



Knowledge Organiser: Constitution

Subject Specific Vocabulary	Short-hand definitions
Federalism	
Connecticut Compromise 1787	
Checks and Balances	
Bipartisanship	
Judicialle	
Enumerated Powers	
Necessary and Proper Clause	

Knowledge Dump 1

What are the principles and what is the nature of the US Constitution

Knowledge Dump 3

What checks does the President have on other branches?

Knowledge Dump 4

What checks does the SC have on other branches

Knowledge Dump 2

What checks does Congress have on the other branches

Give modern examples for each of the checks on each branch of govt?

Congress checks on the President:

• Write legislation

• Override the presidential veto

• The power of the purse

• Declare war

• Impeach the President

• Ratify treaties ( Senate only)

• Ratify cabinet appointments ( Senate only)

Congress checks on SC

• Impeach justices

• Propose a Constitutional Amendment

• Creation of lower courts and stripping the jurisdiction of the SC

• Ratify judicial appointments (Senate only)



Presidential checks on Congress

These powers were given to the President to counteract ‘popular democracy’ – acting in self interest not the interests of the nation. Note the Founding Fathers were suspicious of democracy hence also the Senate the upper chamber was initially appointed not elected.

- Suggest legislation
- Sign/Veto legislation
- Commander in Chief of the armed forces:

Presidential Checks on SC

- Power of the pardon:
- Nominations of judges to affect ideological balance of court

SC checks on Congress and the President:

Evaluate the view that the constitutional checks and balances lead to ineffective government.

The crucial thing is to define effective. It must reference the intentions of the FF – their aim for limited govt to avoid tyranny, supported by bipartisanship, underpinned by federalism. The Separation of Powers and checks and balances were designed to facilitate these three objectives.

You will also need to refer to the factors that impact on effectiveness – divided/united govts, evenly split chambers, presidential poll ratings, events etc

It could be done:

Limited govt and legislative checks . Is the govt too limited and sclerotic. No longer considered scrutiny but partisan derailing of any opponent agenda

SC checks on both branches v checks on it. Is the SC the tyrannical branch

Foreign Policy checks and their effectiveness

Has the vagueness of Article 2 allowed for presidential/federal govt overreach v Is it too hard for the govt to make national policy . Is federalism too strong?

Evaluate the view that the FAP is no longer fit for purpose?



Evaluate the view that the US Constitution is undemocratic

Evaluate the view that the US Constitution no longer works in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century?

Evaluate the view that the constitutional checks and balances