



How the United States Government Works

Follow the clues. Learn the evidence. Crack the test!

CASE NOTES: THE CONSTITUTION & GOVERNMENT

- **Constitution:** The U.S. Constitution is the overall plan for our government. It explains how the government is organized and what powers it has.
- **"We the People":** These words show popular sovereignty - government gets its power from the people.
- **Amend:** The Constitution can be changed or added to through amendments.

Branch	Who/What	Main Job
Legislative	Congress: House + Senate	Makes laws
Executive	President	Carries out / enforces laws
Judicial	Supreme Court + federal courts	Explains laws; checks if they follow the Constitution
Checks & Balances Each branch has ways to limit the power of the other branches so no one branch becomes too powerful.		Federalism Power is shared between the national government and state governments.

How a Bill Can Become a Law: proposed bill → committee → House vote → Senate vote → president

EVIDENCE LOCKER: VOCABULARY

amend	to change or add to something already established	constituent	a person who lives and votes in an area
legislative	having the power to make laws	beacon	something that guides or gives hope
executive	having the power to carry out laws	citizen	a person who belongs to a country and is protected by its laws
judicial	having the power to decide questions about laws	naturalization	the process of becoming a citizen when born in another country
propose	to suggest or put forward an idea	allegiance	loyalty to a group or country

Detective Tip: Look for clue words in a question. "Makes laws" points to legislative. "Carries out laws" points to executive.



Name: _____ Date: _____

PART A: VOCABULARY EVIDENCE - MATCH THE CLUE

Write the correct letter beside each vocabulary word.

- | | |
|------------------------|---|
| 1. ____ amend | A. loyalty to a group or country |
| 2. ____ legislative | B. to suggest an idea |
| 3. ____ executive | C. the process of becoming a U.S. citizen |
| 4. ____ judicial | D. a person who belongs to a country |
| 5. ____ propose | E. having the power to make laws |
| 6. ____ constituent | F. to change or add to something established |
| 7. ____ beacon | G. having the power to carry out laws |
| 8. ____ citizen | H. a person who lives and votes in an area |
| 9. ____ naturalization | I. having the power to decide questions about laws |
| 10. ____ allegiance | J. something that guides or gives hope |

PART B: FOLLOW THE EVIDENCE

11. **Which document is the overall plan for the United States government?**
A. Declaration of Independence B. U.S. Constitution C. Bill from Congress
12. **"We the People" shows that the government gets its power from -**
A. the people B. the courts C. one ruler
13. **Which branch of government MAKES laws?**
A. executive B. judicial C. legislative
14. **Congress is made up of the -**
A. House of Representatives and Senate B. president and vice president C. Supreme Court and lower courts
15. **Which branch carries out and enforces laws?**
A. legislative B. executive C. judicial
16. **Why does the government use checks and balances?**
A. to make one branch strongest B. to keep one branch from becoming too powerful C. to let states ignore laws
17. **What is federalism?**
A. sharing power between national and state governments B. giving all power to Congress C. letting courts make every law
18. **Which is a power of state governments?**
A. declaring war B. running elections C. printing U.S. money
19. **A proposed bill must be approved by Congress before it can go to the -**
A. president B. governor of every state C. Supreme Court first
20. **Which action is an example of civic virtue?**
A. refusing to help your community B. volunteering to clean a park C. ignoring all community rules

CASE CLOSED CHECK: Circle any question you are not sure about. Go back to Page 1 and find the evidence!

**Papers and Places - Chapter 1 | How the United States Government Works****PART A: VOCABULARY ANSWERS**

1. amend	F	6. constituent	H
2. legislative	E	7. beacon	J
3. executive	G	8. citizen	D
4. judicial	I	9. naturalization	C
5. propose	B	10. allegiance	A

PART B: PRACTICE ANSWERS + QUICK RATIONALE**11. B - U.S. Constitution**

It is the overall plan for the U.S. government.

12. A - the people

"We the People" shows popular sovereignty.

13. C - legislative

The legislative branch makes laws.

14. A - House of Representatives and Senate

Together, the House and Senate make up Congress.

15. B - executive

The executive branch carries out and enforces laws.

16. B - keep one branch from becoming too powerful

Checks and balances limit the power of each branch.

17. A - sharing power between national and state governments

That division of power is called federalism.

18. B - running elections

States are responsible for running elections.

19. A - president

After Congress approves a bill, it is sent to the president.

20. B - volunteering to clean a park

Helping the community is an example of civic virtue.

TEACHER NOTE

Suggested use: Have students study Page 1, complete Page 2 without notes, then use the circled "unsure" items to target a quick reteach before the chapter test.

Editable note: Open the DOCX in Microsoft Word or upload it to Google Drive and open with Google Docs to customize wording, spacing, or practice for multiple sessions.