Name\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Date\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Period\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Unit 6 Day 8

**The System of Checks and Balances**

The delegates to the Constitutional Convention did not want any one of the three branches of government to become too powerful. For this reason, the system of “**checks and balances**” was established. This system allows one branch to limit, or “check,” the power of another branch. Listed below are important powers of the executive, legislative, and judicial branches. Use the information to answer the questions that follow.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Executive Branch**  **(President)**  (Enforces the Laws) | **Legislative Branch**  **(Congress)**  (Writes the Laws) | **Judicial Branch**  **(Courts)**  (Interprets the Laws) |
| 1. May sign or veto “bills” (proposed laws). | 1. Writes bills and sends them to the president. | 1. Decides whether laws have been broken. |
| 1. Appoints judges, ambassadors, Cabinet members, and other officials. | 1. Can pass a law over the president’s veto by a 2/3 vote in both the Senate and House. | 2. May declare a law “unconstitutional” (the power of “judicial review”). |
| 1. Commands the armed forces. | 1. a) House can “impeach” president by a “majority vote” (over half). b) Senate then can remove the president by a 2/3 vote. |  |
| 1. Makes treaties and conducts foreign policy. | 1. Approves or disapproves appointments made by the president. |  |
|  | 1. Can remove judges and other officials for improper behavior. |  |

Directions: Each question has two parts. Fill in the space in part “a” with the name of the branch – executive, legislative, or judicial – that has the power being described. Fill in the space in part “b” with the branch that can “check” the power of the first branch.

1a. A bill is written by the ***legislative*** branch and then signed by the president.

1b. The law is declared “unconstitutional” by the ***judicial branch***.

2a. A Secretary of State is chosen by the ***executive*** branch.

2b. The ***legislative*** branch decides not to approve of the president’s choice.

3a. A bill is passed by the ***legislative*** branch.

3b. The ***executive*** branch vetoes it.

3c. The bill becomes a law with 2/3 of the members of each house of the ***legislative*** branch approving it.

