

Basic Government Concepts

Key Terms to know: *Federalism, Representative Democracy, Consent of the Governed; Popular Sovereignty; Separation of Powers; Checks and Balances; Legislative Branch; Executive Branch; Judicial Branch; Rule of Law; Majority Rule; Delegated powers; Reserved Powers; Concurrent Powers; Amend*

Our government was created, to serve the people of our nation
And with it came many concepts, among much deliberation
The first of these is Federalism –this means power is shared,
Between the nation and states, to ensure that rule is fair.

In representative democracy, the leaders are elected,
Voted in by the people, so that their rights will be protected
Because in our government, its power is derived
By the consent of the governed, whom chose who will preside.

This is popular sovereignty –meaning the people get to choose,
How their government is run, so that power will not be abused,
And just to ensure, that power has its limits,
Our government was created, with separation of its powers in it.

Three branches were created, each branch given a different role
With the hopes that not a single branch would gain too much control,
A system of checks and balances was then created too,
Giving the branches the power to check each other through and through

The legislative was the first branch created—to make the laws, of course!
And then the executive branch, to ensure that they're enforced!
Finally the judicial—the court system was what they'd need,
To interpret every law, and rule on its constitutionality

Our nation is one that's governed, by a simple rule of law --
No matter one's status within the nation, every law applies to all.
It is a nation of majority rule—people choose what is decided,
Basing their decisions off all the information they're provided!

Our nation's government is limited, it's specific powers are delegated,
While reserved powers are given to the states, where they're demonstrated
Still, other powers are concurrent, and by this, they are shared,
By the federal government and the states--such as when taxes are declared!

Our Constitution is complex, it's true, but still, it functions best
For over two hundred years, it has survived so many tests.
Perhaps because it's flexible – it has the power to change, and bend,
For additions can be made to it—to add on to it is to amend.

Name: _____

Class Period: _____

Introduction to the United States Government, questions

Question	Answer
In the concept of federalism, does governmental power go to the central government or to state governments?	
What is meant by the term 'representative democracy'?	
What is 'popular sovereignty'?	
Define 'Consent of the governed'	
What is the purpose of the concept of separation of powers?	
What three branches were created as our government was established, and what is the purpose of each?	
Define 'rule of law':	
What is majority rule?	
What are the differences between delegated powers, reserved powers, and concurrent powers?	
What is an example of a concurrent power?	
Why has our Constitution been able to work so effectively for so long?	

Given what you know (strictly based off of the poem), list and explain six examples of how our government's power is limited.

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____
6. _____