

Separation of Powers: Discussion Starters and Writing Prompts
For High School Level and Beyond

1. Name the three branches of government.
2. What is the job description of each branch?
3. In what document can these job descriptions be found?
4. Why did the Framers assign Article I to Congress, not the President?
5. Why did the Framers create a separation of powers among the three branches of government?
6. What would happen if too much power were concentrated in one branch of government without checks by the other branches?
 - Legislative Branch
 - Executive Branch
 - Judicial Branch
7. What do we mean when we refer to the separation of powers as a system of checks and balances?
8. Focus on each branch of government and describe how it exercises a check on the others.
9. Track the life of a law through each branch of government and describe the role of each branch.
 - Legislative Branch
 - Executive Branch
 - Judicial Branch
10. What are some of the challenges of the process of checks and balances among the branches?
11. What are some of the benefits of the process of checks and balances among the branches?
12. Some scholars describe the separation of powers as a three-legged stool. Why is that a good description?