



Especially

for

kids

and their

families

# The Mini Page

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By BETTY DEBNAM

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## More Big Ideas From Our Constitution

# Checks and Balances

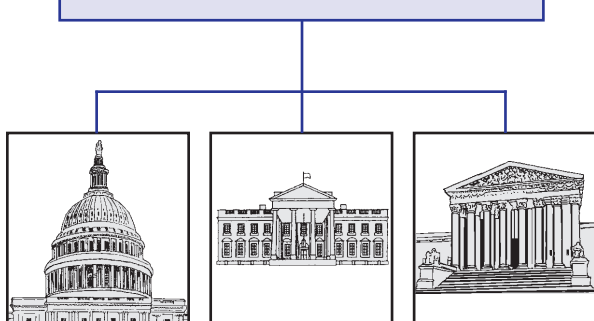
The word “check” has many meanings. One of them is to stop, or limit.

The term “checks and balances” means the limits put on each branch of government so that one branch cannot overpower another branch.

The writers of the Constitution “checked” the powers they gave each branch of government. The writers also wanted all three branches to limit, or “balance,” each other’s powers.

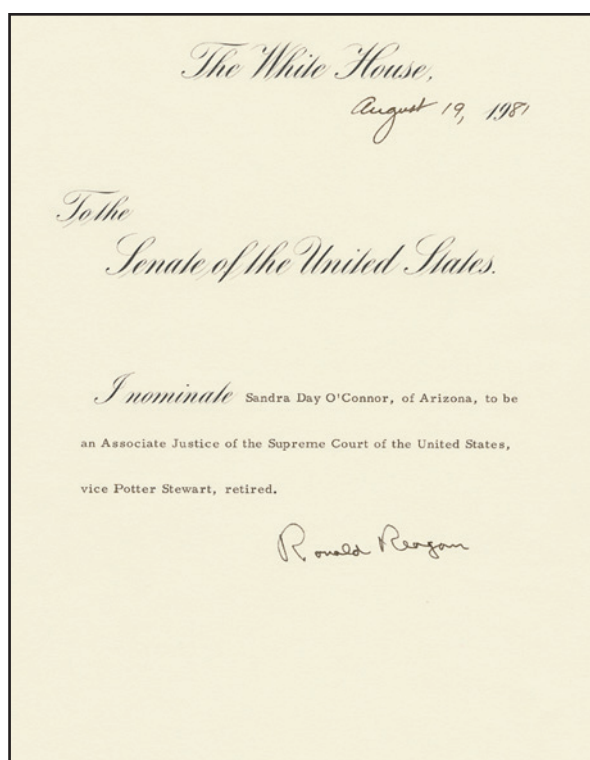
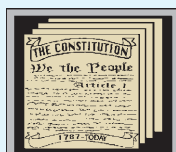
They thought checks and balances would make government safe and secure. They did not want one branch to threaten our freedom.

## GOVERNMENT



This mobile is a symbol of the balance of power. The government works well if the powers are balanced and checked.

This is the fifth in a nine-part monthly series. We thank the staff of the National Archives and Lee Ann Potter, director of education and volunteer programs, for their help.



Checks and balances are easy to see in this 1981 letter from President Reagan (the executive branch) to the Senate (the legislative branch) about a Supreme Court justice (the judicial branch).

## Laws



The Congress passes a law, but it can’t become a law unless the president signs it.



The president can veto a law. Congress can override the veto by a two-thirds vote of both the Senate and the House.



The Supreme Court might declare the law unconstitutional.

## Appointments



The president can appoint people to some important offices.



The Senate must approve the appointments.

## War powers



The president is commander in chief of the armed forces.



Congress has the power to declare war.

## Voting powers





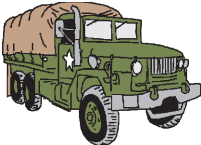








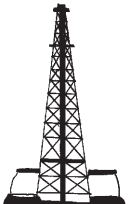



The writers of the Constitution also checked the power of government by setting elections. Members of Congress and the

president are elected for limited terms. If the voters want a change, they can go to the polls and vote officials out of office.

