

U.S. History STAAR (State of Texas Assessments of Academic Readiness) Practice Test (Sample)

Study Guide



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SAMPLE

Questions

- 1. What does 'tax-in-kind' mean?**
 - A. A tax paid in goods rather than money**
 - B. A tax on income and earnings**
 - C. A flat fee for personal property**
 - D. A tax assessed based on wealth**
- 2. What was the main goal of the Lewis and Clark expedition?**
 - A. To establish trade with Native Americans**
 - B. To explore the newly acquired western territory**
 - C. To map the Atlantic coastline**
 - D. To find a route to the Pacific Ocean**
- 3. What instruction did William Prescott give regarding when to shoot?**
 - A. "Shoot at will."**
 - B. "Don't shoot until you see the whites of their eyes."**
 - C. "Fire at the sound of the whistle."**
 - D. "Aim for the center."**
- 4. What is the purpose of the Bill of Rights?**
 - A. To outline the duties of the President**
 - B. To guarantee individual freedoms**
 - C. To define the structure of the government**
 - D. To address issues of taxation**
- 5. Which group can rule a law unconstitutional?**
 - A. Executive branch**
 - B. Legislative branch**
 - C. Judicial branch**
 - D. Federal reserve**
- 6. What did the Federal Reserve Act of 1913 establish?**
 - A. A system of state banks**
 - B. A central banking system in the U.S.**
 - C. A federal loan agency**
 - D. A national credit union**

- 7. Who was the first woman to run for president in the U.S.?**
- A. Hillary Clinton**
 - B. Victoria Woodhull**
 - C. Elizabeth Cady Stanton**
 - D. Margaret Sanger**
- 8. Which branch of government is responsible for making laws?**
- A. Executive**
 - B. Legislative**
 - C. Judicial**
 - D. Administrative**
- 9. What are Enumerated Articles as defined by Parliament?**
- A. Goods that colonists could sell to any country**
 - B. Goods that colonists were limited to selling only to England**
 - C. Products imported from England to the colonies**
 - D. Items exempt from taxation by the colonies**
- 10. Who wrote the Declaration of Independence?**
- A. Benjamin Franklin**
 - B. George Washington**
 - C. Thomas Jefferson**
 - D. James Madison**

Answers

SAMPLE

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

SAMPLE

Explanations

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1. What does 'tax-in-kind' mean?

- A. A tax paid in goods rather than money**
- B. A tax on income and earnings**
- C. A flat fee for personal property**
- D. A tax assessed based on wealth**

The term 'tax-in-kind' refers specifically to a tax that is paid with goods or commodities instead of cash. This form of taxation was historically significant, particularly in agrarian societies where farmers would pay taxes with a portion of their crops or livestock rather than currency. This system of taxation allowed for the collection of revenue in a manner that was often more convenient for rural and farming communities, especially in times or regions where currency was scarce or devalued. In contrast, the other terms describe different tax structures: a tax on income and earnings specifies a direct monetary charge based on profit, while a flat fee for personal property pertains to a set amount charged regardless of the property's value. A tax assessed based on wealth refers to a system where liability is proportionate to the net worth of an individual or entity. These definitions highlight the unique nature of 'tax-in-kind' as it relates specifically to goods rather than monetary forms of taxation.

2. What was the main goal of the Lewis and Clark expedition?

- A. To establish trade with Native Americans**
- B. To explore the newly acquired western territory**
- C. To map the Atlantic coastline**
- D. To find a route to the Pacific Ocean**

The Lewis and Clark expedition, commissioned by President Thomas Jefferson following the Louisiana Purchase in 1803, primarily aimed to explore the newly acquired western territory. This exploration was crucial for gaining a better understanding of the geography, resources, and potential for expansion in the vast lands west of the Mississippi River. It also provided valuable information about the indigenous peoples and the wildlife of the region. While the expedition did involve mapping and establishing relationships with various Native American tribes, the overarching goal was to document and survey the newly acquired territory, paving the way for future settlement and development. The other options may touch on aspects of the expedition's activities but do not encapsulate its primary purpose. Establishing trade with Native Americans was a component of their interactions but not the primary objective. Mapping the Atlantic coastline was unrelated to their journey, which focused on the interior of the continent. Finding a route to the Pacific Ocean was indeed part of their mission, but the broader objective of exploring and surveying the entire western territory aligns more directly with the motivations articulated by Jefferson for the expedition.

