

Checks and Balances Cheat Sheet

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.

Test Yourself on Checks and Balances

Scenario 1: Sign a peace treaty with Afghanistan	Which branch has the authority to check this power? What can they specifically do?
What branch as the power to perform this action?	

Scenario 2: Find a law unconstitutional	Which branch has the authority to check this power? What can they specifically do?
What branch as the power to perform this action?	

Scenario 3: Veto legislation	Which branch has the authority to check this power? What can they specifically do?
What branch as the power to perform this action?	

Scenario 4: Sign a bill into law	Which branch has the authority to check this power? What can they specifically do?
What branch as the power to perform this action?	

Scenario 5: Choose a Supreme Court nominee	Which branch has the authority to check this power? What can they specifically do?
What branch as the power to perform this action?	