-year terms. House members serve two-year terms, presidents serve four-year terms, and Article III judges hold office during good behavior.

13. Congress passes a law establishing a new federal district court. Which branch then exercises judicial power through the court?

A. Local government
B. Legislative
C. Executive
D. Judicial

Correct answer: D. Judicial
Congress may establish federal courts below the Supreme Court. Judges in those courts exercise federal judicial power.

14. When the Senate tries the impeachment of a U.S. president, who presides over the trial?

A. Chief justice of the United States
B. Speaker of the House
C. Secretary of state
D. The impeached president

Correct answer: A. Chief justice of the United States
Article I specifies that the chief justice presides when the president is tried by the Senate.

15. Congress passes a law, an agency administers it, and a court interprets it in a dispute. What is the order of branches in that example?

A. Judicial, executive, legislative
B. Executive, legislative, judicial
C. Legislative, executive, judicial
D. Legislative, judicial, executive

Correct answer: C. Legislative, executive, judicial
Congress belongs to the legislative branch, the agency to the executive branch, and the court to the judicial branch.