

CHAPTER 2: AMERICAN CONSTITUTION

PRACTICE TEST

Multiple Choice Questions

1. The phrase *power of the purse* refers to which of the following? (p. 28)
 - a. The influence of women in the political process
 - b. The main issue facing government, which is always a shortage of tax money
 - c. The president's control of the finances of government
 - d. **The constitutional authority for Congress to raise and spend money**
 - e. The power of the Senate to unilaterally cut spending in the area of defense

Answer: d; Page: 28; LO: 2.1; Skill Level: Knowledge

2. Why did the American colonists oppose the taxes imposed by the British after 1763? (p. 29)
 - a. The Americans wanted to print their own stamps.
 - b. The money raised by the taxes went to support government operations in places other than North America.
 - c. **American colonists were unhappy because no Americans participated in the legislative body (the British Parliament) that enacted the taxes.**
 - d. The taxes were placing a heavy burden on the northern states.
 - e. The taxes were encouraging slaves to escape from the South to the North.

Answer: c; Page: 29; LO: 2.1; Skill Level: Knowledge

3. In what way did the Continental Congress differ significantly from the current Congress? (p. 29)
 - a. It officially had authority only over the thirteen colonies.
 - b. **It was essentially a confederation.**
 - c. Its Senate was weaker than the modern Senate.
 - d. Its power to tax was more extensive.
 - e. It was a unitary government.

Answer: b; Page: 29; LO: 2.1; Skill Level: Application

4. Which of the following was NOT a major weakness of the government created by the Articles of Confederation? (p. 29)
 - a. **It limited freedom of the press, frequently arresting newspaper editors who printed stories critical of the government.**
 - b. It lacked the power to regulate commerce among the states.
 - c. It lacked the power to collect taxes from individuals, having to rely instead on contributions from the states.
 - d. It lacked the power to prevent states from printing worthless currency.
 - e. It lacked the power to create a standing army.

Answer: a; Page: 29; LO: 2.1; Skill Level: Knowledge

5. The belief that individual rights transcend the power of government is known as **(p. 30)**
- a. direct democracy.
 - b. representative democracy.
 - c. **the doctrine of natural rights.**
 - d. the rule of law.
 - e. autocracy.

Answer: c; Page: 30; LO: 2.1; Skill Level: Knowledge

6. According to the political philosophy of John Locke, who among the following create(s) government? **(p. 30)**
- a. God
 - b. The king
 - c. The wealthy
 - d. Landowners
 - e. **The people**

Answer: e; Page: 30; LO: 2.1; Skill Level: Knowledge

7. Which of the following political philosophers had the greatest intellectual influence on the authors of the Declaration of Independence? **(p. 30)**
- a. **John Locke**
 - b. Adam Smith
 - c. David Hume
 - d. Charles Beard
 - e. Thomas Hobbes

Answer: a; Page: 30; LO: 2.1; Skill Level: Knowledge

8. The Americans who wrote the Constitution generally believed which of the following? **(p. 31)**
- a. Nations are best governed by kings because the common people are incapable of self-government.
 - b. Political leaders receive their power directly from God and are answerable only to God.
 - c. **Politics is a never-ending struggle between the people and their government.**
 - d. Science is opposed to the laws of God.
 - e. Human progress is not possible.

Answer: c; Page: 31; LO: 2.1; Skill Level: Comprehension

9. Did the framers of the Constitution believe that all policy decisions should be made by majority vote of the people? (p. 32)
- Yes, because they were advocates of direct democracy.
 - Yes, because they believed that most policy decisions should be made by wealthier, better-educated people.
 - Yes, because they thought that the citizens would not support policy decisions unless they were made by majority choice.
 - No, because they feared that the majority would make policy decisions that would silence, disadvantage, or harm the minority point of view, thus producing a tyranny of the majority.**
 - No, because they believed the minority was in a better position to make major policy decisions.

Answer: d; Page: 32; LO: 2.2; Skill Level: Comprehension

10. In Country B, the government arrests political opponents and holds them in jail without filing charges and without a trial. What provision of the U.S. Constitution is designed to prevent such actions from occurring in this country except in times of war or civil war? (p. 36)
- The prohibition against bills of attainder
 - The provision for the writ of *habeas corpus***
 - The Full Faith and Credit Clause
 - Extradition
 - The First Amendment

Answer: b; Page: 36; LO: 2.3; Skill Level: Comprehension

11. Suppose a state legislature passes a law making it a crime for anyone to have possessed an assault weapon at any time during the five years prior to the law's passage. Would this law be constitutional? (p. 36)
- No, because it is an *ex post facto* law**
 - No, because it is a bill of attainder
 - Yes, because the Full Faith and Credit Clause allows states to do so
 - Yes, because the Bill of Rights does not apply to states
 - No, because the First Amendment protects private gun ownership

