Lesson 2
American Government
Principles of American Democracy

Questions: 65, 66, 68, 1, 2, 13, 14, 41, 42, 67, 69, 70, 4, 7, 5, 6, 10, 3, 11, 12, 55
The Constitutional Convention (1787)
Question 65

What happened at the Constitutional Convention?
The Constitution was written.

The Founding Fathers wrote the Constitution.

Question

66

When was the Constitution written?

Civics Flash Cards for the Naturalization Test
Independence Hall in Philadelphia, PA, where the Constitution was signed in 1787.
Question 68

What is one thing Benjamin Franklin is famous for?

Civics Flash Cards for the Naturalization Test
Question #68

- U.S. diplomat
- oldest member of the Constitutional Convention
- first Postmaster General of the United States
- writer of “Poor Richard’s Almanac”
- started the first free libraries

Courtesy of the Library of Congress, LC-USZC4-9906.
The U.S. Constitution is the Supreme Law of the Land

- sets up the government
- defines the government
- protects the basic rights of Americans
Question 1

What is the supreme law of the land?
the Constitution

The Constitution of the United States. Courtesy of the National Archives.
What does the Constitution do?
Question #2

- sets up the government
- defines the government
- protects basic rights of Americans
The Constitution Defines the Government and its Powers
Question 13

Name one branch or part of the government.*

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U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services
Question #13

- Congress
- legislative
- President
- executive
- the courts
- judicial

The U.S. Capitol (legislative branch) and the U.S. Supreme Court (judicial branch) buildings in Washington, D.C.
Separation of Powers / Checks and Balances

CONGRESS
(Legislative Branch)

PRESIDENT
(Executive Branch)

THE COURTS
(Judicial Branch)

Can veto a bill
Can reject a treaty
Can declare a law unconstitutional
Approves federal judges
Can declare an executive action unconstitutional
Appoints federal judges
signed by the president
Question 14

What stops one branch of government from becoming too powerful?
Question #14

- checks and balances
- separation of powers
A Federal System

Separate and Shared Powers

**Federal**
- print money
- declare war
- create an army
- make treaties
- establish post offices
- regulate trade between states and countries
- establish rules for naturalization
- issue patents

**State**
- provide schooling and education
- provide protection
- give a driver’s license
- approve zoning & land use
- conduct elections
- establish local governments
- regulate trade within a state

**Shared**
- collect taxes
- borrow money
- build roads
- establish courts
- provide for the general welfare
- charter banks and corporations
- make and enforce laws
A Federal System
Separate and Shared Powers

Federal
- print money
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Shared
- collect taxes
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State
- provide schooling and education
- provide protection
- provide safety
- give a driver’s license
- approve zoning & land use
- conduct elections
- establish local governments
- regulate trade within a state
Under our Constitution, some powers belong to the federal government. What is one power of the federal government?
★ to print money
★ to declare war
★ to create an army
★ to make treaties

President Woodrow Wilson asking Congress to declare war on Germany, April 2, 1917.

Courtesy of the Library of Congress, LC-USZC4-10297.
Under our Constitution, some powers belong to the states. What is one power of the states?
★ provide schooling and education
★ provide protection (police)
★ provide safety (fire departments)
★ give a driver’s license
★ approve zoning and land use
James Madison - Federalist
A United Nation Requires a Strong Government
Thomas Jefferson - Anti-Federalist
Limited Government; Guaranteed “Natural Rights”

The Bill of Rights
Ratified December 15, 1791

Article I
Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof; or abridging the freedom of speech, or of the press; or the right of the people peaceably to assemble, and to petition the Government for a redress of grievances.

Article II
A well regulated Militia, being necessary to the security of a free State, the right of the people to keep and bear Arms, shall not be infringed.

Article III
No Soldier shall, in time of peace, be quartered in any house, without the consent of the Owner, nor in time of war, but in a manner to be prescribed by law.

Article IV
The right of the people to be secure in their persons, houses, papers, and effects, against unreasonable searches and seizures, shall not be violated, and no Warrants shall issue, but upon probable cause, supported by Oath or affirmation, and particularly describing the place to be searched, and the persons or things to be seized.

Article V
No person shall be held to answer for a capital, or otherwise infamous crime, unless on a presentment or indictment of a Grand Jury, except in cases arising in the land or naval forces, or in the Militia, when in actual service in time of War or public danger; nor shall any person be subject for the same offense to be twice put in jeopardy of life or limb, nor shall be compelled in any Criminal Case to be a witness against himself, nor be deprived of life, liberty, or property, without due process of law; nor shall private property be taken for public use, without just compensation.

Article VI
In all criminal prosecutions, the accused shall enjoy the right to a speedy and public trial, by an impartial jury of the State and district wherein the crime shall have been committed, which district shall have been previously ascertained by law, and to be informed of the nature and cause of the accusation; to be confronted with the witnesses against him; to have compulsory process for obtaining Witnesses in his favor, and to have the Assistance of Counsel for his defense.

