



*Intercollegiate Studies Institute's  
American Civic Literacy Test*

**SURVEY OF CIVIC KNOWLEDGE**

**American History**

1. Jamestown, Virginia, was first settled by Europeans during which period?
  - a) 1301–1400
  - b) 1401–1500
  - c) 1501–1600
  - d) 1601–1700
  - e) 1701–1800
  
2. The Puritans:
  - a) opposed all wars on moral grounds.
  - b) stressed the sinfulness of all humanity.
  - c) believed in complete religious freedom.
  - d) colonized Utah under the leadership of Brigham Young.
  - e) were Catholic missionaries escaping religious persecution.
  
3. The Constitution of the United States established what form of government?
  - a) Direct democracy
  - b) Populism
  - c) Indirect democracy
  - d) Oligarchy
  - e) Aristocracy
  
4. George Washington's role in America's founding is best characterized as:
  - a) prudent general and statesman.
  - b) influential writer on constitutional principles.
  - c) leader of the Massachusetts delegation to the Constitutional congress.
  - d) strong advocate for states rights.
  - e) social compact theorist.
  
5. Which battle brought the American Revolution to an end?
  - a) Saratoga
  - b) Gettysburg
  - c) The Alamo
  - d) Yorktown
  - e) New Orleans
  
6. Which of the following are the unalienable rights referred to in the Declaration of Independence?
  - a) Life, liberty, and property
  - b) Honor, liberty, and peace
  - c) Liberty, health, and community
  - d) Life, respect, and equal protection
  - e) Life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness

7. Which of the following are in correct chronological order?
- The Constitution, the Declaration of Independence, the Articles of Confederation
  - Fort Sumter, Gettysburg, Appomattox
  - Cuban Missile Crisis, Sputnik, Bay of Pigs
  - Mexican-American War, Louisiana Purchase, Spanish-American War
  - Prohibition, Boston Tea Party, Reconstruction
8. The phrase that in America there should be a "wall of separation" between church and state appears in:
- George Washington's Farewell Address.
  - the Mayflower Compact.
  - the Constitution.
  - the Declaration of Independence.
  - Thomas Jefferson's letters.
9. The War of 1812:
- was a decisive victory for the United States over Spain.
  - was a stalemate.
  - established America as the leading power in the world.
  - enhanced Robert E. Lee's reputation as America's most talented general.
  - was confined only to sea battles.
10. The dominant theme in the Lincoln-Douglas debates was:
- treatment of Native Americans.
  - westward expansion.
  - whether Illinois should become a state.
  - prohibition.
  - slavery and its expansion.
11. Abraham Lincoln was elected President during which period?
- 1800–1825
  - 1826–1850
  - 1851–1875
  - 1876–1900
  - 1901–1925
12. In 1933 Franklin Delano Roosevelt proposed a series of government programs that became known as:
- The Great Society.
  - The Square Deal.
  - The New Deal.
  - The New Frontier.
  - supply-side economics.
13. The struggle between President Andrew Johnson and the Radical Republicans was mainly over:
- United States alliances with European nations.
  - the nature and control of Reconstruction.
  - the purchase of Alaska.
  - whether or not to have a tariff.
  - whether slavery should be allowed in the Federal Territories.
14. During which period was the American Constitution amended to guarantee women the right to vote?
- 1850–1875
  - 1876–1900
  - 1901–1925
  - 1926–1950
  - 1951–1975

15. Which of the following statements is true about abortion?
- a) It was legal in most states in the 1960s.
  - b) The Supreme Court struck down most legal restrictions on it in *Roe v. Wade*.
  - c) The Supreme Court ruled in *Plessy v. Ferguson* that underage women must notify their parents of an impending abortion.
  - d) The National Organization for Women has lobbied for legal restrictions on it.
  - e) It is currently legal only in cases of rape or incest, or to protect the life of the mother.
16. The end of legal racial segregation in United States schools was most directly the result of:
- a) the Civil War.
  - b) the Declaration of Independence.
  - c) the affirmative action policies of the 1980s.
  - d) *Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka*.
  - e) *Miranda v. the State of Arizona*.
17. The Manhattan Project developed:
- a) urban enterprise zones.
  - b) equipment to decipher enemy codes.
  - c) fighter planes.
  - d) the Apollo lunar module.
  - e) the atomic bomb.