Answer: a; Page: 36; LO: 2.3; Skill Level: Comprehension

12. Which of the following describes the Antifederalist point of view? (p. 37)
- The best government was a unitary one.
 - State sovereignty was preferable to any other option.
 - The U.S. Constitution should be ratified.
 - The Bill of Rights was necessary to increase states' rights.
 - The Constitution gave too much power to the central government.**

Answer: e; Page: 37; LO: 2.3; Skill Level: Analysis

13. Why were the Federalist Papers written? (p. 32)

- a. **To argue for the ratification of the Constitution of 1787**
- b. To oppose the ratification of the Constitution of 1787
- c. To support the Declaration of Independence
- d. To support the Articles of Confederation
- e. To oppose the Declaration of Independence

Answer: a; Page: 32; LO: 2.2; Skill Level: Knowledge

14. In which of the following forms of government do states have the most power? (p. 34)

- a. A unitary system
- b. A federation
- c. **A confederation**
- d. A monarchy
- e. Anarchy

Answer: c; Page: 34; LO: 2.2; Skill Level: Comprehension

15. The leaders of a new nation want to establish a political system that will provide consistent policy administration throughout the entire country, with efficiency and consistency as its primary goal. Which of the following forms of government would you recommend as being best able to achieve those goals? (p. 34)

- a. **A unitary system**
- b. A confederation
- c. A federation
- d. A direct democracy
- e. A plutocracy

Answer: a; Page: 34; LO: 2.2; Skill Level: Comprehension

16. Which of the following describes the U.S. federal system? (pp. 34–35)

- a. Sovereignty is held only by the central government.
- b. The states have exclusive sovereignty and the right to redraft the Constitution.
- c. Both the states and the central government have a common sovereignty.
- d. **Two spheres exist, within which states and the central government exercise sovereignty.**
- e. The central government is granted sovereignty, which it shares with the states.

Answer: d; Pages: 34–35; LO: 2.2; Skill Level: Comprehension

17. The authors of the American Constitution anticipated that which branch of national government would be the strongest? (p. 32)

- a. Executive
- b. **Legislative**
- c. Judicial
- d. They thought all would be equally strong.
- e. They thought the bureaucracy would be stronger than any of the branches.

Answer: b; Page: 32; LO: 2.2; Skill Level: Knowledge

18. In contrast to the House of Representatives, the framers of the Constitution anticipated that the Senate would be **(p. 33)**
- closer to the people.
 - more radical.
 - less responsive to popular sentiments.**
 - often deadlocked on major issues.
 - more diverse.

Answer: c; Page: 33; LO: 2.2; Skill Level: Knowledge

19. Which of the following is NOT part of the formal process for amending the U.S. Constitution? **(p. 39)**
- The House votes to propose an amendment by a two-thirds margin.
 - The Senate votes to propose an amendment by a two-thirds margin.
 - The president signs a proposal to amend the Constitution.**
 - Three-fourths of the states ratify the proposed amendment.
 - A constitutional convention is convened if two-thirds of the states petition Congress for one.

Answer: c; Page: 39; LO: 2.3; Skill Level: Analysis

20. The government under the Articles of Confederation included thirteen states. How many states had to agree before the Articles could be amended? **(p. 29)**
- Seven
 - Nine
 - Eleven
 - Thirteen**
 - Twelve

Answer: d; Page: 29; LO: 2.1; Skill Level: Application

21. The power to declare unconstitutional the actions of government is known as which of the following? **(p. 40)**
- Police power
 - Legislative review or legislative power
 - Judicial review**
 - Executive power
 - National review

Answer: c; Page: 40; LO: 2.4; Skill Level: Knowledge

22. In America's constitutional system, ultimate authority to interpret the Constitution is vested in which of the following? **(p. 40)**
- Congress
 - The president
 - The U.S. Supreme Court**
 - The states
 - The bureaucracy

Answer: c; Page: 40; LO: 2.4; Skill Level: Comprehension

23. The Supreme Court first found an act of Congress unconstitutional in which case? (p. 40)
- Marbury v. Madison*
 - Plessy v. Ferguson*
 - Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka*
 - McCulloch v. Maryland*
 - Barron v. Baltimore*

Answer: a; Page: 40; LO: 2.4; Skill Level: Knowledge

24. The Equal Protection Clause of the Fourteenth Amendment would have been opposed by which of the following? (p. 41)
- James Madison
 - The Antifederalists**
 - Alexander Hamilton
 - The Federalists
 - John Jay

Answer: b; Page: 41; LO: 2.4; Skill Level: Synthesis

25. Which of the following aspects of America's constitutional system does not have the effect of fragmenting political power in the U.S.? (p. 41)
- Federalism
 - Separation of powers
 - Bicameralism
 - The legislature's power to regulate interstate commerce**
 - The president's power to veto legislation

Answer: d; Page: 41; LO: 2.4; Skill Level: Application

True or False Questions

1. The American Revolution arose over the issue of what constitutes representation and the authority to tax those without representation. **True (p. 29)**