3. What instruction did William Prescott give regarding when to shoot?

A. "Shoot at will."

B. "Don't shoot until you see the whites of their eyes."

C. "Fire at the sound of the whistle."

D. "Aim for the center."

William Prescott's instruction to "Don't shoot until you see the whites of their eyes" was a crucial tactic during the Battle of Bunker Hill. This strategy emphasized the importance of conserving ammunition and ensuring accuracy. Prescott understood that from their elevated position, colonial forces would have a significant advantage if they waited for the British troops to come close, maximizing the effectiveness of their fire. By ordering his men to hold their fire until the enemy was within range, Prescott aimed to increase the likelihood of hitting the approaching soldiers while also reducing unnecessary waste of ammunition. This advice reflects a broader military principle where patience and timing are vital, particularly in situations where resources like gunpowder and reinforcements are limited. The instruction underscores the colonial forces' tactical approach during the battle, highlighting their ingenuity in facing a well-trained British army.

4. What is the purpose of the Bill of Rights?

A. To outline the duties of the President

B. To guarantee individual freedoms

C. To define the structure of the government

D. To address issues of taxation

The purpose of the Bill of Rights is to guarantee individual freedoms that protect citizens from potential government overreach. Ratified in 1791 as the first ten amendments to the U.S. Constitution, the Bill of Rights ensures fundamental rights such as freedom of speech, religion, assembly, and the press, as well as the right to bear arms and protection against unreasonable search and seizure. By explicitly listing these rights, the Bill of Rights serves to limit the authority of the federal government and affirms the principle that individuals possess inherent rights that should not be violated. This foundational text has played a crucial role in the development of American civil liberties and continues to be referenced in legal cases and discussions about human rights.

5. Which group can rule a law unconstitutional?

- A. Executive branch
- B. Legislative branch
- C. Judicial branch**
- D. Federal reserve

The ability to rule a law unconstitutional is a power held by the judicial branch, specifically by the courts. This authority is derived from the principle of judicial review, which allows the judiciary to examine laws and government actions to determine if they are in alignment with the Constitution. If a law is found to violate the Constitution, the judicial branch has the power to invalidate that law, ensuring that the rights and liberties enshrined in the Constitution are protected. This system of checks and balances is fundamental to the U.S. government, as it prevents any one branch from becoming too powerful. The other branches—the executive and legislative—do not possess the authority to declare laws unconstitutional; they can propose or implement laws, but they must abide by the Constitution as interpreted by the courts. The Federal Reserve, while it plays a crucial role in the economic system, does not have legal authority regarding the constitutionality of laws. Thus, the judicial branch is unequivocally the correct answer regarding who can rule a law unconstitutional.

6. What did the Federal Reserve Act of 1913 establish?

- A. A system of state banks
- B. A central banking system in the U.S.**
- C. A federal loan agency
- D. A national credit union

The Federal Reserve Act of 1913 established a central banking system in the United States, known as the Federal Reserve System. This act was a response to the need for a more reliable and stable banking system, as the country experienced financial panics in the early 20th century. The Federal Reserve was designed to provide the nation with a safer and more flexible monetary and financial system. The system consists of 12 regional Federal Reserve Banks and a Board of Governors, which implement monetary policy aimed at stabilizing the economy by regulating the money supply and interest rates. This central banking structure allows for a coordinated response to economic challenges and helps manage inflation and employment. Understanding the central banking system's role is crucial, as it is foundational to current monetary policy and economic stability in the U.S. The other options, such as state banks, federal loan agencies, and national credit unions, do not accurately represent the primary purpose and function of the Federal Reserve Act, highlighting the importance of the central banking system established by this landmark legislation.