# The President's Cabinet

The Cabinet is the name of a special group that gives the president advice.



<p>The secretary of state works our agreements with other countries.</p> 	<p>The secretary of the treasury supervises the collection of taxes.</p> 	<p>The secretary of defense is in charge of the armed forces.</p> 	<p>The attorney general enforces the laws of the United States.</p> 	<p>The secretary of the interior protects our natural resources and wildlife.</p> 
<p>The secretary of agriculture looks after the needs of farmers and our crops.</p> 	<p>The secretary of commerce is interested in better U.S. business opportunities.</p> 	<p>The secretary of labor protects the interests of U.S. workers.</p> 	<p>The secretary of health and human services looks after our health and other needs.</p> 	<p>The secretary of housing and urban development works on housing and urban problems.</p> 
<p>The secretary of transportation tries to set up better and safer ways to travel.</p> 	<p>The secretary of energy tries to solve our energy problems.</p> 	<p>The secretary of education tries to gather information about and improve education.</p> 	<p>The secretary of veterans affairs is concerned with the benefits of veterans and their families.</p> 	<p>The secretary of homeland security works to make our country safer.</p> 

Other officials take part in Cabinet meetings. (The vice president also attends.)

The director of the Office of Management and Budget.

The U.S. trade representative.

The White House chief of staff.

Director of national drug control policy.

Head of the Environmental Protection Agency.

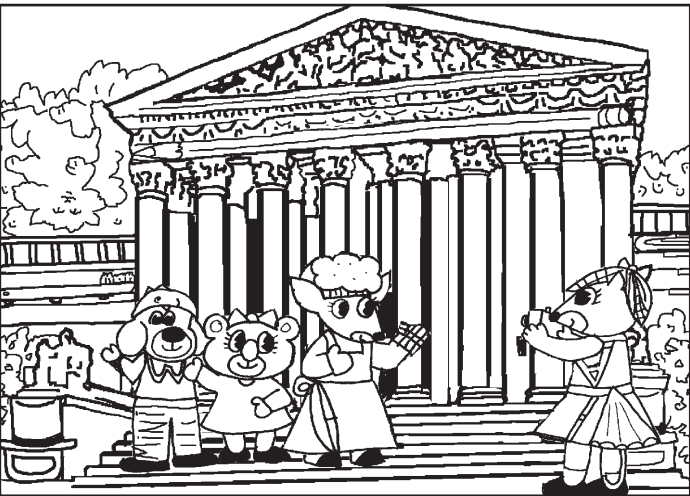
The president's Cabinet is not like the one you keep things in. The word "cabinet" comes from an old English word meaning a private meeting room. Most members have the title of "secretary." These people are in charge of big government departments. The Cabinet was not mentioned in the Constitution, but Article II, Section 2, gives the president the power to nominate members of the Supreme Court and "Others."

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## Mini Spy ...



Mini Spy and her friends are visiting the Supreme Court. See if you can find: • man in the moon • word MINI • ear of corn



- sailboat
- umbrella
- top hat
- ladder
- muffin
- pencil
- paper clip
- letter A
- letter D
- toothbrush
- letter W
- book
- cat



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## TRY 'N FIND THE NEWS HOUND'S CONSTITUTION

Words and names that remind us of the Constitution are hidden in the block below. Some words are hidden backward or diagonally, and some letters are used twice. See if you can find: GOVERNMENT, SUPREME, COURT, APPOINTMENTS, UNITED, STATES, TERM, PRESIDENT, CONSTITUTION, LAWS, TREASON, EXECUTIVE, JUDICIAL, BRANCH, CONGRESS, CHECKS, BALANCES, ARMED, FORCES.

