

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Period: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

## Executive Branch Reading Comprehension

**Directions: Read the following and answer the following questions**

### What is the Executive Branch?

The executive branch meaning refers to one of the United States' **branches of government**. Specifically, the executive branch is responsible for passing the bills that Congress creates, making them into law. The executive branch, just like the other branches of government is subject to the system of **checks and balances**. Checks and balances ensure that no branch of government becomes more powerful than the other branches.

### Head of the Executive Branch

The President of the United States is the head of the executive branch. As the head of the executive branch, the President can serve a maximum of two four-year terms. President Franklin D. Roosevelt is the only President in U.S. history to have served more than two terms. Six years after Roosevelt's death, during his fourth term as President, Congress ratified the **22nd Amendment** to the **Constitution**, changing the Presidential term limit to no more than two terms.

The head of the executive branch is responsible for signing into law the legislation that Congress passes. The President has the right to veto a bill that Congress passes that he doesn't agree with, but Congress can still make the bill a law with a majority vote. The President also acts as a kind of senior commander to the country's military, and he is responsible for fostering diplomacy between the U.S. and other countries.

### Example of Executive Branch Powers

Executive branch examples of power include the authority held by the President, the Vice President, and the President's cabinet. Some of these executive branch examples of power include the ability to appoint individuals to certain governmental posts, and the authority to appoint federal judges to the **U.S. Supreme Court**.

Another of these executive branch examples of power is the authority to grant a **pardon**, or forgiveness, to an individual accused of committing a crime. This power extends only to federal crimes, however. The President has no authority to pardon state crimes.

### Checks and Balances

The system of checks and balances ensures that no branch of government becomes too powerful. The way checks and balances work entails the legislative, executive, and judicial branches of government all sharing governmental power.

For instance, Congress, by way of the system of checks and balances, controls the money that funds any actions the executive branch wants to take. So, if Congress refuses to fund an action, the executive branch cannot execute it.

The President also has the power to **veto** a bill, keeping it from becoming law. However, Congress has the power to override the President's veto with a super majority vote. This is an example of executive branch control kept in check by the system of checks and balances.

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### Duties of the Executive Branch

The duties of the executive branch deal mainly with enforcing the country's laws. For instance, one of the duties of the executive branch is to command and oversee the U.S. military. Another of the duties of the executive branch is specific to the Vice President: he acts as President over the Senate and casts the deciding vote in the event of a tie.

### Executive Branch Questions

#### Matching

- |       |                               |  |
|-------|-------------------------------|--|
| _____ | 1. 22 <sup>nd</sup> Amendment | a. To refuse to admit or approve   |
| _____ | 2. Checks and balances        | b. A system to prevent any one branch from exerting too much power               |
| _____ | 3. Veto                       | c. To remit the penalty of an offense  |
| _____ | 4. Pardon                     | d. An amendment that limits presidential terms                                   |
| _____ | 5. U.S. Supreme Court         | e. The highest court in the US   |
| _____ | 6. Constitution               | f. Division of government into the executive, judicial, and legislative branches |
| _____ | 7. Branches of government     | g. The system of principles in which a nation is governed                        |

#### Multiple Choice

8. Who acts as the President over the Senate and casts the deciding vote in the event of a tie?
- |  |                           |
|--|---------------------------|
| a. President of the United States      | b. Senate pro Tempore     |
| c. Vice President of the United States | d. Senate Majority Leader |
9. Who was the only president who served for more than 2 terms?
- |                          |                    |
|--------------------------|--------------------|
| a. Franklin D. Roosevelt | b. Abraham Lincoln |
| c. George Washington     | d. Ronald Reagan   |
10. Which of the following can the United States President NOT do?
- |  |  |
|--|--|
| a. Nominate justices to the Supreme Court  | b. Command and oversee the US Military |
| c. Pardoning individuals for state crimes. | d. He or she can do all the above.     |

