

Idaho Civics Practice Test (Sample)

Study Guide



Everything you need from our exam experts!

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SAMPLE

Questions

- 1. Name two national U.S. holidays?**
 - A. Labor Day and Thanksgiving**
 - B. Christmas and New Year's**
 - C. Valentine's Day and Independence Day**
 - D. Halloween and Memorial Day**
- 2. Who wrote the Federalist Papers?**
 - A. Thomas Jefferson, James Madison, and John Jay**
 - B. Alexander Hamilton, James Madison, and John Jay**
 - C. George Washington, Benjamin Franklin, and Thomas Paine**
 - D. John Adams, Thomas Jefferson, and James Monroe**
- 3. What is one thing Benjamin Franklin is famous for?**
 - A. Being a founding father**
 - B. Inventing the telephone**
 - C. Serving as a US diplomat**
 - D. Both A and C**
- 4. What does the Supreme Court do?**
 - A. Passes new laws**
 - B. Enforces laws**
 - C. Interprets the Constitution**
 - D. Approves a budget**
- 5. What movement is Martin Luther King Jr. associated with?**
 - A. The Labor Movement**
 - B. The Women's Rights Movement**
 - C. The Civil Rights Movement**
 - D. The Environmental Movement**
- 6. What happened at the Constitutional Convention?**
 - A. The Bill of Rights was created**
 - B. The Constitution was written**
 - C. The Declaration of Independence was debated**
 - D. George Washington was elected President**

- 7. What is the "rule of law"?**
- A. Only lawmakers must follow the law**
 - B. Everyone must follow the law**
 - C. Law enforcement can bend the law**
 - D. Court decisions are not binding**
- 8. Which amendment to the U.S. Constitution guarantees freedom of speech?**
- A. The First Amendment**
 - B. The Second Amendment**
 - C. The Fifth Amendment**
 - D. The Tenth Amendment**
- 9. Which amendment abolished slavery in the United States?**
- A. 12th Amendment**
 - B. 13th Amendment**
 - C. 14th Amendment**
 - D. 15th Amendment**
- 10. Under the US Constitution, what is one power that belongs to the states?**
- A. Print money**
 - B. Regulate interstate commerce**
 - C. Provide schooling and education**
 - D. Declare war**

Answers

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- 1. A**
- 2. B**
- 3. D**
- 4. C**
- 5. C**
- 6. B**
- 7. B**
- 8. A**
- 9. B**
- 10. C**

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Explanations

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1. Name two national U.S. holidays?

- A. Labor Day and Thanksgiving**
- B. Christmas and New Year's**
- C. Valentine's Day and Independence Day**
- D. Halloween and Memorial Day**

Labor Day and Thanksgiving are both recognized as national U.S. holidays established by federal law. Labor Day, celebrated on the first Monday in September, honors the contributions of American workers and the labor movement. Thanksgiving, celebrated on the fourth Thursday in November, is a time for families and friends to gather for a meal and give thanks for their blessings. Other options include holidays that may be widely celebrated, but they do not have the same federal recognition. For example, Christmas and New Year's are broadly celebrated as well, but they do not both qualify as federally recognized holidays for the purposes of national observance in the same way that Labor Day and Thanksgiving do. Valentine's Day and Independence Day also do not fit as both a national day of observance under federal law, with Independence Day being the exception, while Halloween is generally seen more as a cultural celebration rather than an official holiday.

2. Who wrote the Federalist Papers?

- A. Thomas Jefferson, James Madison, and John Jay**
- B. Alexander Hamilton, James Madison, and John Jay**
- C. George Washington, Benjamin Franklin, and Thomas Paine**
- D. John Adams, Thomas Jefferson, and James Monroe**

The Federalist Papers were authored by Alexander Hamilton, James Madison, and John Jay as a series of essays promoting the ratification of the United States Constitution. These writings played a crucial role in explaining the principles of the Constitution and arguing for its adoption, focusing on the need for a stronger federal government than what was provided under the Articles of Confederation. Hamilton's contributions were significant, as he was a key advocate for a centralized government and presented the necessity for such a system in the first essays. Madison, often referred to as the "Father of the Constitution," used his insights on governance and political theory to bolster the arguments, while Jay's writings emphasized the importance of unity among the states. While the other answer choices include prominent figures in American history, such as Thomas Jefferson and Benjamin Franklin, they did not participate in writing these specific essays. Jefferson was an advocate for the Constitution but was in France during the writing of the Federalist Papers. Franklin and Paine also contributed to the Revolutionary cause but are not connected to this specific set of writings.

