

PROJECT: CHECKS AND BALANCES

No one is perfect. Every person, no matter how hard he tries not to, will make mistakes in judgment. This is just the nature of being human. Realizing the fallibility of human beings, the Founding leaders of this nation set into place a series of checks and balances to make sure one part of government did not gain too much control. They wanted to make sure one person (president) did not become a dictator. They attempted to prevent a legislative body (Congress) from making rules that did not have the best interests of ordinary citizens in mind. Finally, they did not want a judicial system (the courts) to have the power to incarcerate people without just cause.

The checks and balances system found in America's Constitution was designed to make sure all three branches of government worked together smoothly and efficiently without granting one too much power.

However, in America's history, there have been times when one branch became decidedly stronger for a period of time and the balance was nearly upset. In today's project, take some time to become more familiar with the Constitution's checks and balances.

Instructions

Locate Web sites, books, or articles which explain the checks-and-balances system found in the Constitution. Helpful Links:

<https://www.factmonster.com/us/government-primer/checks-and-balances>

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Separation_of_powers#Checks_and_balances

http://supremecourthistory.org/timeline_court_warren.html

<http://www.history.com/topics/vietnam-war/gulf-of-tonkin-resolution>

Define/Explain the checks and balances system and then answer the questions:

Checks and Balances:

1. Did the Warren Court exceed its boundaries in issuing some of its decisions during the 1960s?

2. When Congress issued the Gulf of Tonkin Resolution, how did that contribute to upsetting the checks-and-balances system?

3. What would happen if any of the three branches (executive, judicial, or legislative) were to greatly exceed its authority under the Constitution? (Pick one)