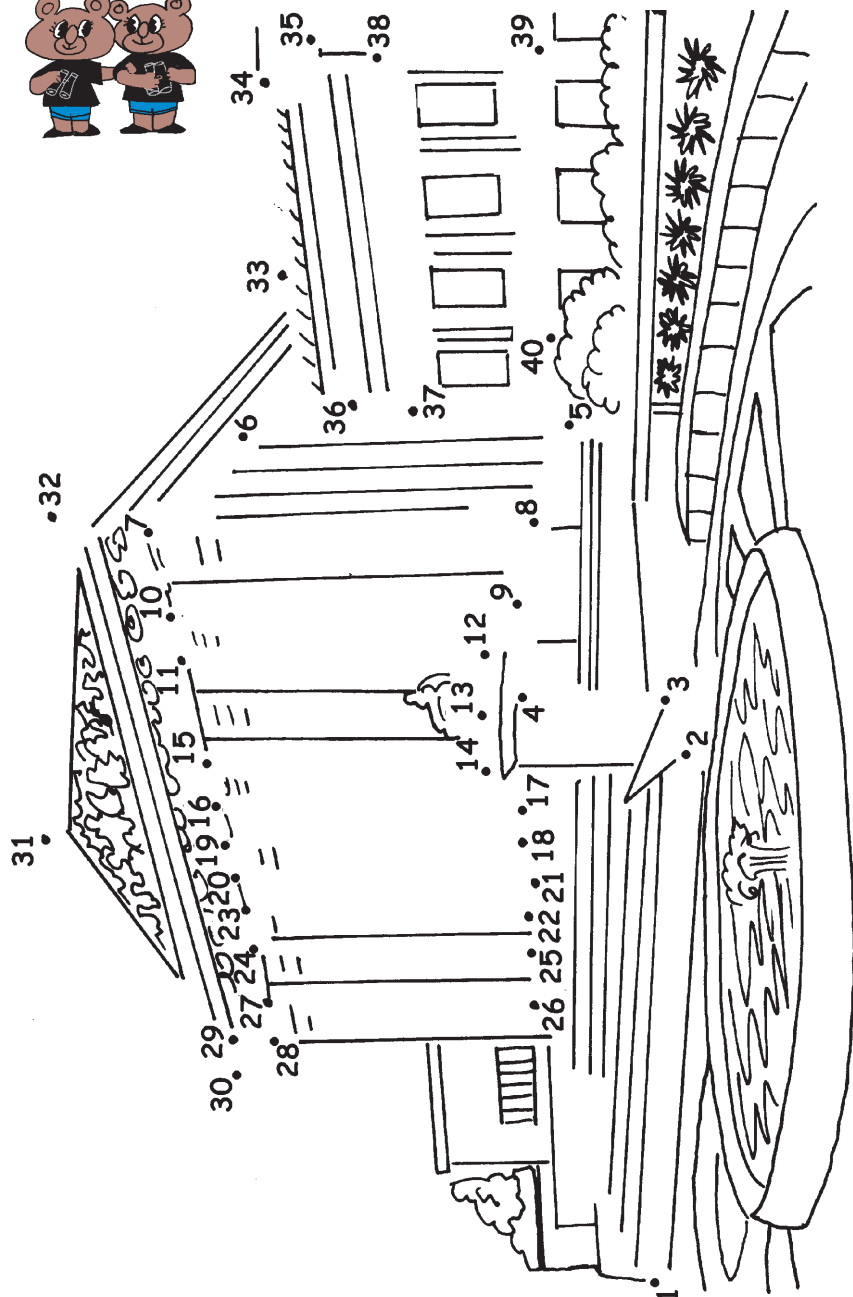
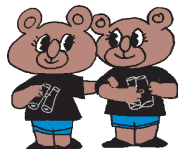
THE CONSTITUTION PROTECTS OUR RIGHTS!



J U D I C I A L L A W S Q P M E  
T R E A S O N K H C N A R B X  
C H E C K S U P R E M E E A E  
U N I T E D S E T A T S S L C  
T R U O C O N G R E S S I A U  
S E C R O F Y J A R M E D N T  
A P P O I N T M E N T S E C I  
G O V E R N M E N T O V N E V  
N O I T U T I T S N O C T S E



Go dot to dot and color.