3. What is one thing Benjamin Franklin is famous for?

- A. Being a founding father
- B. Inventing the telephone
- C. Serving as a US diplomat
- D. Both A and C**

Benjamin Franklin is renowned for multiple contributions to American history, particularly as a founding father and for his role as a diplomat. As a founding father, he played a vital role in the establishment of the United States, contributing to the Declaration of Independence and the Constitution. Franklin's diplomatic endeavors were equally significant; he served as the United States' first ambassador to France, where he worked to secure French support during the American Revolutionary War, which was crucial for the success of the colonies against British rule. Franklin's achievements exemplify the spirit of the revolutionary era, highlighting his intellectual contributions, political activities, and foreign relations work. His legacy encompasses his role in shaping the nation both legally and diplomatically, which makes both being a founding father and serving as a US diplomat key reasons for his fame. The option that includes both A and C captures these significant aspects of his life and contributions.

4. What does the Supreme Court do?

- A. Passes new laws
- B. Enforces laws
- C. Interprets the Constitution**
- D. Approves a budget

The role of the Supreme Court primarily revolves around interpreting the Constitution. This essential function allows the Court to determine what the Constitution means and how it applies to various legal cases that arise. Every time a case is brought before the Supreme Court, the justices assess it in light of constitutional principles, which may include topics such as individual rights, federal authority, and the balance of power among the branches of government. This authority granted to the Supreme Court has a lasting impact, as its interpretations can set precedents that guide future judicial decisions. By resolving disputes and clarifying constitutional ambiguities, the Supreme Court plays a critical role in the American legal system and in upholding the rule of law. In contrast, passing new laws is the responsibility of the legislative branch, while the executive branch is tasked with enforcing laws. Approving a budget is also primarily a function of the legislative branch, specifically Congress, which is responsible for financial legislation and appropriations.

5. What movement is Martin Luther King Jr. associated with?

- A. The Labor Movement
- B. The Women's Rights Movement
- C. The Civil Rights Movement**
- D. The Environmental Movement

Martin Luther King Jr. is primarily associated with the Civil Rights Movement, which sought to end racial segregation and discrimination against African Americans and to secure equal rights under the law. This movement was pivotal in the 1950s and 1960s, advocating for nonviolent protest and civil disobedience to challenge injustices. King's leadership, particularly through his famous "I Have a Dream" speech and his role in events like the Montgomery Bus Boycott and the March on Washington, helped to galvanize support for legislation aimed at dismantling systemic racism, such as the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and the Voting Rights Act of 1965. The other movements listed—Labor, Women's Rights, and Environmental—while significant, are not directly connected to King's advocacy or work. The Labor Movement focuses on workers' rights and unionization; the Women's Rights Movement addresses gender equality and women's suffrage; and the Environmental Movement aims to protect the environment and address climate change. Each of these movements has its own leaders and historical context, separate from King's focus on civil rights for African Americans.

6. What happened at the Constitutional Convention?

- A. The Bill of Rights was created
- B. The Constitution was written**
- C. The Declaration of Independence was debated
- D. George Washington was elected President

The correct answer reflects a significant historical event where the foundation of the United States government was established. At the Constitutional Convention, which took place in Philadelphia in 1787, delegates from various states convened to address the weaknesses of the Articles of Confederation. Instead of merely amending the existing framework, the attendees decided to draft a new governing document, leading to the creation of the U.S. Constitution. This document outlined the structure of the government, delineating the powers of the legislative, executive, and judicial branches, and introduced a system of checks and balances. While the Bill of Rights was indeed a crucial addition to the Constitution, it was not part of the original drafting during the convention itself; instead, it was proposed later to address concerns about individual liberties. The Declaration of Independence was established prior to the convention, specifically in 1776, as a statement of the colonies' intention to separate from British rule. George Washington was later elected as the first President of the United States but not as a direct outcome of the Constitutional Convention. Thus, the drafting of the Constitution defines the primary and critical outcome of the convention, making it the right answer.

