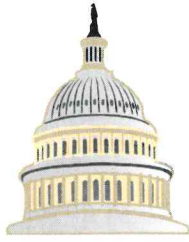


Separation of Powers

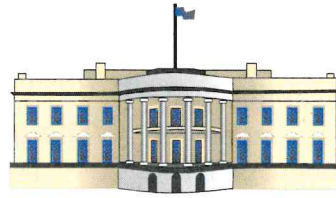


Legislative Branch

(Congress)

Passes laws

- Can override President's veto
- Approves treaties and presidential appointments
- Can impeach and remove President and other high officials
- Creates lower federal courts
- Appropriates money
- Prints and coins money
- Raises and supports the armed forces
- Can declare war
- Regulates foreign and interstate trade

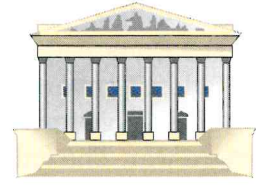


Executive Branch

(President)

Carries out laws

- Proposes laws
- Can veto laws
- Negotiates foreign treaties
- Serves as commander in chief of the armed forces
- Appoints federal judges, ambassadors, and other high officials
- Can grant pardons to federal offenders



Judicial Branch

(Supreme Court and Other Federal Courts)

Interprets laws

- Can declare laws unconstitutional
- Can declare executive actions unconstitutional

Chart Skills

The Constitution set up three branches of government. Each of the branches has its own powers.

- 1. Comprehension** (a) Who heads the executive branch? (b) What is the role of the legislative branch?
- 2. Critical Thinking** Based on this chart, describe the relationship between the judicial branch and the executive branch.



Electing the President

The framers of the Constitution wanted to ensure that the President would not become too strong. Some feared that a President elected directly by the people might become too independent of Congress and the states.

Others opposed direct election because they worried that voters would not know a candidate from outside their area. In the late 1700s, news traveled slowly. New Englanders would probably know little about a candidate from the South. A candidate from Pennsylvania might be unknown to voters in Vermont or Georgia.

As a result of these concerns, the Constitution calls for an **electoral college**. It is made up of electors from every state. Every

four years, the electors vote for the President and Vice President of the United States.

The framers of the Constitution expected that the electors would be well informed and familiar with the national government. They believed that such people would choose a President and Vice President wisely.

Checks and Balances

The Constitution set up a system of **checks and balances**. Under this system, each branch of the federal government has some way to check, or control, the other two branches. The system of checks and balances is another way in which the Constitution limits the power of government. (See the chart on page 220.)