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## Rookie Cookie's Recipe Creamy Corn Chowder

### You'll need:

- 3 tablespoons butter
- 2 (14½-ounce) cans of diced new potatoes
- 2 celery stalks, chopped
- 1 carrot, chopped
- 1 small onion, chopped
- 2 teaspoons dried rosemary
- 3 cups canned or frozen corn kernels
- 1 cup cream
- ½ cup sour cream
- 2 cups milk
- salt and pepper to taste
- 1 cup sharp cheddar cheese, shredded

### What to do:

1. In a large saucepan, melt the butter.
2. Add the potato, celery, carrot, onion and rosemary. Cook for about 5 minutes over low heat.
3. Add the remaining ingredients, except the cheese, and cook on medium heat for another 15 minutes.
4. Serve in bowls and top with cheese. Makes 6 servings.

*Note: You will need an adult's help with this recipe.*

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## Meet Anna Popplewell



photo courtesy Phil Bray  
NARNIA™ © Disney/Walden

Actress Anna Popplewell plays the character Susan in the movie "The Chronicles of Narnia: The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe," based on the novel by C.S. Lewis. She is the oldest sister of the Pevensie kids who travel together on a journey to the magical land called Narnia.

When Anna was 6 years old, she attended drama classes, where she was able to get some TV and film roles. She played the part of Anna Sackville-Bagg in the movie "The Little Vampire."

Anna, now 17, was born in London. Her father is a barrister, or lawyer, and her mother is a doctor. She is the oldest of three children.

Her brother and sister also act and attend drama classes. Her sister, Lulu, played a role in a movie, and her younger brother, Freddie, played Michael Darling in the movie "Peter Pan."

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MIGHTY  
FUNNY'S

## Mini Jokes

All the following jokes have something in common. Can you guess the common theme or category?

**Paul:** What did the pickle say at the start of the card game?

**Pete:** "Dill me in!"

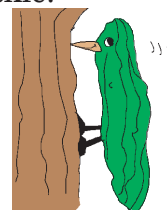


**Patty:** Why did the cucumber need legal advice?

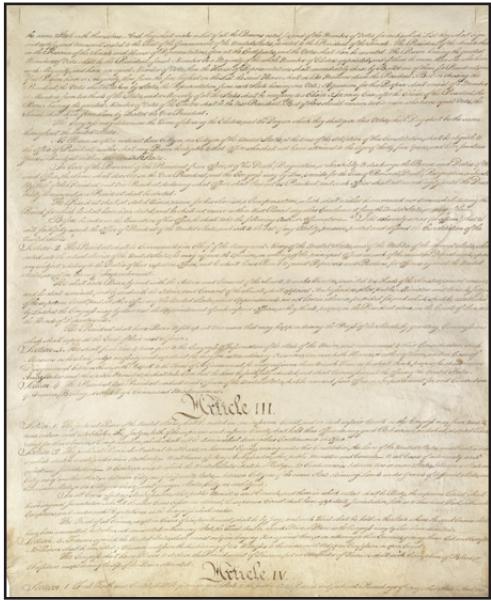
**Parker:** Because it was in a pickle!

**Patrick:** What is green and likes to peck at trees?

**Pam:** Woody Woodpickle!



# Page Three of the Constitution



The Constitution was handwritten on only four pages.  
In this series, we look at this important document based on how the “articles,” or sections, were presented page by page.

## It’s in the Constitution ... Page 3



1. Which role of the president described in Article II, Section 2, is shown in this photo?



photo by Franz Jantzen, Collection of the Supreme Court of the United States

2. What building is this? It is the place where lawyers and judges who know a lot about the Constitution and the law meet in Washington, D.C. It is mentioned in Article III, Section 1.

Page 3 of the Constitution includes most of Article II, all of Article III and the beginning of Article IV.  
Article II is about the executive branch (the president). Article III is about the judicial branch (the Supreme Court). Article IV is about how the states relate to one another.

### Article II Section 1

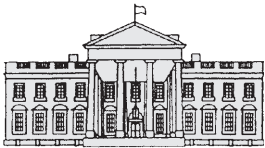
The executive power shall be vested in a president:

- elected for a term of four years.
- there should also be a vice president chosen for the same term.