7. What is the "rule of law"?

- A. Only lawmakers must follow the law
- B. Everyone must follow the law**
- C. Law enforcement can bend the law
- D. Court decisions are not binding

The "rule of law" is a fundamental principle that asserts that all individuals, institutions, and entities are accountable to the law. This means that no person is above the law, and everyone, regardless of their position or status, must adhere to legal statutes and regulations. This concept is crucial for maintaining a fair and just society, as it ensures that laws are applied consistently and impartially. By emphasizing that everyone must follow the law, the rule of law promotes order and protects individual rights from arbitrary governance. It also fosters public confidence in the legal system, as people can trust that the law will be enforced fairly and without bias. This principle is essential in preventing abuses of power and ensuring that justice is served, ultimately contributing to the stability and integrity of a society. In contrast, the other options presented do not capture this essential quality of equality before the law. They imply a hierarchy or exceptions that undermine the foundational idea that laws govern all citizens equally.

8. Which amendment to the U.S. Constitution guarantees freedom of speech?

- A. The First Amendment**
- B. The Second Amendment
- C. The Fifth Amendment
- D. The Tenth Amendment

The First Amendment to the U.S. Constitution is fundamental because it explicitly guarantees the right to freedom of speech, among other freedoms such as religion, press, assembly, and petition. This amendment was ratified in 1791 as part of the Bill of Rights and serves as a cornerstone for democratic values in the United States. Freedom of speech enables individuals to express themselves without fear of government censorship or punishment. This principle is essential for a functioning democracy, allowing citizens to discuss and critique government actions, challenge societal norms, and promote diverse viewpoints. The First Amendment has been the basis for numerous landmark Supreme Court cases that have defined the boundaries and implications of free speech, making it a crucial element of American civil liberties. In contrast, the other amendments do not specifically address the right to free speech. The Second Amendment pertains to the right to bear arms, the Fifth Amendment relates to due process and protection against self-incrimination, and the Tenth Amendment focuses on the powers reserved to the states and the people.

9. Which amendment abolished slavery in the United States?

- A. 12th Amendment
- B. 13th Amendment**
- C. 14th Amendment
- D. 15th Amendment

The 13th Amendment to the United States Constitution is the pivotal amendment that abolished slavery in the United States. Ratified on December 6, 1865, it states, "Neither slavery nor involuntary servitude, except as a punishment for crime whereof the party shall have been duly convicted, shall exist within the United States, or any place subject to their jurisdiction." This amendment was a significant legislative step in the aftermath of the Civil War and served to formally end the institution of slavery that had been prevalent in the country. The importance of this amendment cannot be overstated, as it paved the way for further civil rights advancements and established a legal foundation for the rights of formerly enslaved individuals. The other amendments referenced, such as the 12th, 14th, and 15th, each address different aspects of governance and civil rights, but none directly relate to the specific abolition of slavery. The 14th Amendment focuses on citizenship and equal protection under the law, while the 15th Amendment deals with voting rights regardless of race. Thus, the distinction of the 13th Amendment as the one that abolished slavery is clear and essential in understanding American history and civil rights legislation.

10. Under the US Constitution, what is one power that belongs to the states?

- A. Print money
- B. Regulate interstate commerce
- C. Provide schooling and education**
- D. Declare war

One power that belongs to the states, as outlined in the US Constitution, is the ability to provide schooling and education. This responsibility is derived from the Tenth Amendment, which states that powers not delegated to the federal government nor prohibited to the states are reserved for the states or the people. Education is largely seen as a state and local matter, allowing states to establish their own education systems, curricula, and policies. This ensures that education can be tailored to meet the specific needs of the communities they serve, reflecting local values and priorities. The other options represent powers that are primarily reserved for the federal government. For example, printing money is a power held by the federal government through the Department of the Treasury and the Federal Reserve. Regulating interstate commerce is also a federal power, designed to create a consistent economic framework and address issues that cross state lines. Declaring war is another power reserved for the federal government, specifically assigned to Congress, reflecting the need for a unified national defense.