

You Be The Supreme Court!

As a member of the Supreme Court, or the highest court in the judicial branch, you have the power to:

- Declare laws unconstitutional; and
- Interpret/Make meaning of laws.

You can check the powers of the president by:

- Declaring executive acts unconstitutional.

You can check the powers of the Congress by:

- Declaring laws unconstitutional.

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Directions for Part One: Read the role-playing scenario below and familiarize yourself with your branch of government's goal. Then, brainstorm a list of actions/steps that your branch has the power to take in order to accomplish your goal. An example is provided for you.

Scenario/Goal:

You and your fellow Supreme Court justices have decided that you are sick and tired of the ways in which the president and members of the Congress abuse their authority. From now on, you have decided, if either the president or members of the Congress take actions that are not specifically permitted by the Constitution, you will declare the actions unconstitutional. For example: The president and any congressperson can mail business-related correspondence for free, a privilege called "franking." You believe it is time to stamp out this abuse of authority and force them to adhere to the principles of the Constitution.

Actions to Accomplish Your Goal:

- *You rule in favor of Cliff Clavin in Clavin v. United States (2011), a case in which a disgruntled postal worker sues the U.S. government for theft of stamps.*
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Directions for Part Two: Think about the goals that the other two branches of government have presented to you. Given the ways in which you can check their powers, brainstorm a list of actions/steps you would take to check each branch's power and make it difficult for each branch to accomplish its goal.

Actions to Check the President's Goal:

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Actions to Check the Congress' Goal:

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