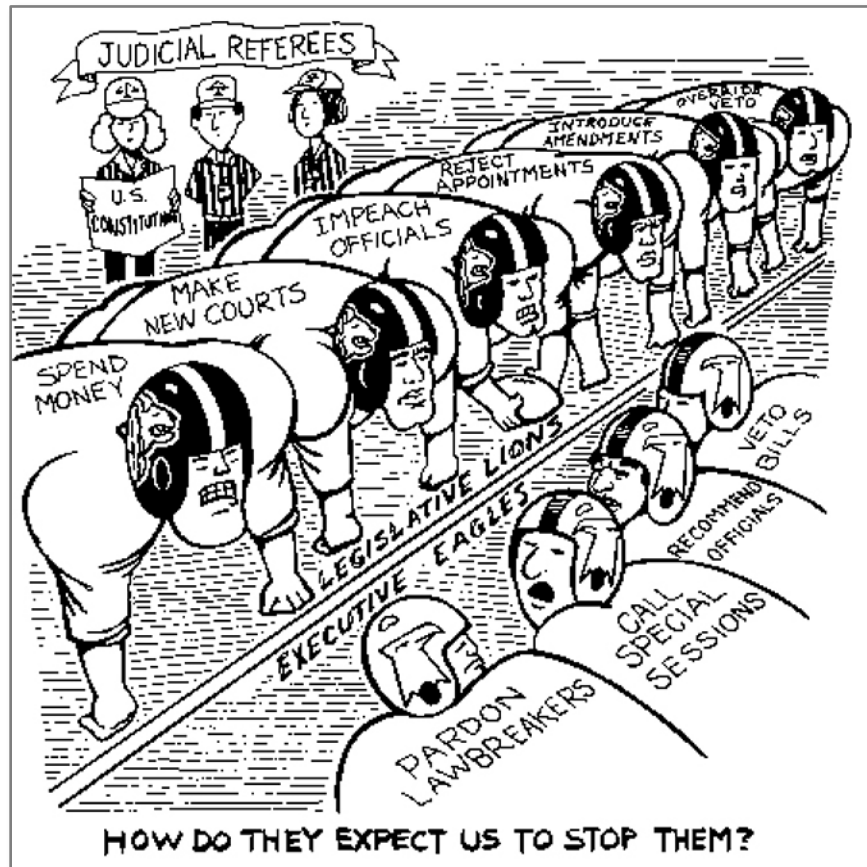


Marbury v. Madison / Cartoon Analysis—Answer Key



Observe

1. What people and objects are shown? Make a list of what you see in the cartoon including captions.

There are six fully outfitted football players lined up on one side of a line labeled "Legislative Lions." On each jersey is one of the following: "Spend Money, Make New Courts, Impeach Officials, Reject Appointments, Introduce Amendments, Override Veto." On each helmet is a lion. Their team has the ball. On the other side of the line labeled "Executive Eagles," there are four fully outfitted players. On each jersey is one of the following: "Pardon Lawbreakers, Call Special Sessions, Recommend Officials, Veto Bills." There is an eagle on each of their helmets. There are three referees labeled "JUDICIAL REFEREES" who are reading the U.S. Constitution.

2. Which of the items on the list from Question 1 are symbols? What does each symbol stand for?

The opposing teams represent the Congress and the president. Each individual player represents one power of the particular team for whom he plays. The referees represent the Supreme Court of the United States and are looking at the U.S. Constitution which is symbolic of the rulebook for the game.

3. What is the setting?
A football field which symbolizes a sporting yet adversarial competition.
4. Are there any objects or people that seem to be exaggerated? If so, why do you think the artist exaggerated?
The Legislative Lions players are bigger and more aggressive looking than the Executive Eagles players. The Judicial Referees are smaller still.

Reflect

5. What is happening in this image?
In the cartoon, one of the four members of the president's team is saying, in reference to the six members of Congress's team, "How do they expect us to stop them?" The referees are consulting their "rulebook," the U.S. Constitution.

Evaluate the Message

6. In your opinion, what is the cartoonist's message? What elements of the cartoon give you that impression?
The cartoonist's message is that Congress and the president often work in opposition to one another. The president is always "playing defense," or reacting to actions of the legislature. He seems to feel that the Congress is more powerful, but that the judicial branch has the final say and can "change the outcome of the game" by making a particular ruling.
7. Do you agree with the point of view and message of the cartoonist? Why or why not?
Student answers will vary. Students should provide some substantiation for their opinion. For instance, students might argue that in reality, the president is more powerful than the Congress because he recently vetoed several major pieces of legislation that Congress has been trying to pass and that only the president can enforce (or not enforce) the laws. On the other hand, students could say that Congress is more powerful because the president needs their approval when he takes action, such as confirming his appointments or ratifying a treaty with a foreign country and only Congress can tax and spend.

Question

8. What do you still wonder about?
Student answers will vary.