Article VII
In Suits at common law, where the value in controversy shall exceed twenty dollars, the right of trial by jury shall be preserved, and no fact tried by a jury shall be otherwise re-examined in any Court of the United States, than according to the rules of the common law.

Article VIII
Excessive bail shall not be required, nor excessive fines imposed, nor cruel and unusual punishment inflicted.

Article IX
The enumeration in the Constitution, of certain rights, shall not be construed to deny or disparage others retained by the people.

Article X
The powers not delegated to the United States by the Constitution, nor prohibited by it to the States, are reserved to the States respectively, or to the people.
The Federalist Papers

The Federalist: A Collection of Essays, Written in Favour of the New Constitution, as Agreed Upon by the Federal Convention, September 17, 1787.

In Two Volumes. Vol. I.

New-York: Printed and Sold by John Tiebout, No. 358 Pearl-Street. 1799.
The Federalist Papers supported the passage of the U.S. Constitution. Name one of the writers.
Question #67

★ (James) Madison
★ (Alexander) Hamilton
★ (John) Jay
★ Publius

Title page of The Federalist, vol. 1, 1799.
George Washington
First President of the United States
Question 69

Who is the “Father of Our Country”?

Civics Flash Cards for the Naturalization Test

U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services
(George) Washington
Who was the first President?*
(George) Washington
27 Constitutional Amendments

1st - 10th Amendments: The Bill of Rights, 1791.
11th Amendment: Grants states immunity from outside lawsuits, 1795.
12th Amendment: Requires distinct votes for President and Vice President, 1804.
13th Amendment: Abolished slavery, 1865.
14th Amendment: Defines citizenship; includes clauses on due process and equal protection, 1868.
15th Amendment: Grants voting rights to male citizens of all races, 1870.
16th Amendment: Authorizes a federal income tax, 1913.
17th Amendment: Allows direct Senatorial elections by a state, 1913.
18th Amendment: Enacted prohibition, 1919.
19th Amendment: Grants voting rights to women, 1920.
20th Amendment: "Lame Duck Amendment:" reduces time between election and service of elected officials, 1933.
21st Amendment: Repealed the 18th Amendment, 1933.
22nd Amendment: Limits a president to two terms, 1951.
25th Amendment: Clarifies procedures regarding succession of President and Vice President upon death or inability to serve, 1967.
26th Amendment: Makes 18 the minimum legal voting age, 1971.
27th Amendment: Allows changes in Congressional salary only after a general election (first submitted in 1789) 1992.
Question 4

What is an amendment?
Question #4

- a change (to the Constitution)
- an addition (to the Constitution)

The 20th Amendment to the Constitution.
Question 7

How many amendments does the Constitution have?
Question #7

twenty-seven
(27)

Portrait of Elizabeth Cady Stanton, seated, and Susan B. Anthony, standing, advocates for the rights of women to vote.

The Constitution and Bill of Rights

The Foundation of a Constitutional Democracy

The Bill of Rights
Ratified December 15, 1791

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What do we call the first ten amendments to the Constitution?
the Bill of Rights
The First Amendment

Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof; or abridging the freedom of speech, or of the press; or the right of the people peaceably to assemble, and to petition the Government for a redress of grievances.
Question 6

What is one right or freedom from the First Amendment?*

Civics Flash Cards for the Naturalization Test
Question #6

- speech
- religion
- assembly
- press
- petition the government

A newspaper stand in 1941.
Courtesy of the Library of Congress, LC-USF346-BN-001359-Q-C.
Question

10

What is freedom of religion?
You can practice any religion, or not practice a religion.

The Idea of Self-government
The idea of self-government is in the first three words of the Constitution. What are these words?
We the People

“We the People,” the first three words of the preamble to the Constitution of the United States.

( Courtesy of the National Archives. )
Capitalist Economy / Market Economy
Question 11

What is the economic system in the United States?*

Civics Flash Cards
for the Naturalization Test

U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services
Question #11

- capitalist economy
- market economy
The Rule of Law

- Everyone must follow the law
- No one is above the law
- Leaders must obey the law
- Government must obey the law
Question 12

What is the “rule of law”?
Everyone must follow the law.
Leaders must obey the law.
Government must obey the law.
No one is above the law.

The Contemplation of Justice statue outside the U.S. Supreme Court building in Washington, D.C.
Courtesy of the Collection of the Supreme Court of the United States.
Ways to Participate in Our Democracy

• vote
  • join a political party
  • help with a campaign
  • join a civic group
  • join a community group
• give an elected official your opinion on an issue
  • call Senators and Representatives
• publicly support or oppose an issue or policy
  • run for office
• write to a newspaper
What are two ways that Americans can participate in their democracy?
★ vote
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★ join a civic group
★ join a community group
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