

AP US Government and Politics
Federalism Activity

Please complete each part on a separate piece of paper.

Part 1. Define the term federalism in your own words:

Part 2 Complete the chart using the Constitution and your textbook.

Type of Power	Definitions	Examples
Enumerated or Delegated Powers	powers specifically listed in the U.S. Constitution for the federal (national) government only	1. 2. 3. 4. 5.
Reserved Powers	powers that are given to the states by the Tenth Amendment to the U.S. Constitution	1. 2. 3. 4.
Concurrent Powers	powers shared by the federal (national) and state governments	1. 2. 3.
Local Government Powers	powers given to towns, cities and counties by the Florida Constitution	1. 2. 3.

Part 3. Read the following passage and the answer the question below.

Before the U.S. Constitution, the United States had the Articles of Confederation and was organized with a confederal system. A confederal system is a system of government where power is held by independent states and there is little power in the federal (national) government. The U.S. Constitution was written because of concerns about the weaknesses of the Articles of Confederation. The federal government had very little power and the states acted as independent nations with too much power. Government power was unbalanced and there was no sense of national unity (togetherness).

To solve these problems, the U.S. Constitution was written and the United States moved from a confederal system to a system of federalism. The Founding Fathers had a big goal. They needed to limit state power because states had too much power under the Articles of Confederation. They also needed to create a federal government with limited power. As a solution, the Founding Fathers created a system of federalism. This means that power is shared between the federal, state, and local governments. The federal government has its own powers, shares some powers with the states, and gives states some of their own powers. By dividing power between different levels, this limits the power of each level of government and one level of government cannot become too powerful.

How does federalism limit government power? Highlight the relevant passages in the text that helped you answer this question.

Part 4: Who Has the Power?

Directions: Work in small groups to decide which level or levels (federal, state, or local) of government has the power to deal with each of the questions on the list and what type of power they have to deal with the issue (enumerated/delegated, reserved, concurrent or local). Write the level or levels and their associated power in the blank space underneath the question. Be prepared to explain your answers to the class.

1. Who is going to keep people safe from speeding cars (speed limits)?

2. Who is going to protect us from foreign invasion or threats?

3. There is a pothole in the street outside my house. Who should I talk to?

4. A group of people want to establish a new city. Who should they talk to?

5. Who decides who might get married legally?

6. Who resolves conflicts between states?

7. My garbage hasn't been picked up in two weeks, who do I talk to about this issue? _____
8. Who makes sure that the country's economy is safe and stable?

9. My taxes keep going up! Who can I talk to about this?

10. Who is in charge of passing laws around here?
