

21st Century Skills



networks

The Constitution

Information Literacy: Using a Table to Analyze Data

Learning the Skill

Charts and tables organize information into groups of related facts and ideas. A table presents written or numerical information in lists, columns, and rows.

Use the following ideas to help you analyze the information in the table:

- Find the title, which should tell you the main topic of the table.
- Identify the column headers to learn the major categories displayed in the table.
- Read each row from left to right to learn about specific entries.
- Read each column from top to bottom to compare entries by category.

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The Constitution

Practicing the Skill Now read through the information about the five fundamental principles of government to answer the questions below:

The Five Fundamental Principles of the Government Embodied in the U.S. Constitution

Principle	Explanation of the Principle	Examples of the Principle
Popular Sovereignty	The power of government lies with the people	Declaration of Independence claims power for the people; majority voting is an exercise of the principle
Rule of Law	Laws apply to everyone, including those who govern	Constitution specifies what government is allowed to do
Separation of Powers	Separating the functions of government helps protect against abuse of power	Federal government is divided into legislative, executive, and judicial branches
Checks and Balances	Each branch of government can limit the power of the other branches	Legislature can impeach the president; president can appoint judges; judiciary can declare laws unconstitutional
Federalism	Power is divided between national and state governments	National government has the power to coin money; state governments have the power to conduct elections; both national and state governments may collect taxes

1. What essential document of U.S. law is based on the five principles of government listed above?

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The Constitution

2. Which principle allows people to elect their representatives in Congress?

3. Which principle helps to reduce conflicts between state and federal governments?

Applying the Skill

4. To apply this skill, review the three examples given for the principle "Checks and Balances." For each example, explain which branch of government is limiting which other branch.

5. In which column and which row do each of the following entries appear? For example, "Declaration of Independence" appears under Examples in the first row.

A. "Power divided between national and state governments"

B. "President can appoint judges"

C. "Separation of Powers"

6. To apply this skill, review the examples given in the third column. For each principle, name one more example that illustrates the principle.
