

U.S. Constitution Key Terms-Sample Answers

KEY TERMS	DEFINITION	IN YOUR WORDS	CONSTITUTIONAL EXAMPLE
separation of powers	the structure of the federal government that sets up three branches with their own distinct powers and responsibilities	three branches of government; each own job	Legislative Executive Judicial Articles I-III
checks and balances	the ability of each branch of government to limit the power of the other branches	each branch has the ability to block another branch if misusing power	President negotiates a treaty; takes $\frac{2}{3}$ Senate approval to ratify
individual rights	rights guaranteed or belonging to a person	basic freedoms you get no matter what	Bill of Rights 9th Amendment
rule of law	the idea that those who govern must also follow the same laws as everyone; no one is above the law	law applies to everyone no matter what	If VP commits a crime they are not exempt from consequences

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due process of law	the idea that people accused of a crime still have individual rights, that the process of weighing their accused crimes must take place fairly, following an established standard, before they can lose either their life or freedom	trials have to be fair and follow rules that respect people's rights	Can't have someone sitting in jail for 9 years awaiting trial 5th Amendment 6th Amendment 7th Amendment 8th Amendment
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Question: How do the terms above limit the powers of government?

Answers will vary.

With separation of powers, checks and balances, individual rights, rule of law, and due process of law our nation ensures that one branch of government, one individual, or one majority group cannot become too powerful. The government gets its power from the people. There is no avenue in which those in power can use the structures of the constitution/government to consolidate more power and suppress dissent.