| **KEY TERMS** | **DEFINITION** | **IN YOUR WORDS** | **CONSTITUTIONAL EXAMPLE** |
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| **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 ⅔ 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 |
| **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 |

**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.