Answer: T; Page: 29; LO: 2.1; Skill Level: Knowledge

2. The Articles of Confederation created a national government whose powers were strictly limited. **True (p. 29)**

Answer: T; Page: 29; LO: 2.1; Skill Level: Knowledge

3. The writers of the Constitution were primarily influenced by the ideas of Thomas Hobbes, author of the *Second Treatise on Government*. **False (p. 30)**

Answer: F; Page: 30; LO: 2.1; Skill Level: Knowledge

4. The U.S. Constitution reflected the view of human nature that people are united by their love of country and concern for the common good. **False (p. 30)**

Answer: F; Page: 30; LO: 2.1; Skill Level: Comprehension

5. The framers of the Constitution created a system of government based on the principle of direct democracy. **False (p. 31)**

Answer: F; Page: 31; LO: 2.2; Skill Level: Knowledge

6. The original Constitution did not include a bill of rights because a majority of the framers of the Constitution believed that such a provision was unnecessary, redundant, useless, and possibly even dangerous. **True (p. 36)**

Answer: T; Page: 36; LO: 2.3; Skill Level: Knowledge

7. The term *rule of law* refers to the idea that the law rules those who govern. **True (p. 36)**

Answer: T; Page: 36; LO: 2.3; Skill Level: Comprehension

8. The concept of separation of powers with checks and balances was developed by the English political philosopher John Locke. **False (p. 32)**

Answer: F; Page: 32; LO: 2.2; Skill Level: Knowledge

9. A federation is a compromise between unitary government and a confederacy. **True (p. 34)**

Answer: T; Page: 34; LO: 2.2; Skill Level: Knowledge

10. The first case in which the U.S. Supreme Court found an act of Congress unconstitutional was *Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka*. **False (p. 40)**

Answer: F; Page: 40; LO: 2.4; Skill Level: Knowledge

Short-Answer Questions

1. Summarize the arguments concerning taxation and representation advanced by the British Parliament and American revolutionaries. Page: 29; LO: 2.1; Skill Level: Knowledge
2. Give two specific reasons for the failure of the Articles of Confederation. Page: 29; LO: 2.1; Skill Level: Knowledge
3. Why did the framers of the Constitution create a bicameral legislature instead of a unicameral body? Page: 33; LO: 2.2; Skill Level: Analysis
4. According to John Locke, what is the source of government authority, and what is the role of government in society? In what way did Locke's view influence American political leaders in the late eighteenth century? Page: 30; LO: 2.2; Skill Level: Analysis
5. What is meant by the term *rule of law* and what influence did it have on the framers of American government after independence? Page: 36; LO: 2.3; Skill Level: Analysis
6. What did the framers of the Constitution mean by *tyranny of the majority* and how did they propose to deal with the problem? Page: 31; LO: 2.2; Skill Level: Analysis

7. Why did the framers of the Constitution not include a bill of rights in the original document? Page:36 ; LO: 2.3; Skill Level: Analysis
8. Define *separation of powers with checks and balances*. Give an example of a specific check found in the Constitution that the executive branch of government has on the judicial branch. Page: 32; LO: 2.2; Skill Level: Comprehension
9. Give examples of governments that illustrate the following: federal system, unitary government, confederation. Page: 34; LO: 2.2; Skill Level: Comprehension
10. What is the significance of the case of *Marbury v. Madison*? Page: 40; LO: 2.4; Skill Level: Analysis

Essay Questions

1. The Americans who gathered in Philadelphia in 1787 had lived through a number of political circumstances that affected their approach to constitution writing. These included the colonial period before 1763, the colonial period after 1763, and the period under the Articles of Confederation. Write an essay in which you discuss the influence each of these periods had on the composition of the Constitution. Pages: 34–35; LO: 2.2; Skill Level: Analysis
2. Read Federalist Paper No. 1, which outlines the central issues of the Federalist-Antifederalist debate, and explore to what extent the original goals were met. In other words, did Alexander Hamilton succeed in all of the goals he set out for the Federalist debate? Page: 32; LO: 2.2; Skill Level: Comprehension
3. James Madison, the principal architect of America’s constitutional apparatus, identified two threats to liberty in America: factions (or special interests) and the excessive concentration of political power. Write an essay in which you describe and discuss Madison’s system for dealing with these two threats, as embodied in the Constitution. Support your analysis by citing specific constitutional provisions as examples of your points. Page: 32; LO: 2.2; Skill Level: Analysis
4. Federalism was one of the key components of the Constitution of 1787. Write an essay on federalism organized along the following lines: (a) define federalism, distinguishing it from unitary and confederal systems; (b) identify and discuss two advantages of a federal system to a nation like the U.S.; and (c) identify and discuss the disadvantages of federalism to a nation like the U.S. Pages: 34–35; LO: 2.; Skill Level: Analysis
5. If a constitution is to endure, it must change with the times. Over the last 200 years, the American Constitution has changed considerably, and not just as the result of formal, numbered amendments. Write an essay on constitutional change, focusing on the ways the U.S. Constitution has changed other than by formal amendment. Pages: 38–40; LO: 2.4; Skill Level: Analysis