#### Political Philosophy and American Government

18. The line "We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal . . ." is from:
- a) *The Federalist*.
  - b) the Preamble to the Constitution.
  - c) *The Communist Manifesto*.
  - d) the Declaration of Independence.
  - e) an inscription on the Statue of Liberty.
19. In *The Republic*, Plato points to the desirability of:
- a) tyranny.
  - b) democracy.
  - c) philosopher kings.
  - d) commercial republics.
  - e) world government.
20. A "representative democracy" is a form of government in which:
- a) all or most citizens govern directly.
  - b) a monarch is elected to represent a people.
  - c) citizens exhibit wide ethnic and cultural diversity.
  - d) a president's cabinet is popularly elected.
  - e) those elected by the people govern on their behalf.
21. *The Federalist* (or *The Federalist Papers*) was written to:
- a) support ratification of the U.S. Constitution.
  - b) oppose ratification of the U.S. Constitution.
  - c) support America's independence from Britain.
  - d) oppose America's independence from Britain.
  - e) support the Missouri Compromise.



22. The principle of the "separation of powers" suggests that:
- legislative, executive, and judicial powers should be dispersed.
  - government becomes more efficient with division of labor.
  - there should always be at least two global superpowers.
  - no single political party should dominate any legislature.
  - courts should formulate policy during periods of Congressional gridlock.
23. The power of judicial review was established in:
- the Constitution.
  - Marbury v. Madison*.
  - McCulloch v. Maryland*.
  - the Bill of Rights.
  - a Presidential executive order.
24. What is federalism?
- A political party at the time of the Founding
  - A set of essays defending the Constitution
  - A political system where the national government has ultimate power
  - A political system where state and national governments share power
  - The belief that America should be unified with a trans-continental railroad
25. The common law:
- was ruled unconstitutional by the United States Supreme Court.
  - is based upon past custom and emerging case law.
  - was the fundamental law for the Nazis and the Soviets.
  - is a new form of jurisprudence being tested in Louisiana.
  - consists of only those statutes approved by popular referendum.
26. The Declaration of Independence relies most obviously on the political thought of:
- Plato.
  - Niccolo Machiavelli.
  - David Hume.
  - John Locke.
  - Georg Hegel.
27. Which statement is a common argument against the claim that "man cannot know things"?
- Professors teach opinion not knowledge.
  - Appellate judges do not comprehend social justice.
  - Consensus belief in a democracy always contains error.
  - Man trusts his ability to know in order to reject his ability to know.
  - Social scientists cannot objectively rank cultures.
28. In his "I Have a Dream" speech, Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.:
- argued for the abolition of slavery.
  - advocated black separatism.
  - morally defended affirmative action.
  - expressed his hopes for racial justice and brotherhood.
  - proposed that several of America's founding ideas were discriminatory.
29. Socrates, Plato, Aristotle, and Aquinas would concur that:
- all moral and political truth is relative to one's time and place.
  - moral ideas are best explained as material accidents or byproducts of evolution.
  - values originating in one's conscience cannot be judged by others.
  - Christianity is the only true religion and should rule the state.
  - certain permanent moral and political truths are accessible to human reason .

30. The Bill of Rights explicitly prohibits:
- a) prayer in public school.
  - b) discrimination based on race, sex, or religion.
  - c) the ownership of guns by private individuals.
  - d) establishing an official religion for the United States.
  - e) the President from vetoing a line item in a spending bill.
31. Which author's view of society is presented correctly?
- a) Edmund Burke argued that society consists of a union of past, present, and future generations.
  - b) Adam Smith argued that the division of labor decreases the wealth of nations.
  - c) Alexis de Tocqueville argued that voluntary associations are usually dangerous to society.
  - d) Max Weber argued that the Jewish work ethic is central to American capitalism.
  - e) John Locke defended the divine right of kings.

