

Three Branches Sorting Office

Mission: Sort eleven government powers into the three branches, then use them to explain how the branches check one another.

Big question: Which powers does each branch of government have?

★ Warm-up: Quick sort

Which branch?

Signs bills ✓ **Executive.**

Writes bills ✓ **Legislative.**

Key vocabulary

Commander in chief	The President's role as head of the military.
Judicial review	The courts' power to decide if laws follow the Constitution.
Treaty	An agreement with another country.
Enforce	To make sure laws are followed.

1 Box 1

Deliver the powers

In the simulator: Sort all 11 powers correctly.

What did you notice?

2 Box 2

Shared power

The President **MAKES** treaties, but the Senate must **APPROVE** them. What is this an example of?

☐ Checks and balances ☐ A veto ☐ Judicial review

✓ **Checks and balances**

Most powers

Why do you think the Founders listed Congress's powers **FIRST** in the Constitution (Article I)?

☐ They saw Congress, which represents the people, as the most important branch

☐ Congress has the fewest powers ☐ It was alphabetical

✓ **They saw Congress, which represents the people, as the most important branch**

3 Box 3

Explain a check

Choose two powers from **DIFFERENT** branches that check each other and explain how.

Look for: Names two powers; Explains the check; at least 20 words

4 Box 4

Legend: war powers Legend only

Congress declares war, but the President commands the military. Why might the Founders have split war powers this way?

Look for: Explains the reason; at least 20 words



Exit ticket: answer the big question in your own words

Which powers does each branch of government have?

Look for: Congress makes laws, taxes, and declares war; the President enforces laws, commands the military, and can veto; the Supreme Court interprets laws and can declare them unconstitutional. Shared powers, like treaties, let branches check each other.



Completion codes

Students see a code like **ABC-I3** when they finish. The first part must match below. The letter is the level (E = Explorer, I = Investigator, L = Legend), and the number at the end is how many stars they earned.

Level	Code starts with
 Explorer	1CE-E
 Investigator	L01-I
 Legend	1H7-L



Watch for these misconceptions

- "The President is the boss of the whole government." The three branches are equal and check each other.
- "The Bill of Rights gives people rights." It protects rights people already have from government interference.
- "Freedom of speech means you can say anything anywhere with no consequences." It limits government, not every consequence.