

US1.7b

The Constitution of the United States of America established a federal system of government based on power shared between the national and state governments.

Basic Principles of Government

Separation of Powers

The structure of the new national government was based upon James Madison's Virginia Plan, which called for three separate branches of government.

The Legislative Branch (Congress) makes the laws. Congress is a two-house legislature in which all states are represented equally in the Senate (two senators per state) and the people are represented in the House of Representatives (number of a state's representatives is based on the state's population).

The Judicial Branch (Supreme Court) determines if laws made by Congress are constitutional.

The Executive Branch (President) enforces the laws.

Checks and Balances

Each branch can check the power of the other

These checks keep any one branch from gaining too much power

The student will demonstrate knowledge of the challenges faced by the new nation by
b) identifying the basic principles of the new government established by the Constitution of the United States and the Bill of Rights