

Middle School
Recommended
for 8th Grade

Checks & Balances CBA

To prevent abuses of power, those who helped found our nation developed the system of checks and balances. You will develop a reasoned position on the effectiveness of this system related to one current or historical event.

Directions to students¹

In a cohesive paper or presentation², you will:

- State a position that evaluates whether the system of checks and balances worked during the event by evaluating whether it prevented one branch from exercising too much power.
- Provide background on the event by describing the event.
- Provide background for the position by explaining how branches of government exercised constitutional powers during this event with two or more examples.
- Provide reasons for your position that include:
 - An explanation of how one branch checked or could have checked another with two or more examples to support the position.
- Make explicit references within the paper or presentation to three or more credible sources that provide relevant information AND cite sources within the paper, presentation, or bibliography.

¹ This directions page guides students towards the “proficient” level (level “3”) for this CBA. To help students reach “excellent” (level “4”), please refer to the rubric or, if available, the graphic organizer.

² Students may do a paper or presentation in response to the CBA provided that for either format, there is documentation of this response that someone outside their classroom could easily understand and review using the rubric (e.g., a videotaped presentation, an electronic written document).

Middle School – Checks & Balances – Rubric (Recommended for 8th Grade*)

←-----PASSING-----→	NOT PASSING-----→			
GLE (EALR)	4 - Excellent	3 - Proficient	2 - Partial	1- Minimal
1.2.2 Evaluates the effectiveness of the system of checks and balances in the United States based on a historical event (1776 – 1900). (8 th Grade) (EALR 1.2. Understands the purposes, organization, and function of governments, laws and political systems.) 5.4.1 Uses sources within the body of the work to support positions in a paper or presentation. (8 th Grade) (EALR 5.4. Creates a product...)	States a position that evaluates whether the system of checks and balances worked during the event by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Evaluating whether it prevented one branch from exercising too much power. AND Discussing the long-term implications of this event for the functioning of government. 	States a position that evaluates whether the system of checks and balances worked during the event by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Evaluating whether it prevented one branch from exercising too much power. 	States a position on how the branches of government functioned during the event WITHOUT evaluating whether it prevented one branch from exercising too much power.	Discusses the system of checks and balances without taking a position.
1.2.1. Understands and analyzes the structure and powers of government at the national level. (8 th Grade) 1.2.1. Understands and analyzes the structure, organization, and powers of government at the local, state, and tribal levels. (7 th Grade) (EALR 1.2. Understands the purposes, organization, and function of governments, laws and political systems.)	Provides background on the event by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Describing the event and Explaining how branches of government exercised constitutional powers during this event with three or more examples. 	Provides background on the event by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Describing the event and Explaining how branches of government exercised constitutional powers during this event with two examples. 	Provides background on the event by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Describing the event and Explaining how a branch of government exercised constitutional powers during this event with one example. 	Provides background on the event by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Making a reference to branches of government but does not explain how they acted during this event.
	Provides reason(s) for the position supported by evidence. The evidence includes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> An explanation of how one branch checked or logically could have checked another with three or more examples. 	Provides reason(s) for the position supported by evidence. The evidence includes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> An explanation of how one branch checked or logically could have checked another with two examples. 	Provides reason(s) for the position supported by evidence. The evidence includes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> An explanation of how one branch checked or logically could have checked another with one example. 	Provides reason(s) for the position without any supporting evidence.
5.4.2. Uses appropriate format to cite sources within an essay. (8 th Grade) (EALR 5.4. Creates a product...) 5.2.2. Evaluates the logic of positions in primary and secondary sources to interpret an issue or historical event. (8 th Grade) (EALR 5.2. Uses inquiry-based research.)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Makes explicit references within the paper or presentation to four or more credible sources that provide relevant information. Cites sources within the paper, presentation, or bibliography. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Makes explicit references within the paper or presentation to three credible sources that provide relevant information. Cites sources within the paper, presentation, or bibliography. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Makes explicit references within the paper or presentation to two credible sources that provide relevant information. Cites sources within the paper, presentation, or bibliography. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Makes explicit references within the paper or presentation to one credible source that provides relevant information. Cites sources within the paper, presentation, or bibliography.

* OSPI recommends that this CBA be used at a particular grade level and thus, the GLEs included in the rubric are for that grade. However, if the CBA is used at another grade level within the grade band (3-5, 6-8, or 9-12), the GLEs may need to change to match the appropriate content.

** Please also refer to the document “Scoring Notes for Secondary Social Studies CBAs” when evaluating student work.