

CHEAT SHEET: CHECKS AND BALANCES

The organizer below shows the basic system of checks and balances laid out in Articles 1-3 of the Constitution. Use them to develop your own “power diagram” like we did on class with RPSLS.

Checks and Balances in the Federal Government

Powers

Passes federal laws.

Can override President's veto of a bill by a two-thirds vote.

Establishes lower federal courts and number of federal judges.

Legislative



Checks on Powers

President can veto federal bills.

Supreme Court can declare laws unconstitutional.

Approves or vetoes federal bills.

Carries out federal laws.

Appoints federal judges and other high federal officials.

Can make foreign treaties.

Can grant pardons and reprieves to federal offenders.

Executive



Congress can override President's veto by a two-thirds vote.

Senate can refuse to confirm presidential appointments.

Senate can refuse to ratify treaties.

Congress can impeach and remove President.

Supreme Court can declare executive acts unconstitutional.

Interprets and applies the law.

Can declare laws passed by Congress and actions taken by the executive unconstitutional.

Judicial



Congress can propose constitutional amendments to overturn judicial decisions.

Congress can impeach and remove federal judges.

RPSLS Tournament

You'll need a partner, and a mastery of this game to do well. You'll get 5 minutes to practice with your partner, then we're on to a full-scale 15 minute tournament. Winner presents their strategy, then maps out the game on the board. (below is from Wikipedia).

Rock-paper-scissors-lizard-Spock

Rock-paper-scissors-lizard-Spock is a five-gesture expansion of the classic selection method game [rock-paper-scissors](#). It operates on the same basic principle, but includes two additional weapons: the [lizard](#) (formed by the hand as a sock-puppet-like mouth) and [Spock](#)^[1] (formed by the [Star Trek Vulcan salute](#)). This reduces the chances of a round ending in a tie.

Rules

The rules of Rock-paper-scissors-lizard-Spock are:

- | | | |
|---|-------------------------------|-------------------------|
| • Scissors cuts paper | scissors | Spock |
| • Paper covers rock | • Scissors decapitates lizard | • Spock vaporizes rock |
| • Rock crushes lizard | • Lizard eats paper | • Rock crushes scissors |
| • Lizard poisons Spock | • Paper disproves | |
| • Spock smashes | | |

There are ten possible pairings of the five gestures; each gesture beats two of the other gestures and is beaten by the remaining two.

Good luck!