7. Who was the first woman to run for president in the U.S.?

- A. Hillary Clinton**
- B. Victoria Woodhull**
- C. Elizabeth Cady Stanton**
- D. Margaret Sanger**

Victoria Woodhull was the first woman to run for president in the United States, doing so in the 1872 election. Woodhull was a prominent suffragist and a strong advocate for women's rights during a time when women did not have the right to vote in many parts of the country. Her candidacy was significant because it challenged the traditional views of a woman's role in society and politics. Woodhull represented the Equal Rights Party, and although she did not appear on the ballot in many states and faced significant political and social obstacles, her campaign was a groundbreaking moment in U.S. history, highlighting the growing movement for women's suffrage. This early attempt at participation in presidential politics set a precedent for future female candidates. Hillary Clinton, Elizabeth Cady Stanton, and Margaret Sanger all played important roles in American history, particularly in advancing women's rights and health issues, but they did not run for the presidency as early as Woodhull. Clinton would ultimately become the first woman to be a major party nominee for president in 2016, while Stanton and Sanger were more involved in advocacy and reform movements rather than direct political candidacy at the presidential level.

8. Which branch of government is responsible for making laws?

- A. Executive**
- B. Legislative**
- C. Judicial**
- D. Administrative**

The legislative branch of government is responsible for making laws. This branch consists of elected representatives who debate, draft, and vote on legislation. In the United States, the legislative branch is represented by Congress, which is divided into two chambers: the House of Representatives and the Senate. Each chamber has specific roles and responsibilities in the law-making process, including introducing bills, holding hearings, and creating amendments. The legislative branch operates with the fundamental purpose of representing the will of the people and ensuring that laws are created in a structured and democratic manner. This function distinguishes it from the other branches of government, such as the executive branch, which is tasked with enforcing laws, and the judicial branch, which interprets laws and resolves legal disputes. The administrative aspect typically refers to various governmental agencies that implement policies and laws rather than create them.

9. What are Enumerated Articles as defined by Parliament?

- A. Goods that colonists could sell to any country
- B. Goods that colonists were limited to selling only to England**
- C. Products imported from England to the colonies
- D. Items exempt from taxation by the colonies

The concept of Enumerated Articles refers to specific goods that, under the Navigation Acts imposed by Parliament, could only be exported to England. This was part of a larger system aimed at regulating colonial trade and ensuring that the economic benefits of colonial resources flowed back to the mother country. By limiting the sale of these goods exclusively to England, Parliament sought to strengthen its economic control over the colonies and protect its mercantile interests. This practice not only restricted colonial economic independence but also laid the groundwork for the later discontent that would lead to calls for greater autonomy. Understanding this context helps clarify why this definition is essential in comprehending colonial policies and their impact on the relationship between the colonies and England. The other options describe various trade scenarios but do not accurately reflect the specific nature of Enumerated Articles as outlined by Parliamentary legislation.

10. Who wrote the Declaration of Independence?

- A. Benjamin Franklin
- B. George Washington
- C. Thomas Jefferson**
- D. James Madison

The Declaration of Independence was primarily authored by Thomas Jefferson, marking a significant moment in American history. Jefferson was tasked with drafting this document during the Continental Congress in 1776, as a means of formally declaring the Thirteen Colonies' intention to separate from British rule. His eloquent articulation of Enlightenment ideals, particularly the principles of liberty and equality, laid the philosophical groundwork for the new nation. Jefferson's writing reflected the sentiments of the time and articulated the colonies' grievances against King George III, advocating for the inherent rights of individuals. While other founding figures, such as Benjamin Franklin, George Washington, and James Madison, played crucial roles in the American Revolution and the formation of the new government, it was Jefferson's hand that shaped the Declaration's powerful message of independence. Thus, the answer highlighting Thomas Jefferson acknowledges his pivotal contribution to one of the foundational documents of the United States.