### America and the World

32. In 1776, Thomas Paine argued for colonial independence from Britain in:
- a) the Declaration of Independence.
  - b) *Common Sense*.
  - c) *Novanglus*.
  - d) *A View of the Controversy between Great Britain and Her Colonies*.
  - e) *Letter from Birmingham Jail*.
33. Which of the following is *NOT* among the official powers of Congress?
- a) To declare war
  - b) To regulate commerce with foreign nations
  - c) To receive ambassadors
  - d) To create courts lower than the Supreme Court
  - e) To approve treaties with foreign nations
34. The warning to the American people to avoid entangling alliances and involvement in Europe's wars is found in:
- a) President Eisenhower's Farewell Address.
  - b) President Washington's Farewell Address.
  - c) Woodrow Wilson's *Fourteen Points*.
  - d) The League of Nations Covenant.
  - e) The Treaty of Versailles of 1919.
35. The Monroe Doctrine:
- a) discouraged new colonies in the Western hemisphere.
  - b) proclaimed America's "Manifest Destiny."
  - c) was the earliest recorded agreement between the United States and France.
  - d) was America's response to Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn's *Gulag Archipelago*.
  - e) resolved border disputes among the thirteen colonies.
36. According to just-war theory, a just war requires which of the following?
- a) Approval by the International Court of Justice
  - b) Endorsement by democratic vote
  - c) A threatening shift in the balance of powers
  - d) The authority of a legitimate sovereign
  - e) That no civilian casualties occur

37. Which of the following was an alliance to resist Soviet expansion:
- a) United Nations.
  - b) League of Nations.
  - c) North Atlantic Treaty Organization.
  - d) Warsaw Pact.
  - e) Asian Tigers.
38. What kind of government is a *junta*?
- a) Military
  - b) Religious
  - c) Populist
  - d) Social democratic
  - e) Parliamentary
39. The question of why democracy leads to well-ordered government in America when disorder prevails in Europe is central to:
- a) Thomas Jefferson's *Notes on the State of Virginia*.
  - b) Walt Whitman's *Democratic Vistas*.
  - c) John Adams's "Thoughts on Government."
  - d) Alexis de Tocqueville's *Democracy in America*.
  - e) Charles Beard's *An Economic Interpretation of the Constitution of the United States*.
40. The United Nations was organized in:
- a) 1953 to combat the power of American corporations.
  - b) 1945 to promote "international organization."
  - c) 1937 to deter the spread of Nazism.
  - d) 1968 to pursue nuclear disarmament.
  - e) 1961 to curtail global warming.
41. The major powers at odds with each other in the "Cold War" were the United States and:
- a) Germany.
  - b) Iran.
  - c) Vietnam.
  - d) the Soviet Union.
  - e) Poland.
42. How did President Kennedy respond to the Cuban Missile Crisis?
- a) He imposed a naval blockade on Cuba.
  - b) He landed Cuban exiles at the Bay of Pigs.
  - c) He sent troops to Cuba to destroy nuclear weapons.
  - d) He went to Havana to meet with Fidel Castro.
  - e) He ended all diplomatic communications with the Soviets.
43. "Balance of power" refers to:
- a) a state that seeks to expand its power generates resistance by other states.
  - b) states that are militarily powerful tend to acquire strong allies.
  - c) weaker states tend to "join the winner" in most international conflicts.
  - d) land and sea powers have tended to balance one another.
  - e) terrorists conceal their demands and affiliations.
44. The Gulf of Tonkin Resolution (1964) was significant because it:
- a) ended the war in Korea.
  - b) gave President Johnson the authority to expand the scope of the Vietnam War.
  - c) was an attempt to take foreign policy power away from the President.
  - d) allowed China to become a member of the United Nations.
  - e) allowed for oil exploration in Southeast Asia.