The section explains how the president and vice president will be elected. (This changed in 1804 with the 12th Amendment.)  
The president will:

- be a natural-born citizen.
- have lived in the United States for 14 years.
- be at least 35 years old.

If he dies, the vice president is the successor.



### Section 2

Roles and responsibilities of the president:

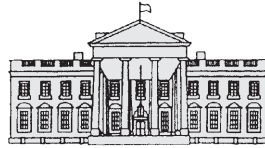
- commander in chief.
- has the power to grant pardons.
- with the advice and consent of Congress, makes treaties, nominates Supreme Court justices and others.



### Section 3

The president will:

- give Congress information on the state of the Union.
- execute all laws.
- commission officers.



### Section 4

The president, vice president and all civil officers of the United States can be removed from office, or impeached and convicted, for treason, bribery and other crimes.

### Article III Section 1

Judicial power will rest in the Supreme Court and other courts.



### Section 2

Establishes the jurisdiction of the cases that are to be considered by the court.

### Section 3

Explains what the delegates meant by treason.



### Article IV

Begins on Page 3 of the Constitution, but most of it is on Page 4. We will learn about that in the next issue in the series.

Answers: 1. the role of commander in chief.  
2. the Supreme Court.



Read all about  
checks and  
balances



in

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(Note to Editor: Above is camera-ready, one column-by-4 1/4-inch ad promoting Issue 3.)

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3-5 (06)

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**Standards Spotlight:  
Checks and Balances**

**Mini Page activities meet many state and national educational standards. Each week we identify standards that relate to The Mini Page's content and offer activities that will help your students reach them.**

**This week's standards:**


- Students understand the purpose of government. (Social Studies: Power, Authority and Governance)
- Students identify key ideals of the United States' democratic republican form of government. (Social Studies: Civic Ideals and Practice)

**Activities:**


1. Find a picture of President George W. Bush in the newspaper. Paste it on a piece of paper. Now write a sentence telling something about Mr. Bush's job as president.
2. Find news stories about or photographs of U.S. senators and members of the House of Representatives. Paste the stories/photos on a large piece of paper. Under each story/photo, write the name and party of the person. Write a sentence telling why that person is in the news.
3. Find a news story about President Bush meeting with a leader from another country. Write a paragraph discussing the purpose of the meeting. Write a second paragraph explaining how the meeting illustrates one of the responsibilities of the president.
4. Who in the U.S. government: (a) can veto a law, (b) decide whether or not a law fits our Constitution, (c) override a veto, and (d) declare war against another country?
5. Collect news stories about a topic being discussed by members of Congress and White House officials. Write several paragraphs discussing the issue. Use these questions to guide your writing: What is the issue? What positions on the issue are taken by different representatives of Congress and the White House? What powers do the different branches of government have with regard to the issue? How do you think the issue will finally be resolved?

(standards by Dr. Sherrye D. Garrett, Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi)

(Note to Editor: Above is the Standards for Issue 3.)

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**Gus Goodsport's Report**



**Supersport: LaDainian Tomlinson**  
**Height: 5-10      Birthdate: 6-23-1979**  
**Weight: 221      Hometown: Rosebud, Texas**  
Anybody who can tell the difference between a pass and punt knows San Diego Chargers running back LaDainian Tomlinson is something special. Chargers coach Marty Schottenheimer has called him the "best back" he has seen in about four decades of coaching.  
L.T., Tomlinson's nickname, has rushed for more than 1,000 yards in each of his five NFL seasons, gaining a career high of 1,683 in 2002. He excels as a pass receiver as well and had 100 catches in 2004.  
Tomlinson, who starred in college at Texas Christian, also does special work when he isn't charging through defenses. From his "21 Club" — 21 is his uniform number — he gives tickets to 21 kids to attend Chargers' home games. At Thanksgiving, he buys 1,000 meals for the hungry. At Christmas, he turns into a "Santa" and buys and delivers about 1,000 gifts at a children's hospital.  
Tomlinson also provides 30 \$1,000 scholarships annually for students in San Diego and Waco, Texas, his home area.

(Note to Editor: Above is copy block for Page 3, Issue 3, to be used in place of ad if desired.)

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