

Checks and Balances

This chart shows the powers of the three branches of the United States government and how each branch checks or constrains the power of the others.

Congress

POWERS	CHECKS ON EXECUTIVE	CHECKS ON JUDICIARY
Passes federal laws	Controls appropriations	Senate approves appointments of judges
Passes federal budget, levying taxes and funding executive functions	Can override executive vetoes of legislation with a two-thirds vote in each house of Congress	Possesses power to impeach and remove judges
Establishes lower federal courts, judicial positions	Can impeach and remove president	Controls appropriations to federal courts
Approves treaties and federal appointments	Senate can deny confirmation to executive appointees or to treaties with foreign governments	Can curb judicial power by adding new judges and creating new court systems
Declares war	Possesses oversight powers	Writes rules that may limit powers of judicial review in certain legislation

Executive

POWERS	CHECKS ON CONGRESS	CHECKS ON JUDICIARY
Executes laws passed by Congress	Veto over legislation	President appoints judges
Appoints judges and other employees of the federal government	Power to convene special session of Congress	Can pardon individuals convicted in federal courts
Commander-in-chief of armed forces	Power to adjourn Congress	
Negotiates treaties with foreign governments	Vice-president presides over Senate, with tie-breaking vote	

Judiciary

POWERS	CHECKS ON CONGRESS	CHECKS ON EXECUTIVE
Rules on constitutionality of Congressional legislation and Executive acts	Judicial review of legislation	Judicial review of Executive acts
Chief justice presides over presidential impeachment hearings	Chief justice presides over presidential impeachment hearings	Chief justice presides over presidential impeachment hearings