45. Which wall was President Reagan referring to when he said, "Mr. Gorbachev, tear down this wall"?
- a) Kremlin Wall
  - b) Wailing Wall
  - c) Hadrian's Wall
  - d) Great Wall of China
  - e) Berlin Wall
46. Among which of these groups would Saddam Hussein have found his most reliable supporters?
- a) Islamic Brotherhood
  - b) Baath Party
  - c) Communist Party
  - d) Hamas
  - e) Israelis
47. The stated United States objective of the 1991 Persian Gulf War was to:
- a) block Soviet expansion in the Middle East.
  - b) defend Israel.
  - c) overthrow the Iraqi government.
  - d) expel Iraqi forces from Kuwait.
  - e) recover control of the Suez Canal.

### The Market Economy

48. Inflation:
- a) results from an over-abundance of goods and services.
  - b) has not been a problem since the Great Depression.
  - c) reduces money's purchasing power even when some prices decrease.
  - d) is monitored daily by the *Dow Jones Industrial Average*.
  - e) remains beyond the influence of central banks due to oil price fluctuations.
49. Free enterprise or capitalism exists insofar as:
- a) experts managing the nation's commerce are appointed by elected officials.
  - b) individual citizens create, exchange, and control goods and resources.
  - c) charity, philanthropy, and volunteering decrease.
  - d) demand and supply are decided through majority vote.
  - e) Government implements policies that favor businesses over consumers.
50. Free markets typically secure more economic prosperity than government's centralized planning because:
- a) the price system utilizes more local knowledge of means and ends.
  - b) markets rely upon coercion, whereas government relies upon voluntary compliance with the law.
  - c) more tax revenue can be generated from free enterprise.
  - d) property rights and contracts are best enforced by the market system.
  - e) government planners are too cautious in spending taxpayers' money.
51. Which of the following is the best measure of production or output of an economy?
- a) Gross Domestic Product
  - b) Consumer Price Index
  - c) Unemployment Rate
  - d) Prime Rate
  - e) Exchange Rate

52. Business profit is:
- cost minus revenue.
  - assets minus liabilities.
  - revenue minus expenses.
  - selling price of a stock minus its purchase price.
  - earnings minus assets.
53. National defense is considered a public good because:
- a majority of citizens value it.
  - a resident can benefit from it without directly paying for it.
  - military contracts increase employment opportunities.
  - a majority of citizens support the military during war.
  - airport security personnel are members of the Federal civil service.
54. Keynesian economists conclude that the recession phase of a business cycle:
- involves a lower unemployment rate.
  - occurs when investment spending crowds out consumer spending.
  - can be eliminated by government taxing more than it spends.
  - can be reversed by government spending more than it taxes.
  - can be reversed with higher interest rates.
55. Over the past forty years, real income among American households has:
- remained the same when averaged over all households.
  - involved the rich getting richer and the poor getting poorer.
  - involved the poor getting richer and the rich getting poorer.
  - decreased for the middle class and increased for the upper class.
  - increased for the lower and middle classes and increased most for the upper class.
56. Why are businesses in two different countries most likely to trade with each other?
- They know that although one business will be hurt from trading, the other will be better off, and they both hope to be the winner.
  - Businesses are unable to sell their products in their own countries.
  - Each business expects to be better off as a result of the trade.
  - Their respective governments require them to do so.
  - The natural resources of both countries are similar.
57. The price of movie tickets has increased. According to the law of demand, what is likely to be the result?
- Theaters will sell fewer tickets.
  - Theaters' revenues will increase.
  - The quality of movie theaters will improve.
  - The number of videos rented will decrease.
  - Popcorn purchases at theaters will increase.
58. What is a major effect of a purchase of bonds by the Federal Reserve?
- A reduction in the supply of common stock
  - An increase in the volume of commercial bank loans
  - A decrease in the supply of money
  - An increase in interest rates
  - A decrease in investment spending by businesses



59. A progressive tax:

- a) encourages more investment from those with higher incomes.
- b) is illustrated by a 6% sales tax.
- c) requires those with higher incomes to pay a higher ratio of taxes to income.
- d) requires every income class to pay the same ratio of taxes to income.
- e) earmarks revenues for poverty reduction.

60. The Federal government's largest pay out over the past twenty years has been for:

- a) military.
- b) social security.
- c) interest on the national debt.
- d) education.
- e) foreign aid.

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