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Spreading the News of Independence

Unlike today, there was no mass media, television, or internet, and not even a national postal system as we know it. Spreading news relied on public readings, horseback riders, handwritten letters, town criers, newspapers, and word of mouth. The thirteen colonies stretched over 1,000 miles, from New Hampshire to Georgia. Roads were often rough dirt paths, and travel by horse or carriage was slow. A message from Philadelphia could take weeks to reach the northern or southern colonies. News of independence spread at different speeds: towns near Philadelphia received information within days, while distant frontier areas might not learn of it for a month or more.

However, despite these challenges, the message of independence spread quickly enough to inspire celebration and strengthen the colonies' resolve to fight for freedom. On July 8, 1776, church bells were rung throughout Philadelphia to call the people to the first public reading of the Declaration. A day later George Washington had the Declaration read to the Continental Army and citizens in New York City.

The World Recognizes Independence

After several years of conflict, the Revolutionary War ended with the American victory at the *Battle of Yorktown*. Negotiations followed, leading to the signing of the *Treaty of Paris* on September 3, 1783. The treaty formally recognized the United States as an independent nation, as declared in 1776, and established boundaries for the new country.

The American War for Independence was a world conflict involving the United States and Great Britain, France, Spain, and the Netherlands. The peace process brought the young United States into international diplomacy, playing against the largest and most established powers on earth. The three American negotiators – *John Adams*, *Benjamin Franklin*, and *John Jay* – proved themselves ready for the world stage, achieving many of the objectives the new United States sought.



America's 250th Anniversary July 4, 2026

On July 4, 2026, our nation will commemorate and celebrate the 250th anniversary of the signing of the Declaration of Independence. This significant milestone, known as the *Semiquincentennial*, provides an opportunity for all citizens to come together and celebrate our shared values rather than our divisions. It encourages reflection on how our country was founded on the principles of “life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness,” as well as the ongoing work of our democracy.

QUESTIONS

MULTIPLE CHOICE: Circle the letter of the correct answer.

- Which of the following is NOT an unalienable right of the Declaration?
 - life
 - liberty
 - education
 - pursuit of happiness
- The Declaration of Independence was written by:
 - Thomas Jefferson
 - George Washington
 - Alexander Hamilton
 - John Adams
- The Declaration of Independence included:
 - statements concerning the rights of individuals
 - a list of specific grievances against England
 - a formal claim of independence from England
 - all of the above

TRUE OR FALSE? Write a **T** or **F** in the space provided.

- ___ 1. The Second Continental Congress had the task of carrying out the American Revolution.
- ___ 2. The Declaration of Independence is not a constitution.
- ___ 3. The Declaration was written in Washington, D.C.
- ___ 4. The principles of the Declaration of Independence were used in writing the U.S. Constitution.
- ___ 5. Richard Henry Lee wrote a resolution that would allow England more authority over the colonists.

THE DECLARATION BY THE NUMBERS. Choose the correct number from the bank that matches the statement.

Number Bank: 3, 5, 10, 13, 27, 56, 250

- ___ Number of committee members drafted Declaration
- ___ Semiquincentennial years
- ___ Number of parts in the Declaration
- ___ Grievances against the King
- ___ Number of signers of the Declaration
- ___ Number of original colonies

EVENTS IN ORDER. Write the numbers **1-4**, indicating which historical event happened first (**1**), second (**2**), third (**3**), or fourth (**4**).

- _____ Treaty of Paris signed.
- _____ Boston Tea Party occurred.
- _____ Second Continental Congress met.
- _____ First public reading of the Declaration.

READ THE DECLARATION. As part of the 250th celebration, there is no better way to show your civic pride than by reading the Declaration. There are approximately 1,320 words, and it will take 10-15 minutes to complete. After carefully reading, answer the following questions:

- Choose one grievance listed against the king and explain the details and why the colonists think it was unfair?

- What does “consent of the governed” mean, and why is it important in a democracy? _____

Ratification

It was decided that the Constitution would go into effect as soon as nine states approved it. The convention adjourned on September 17, 1787, and the fight for ratification began. The battle was a bitter one. The *Federalists* supported the Constitution. Leading Federalists Hamilton, Jay, and Madison published the *Federalist Papers*. These papers were essential in convincing people that the Constitution was of value. The *Anti-Federalists* fought against the Constitution but were not successful.

On June 21, 1788, the Constitution took effect when New Hampshire became the ninth state to ratify it. The remaining four states joined by 1790. The Federalists and Anti-Federalists continued their battle over the Constitution and became two separate political forces under the new government.

On January 7, 1789, the United States, having recently adopted its Constitution, held its first presidential election. Only white men who owned property voted. They choose electors who, in turn, vote for the candidates. As it did in 1789, the United States still uses the Electoral College system established by the U.S. Constitution.

Our First President

As expected, George Washington won the election and was sworn into office on April 30, 1789, as the first president of the United States and the “Father of Our Country.” Washington was a Virginia landowner who had led the patriotic forces in the war against the British. His accomplishments matched his popularity. Washington was a delegate to both Continental Congresses. He was unanimously named commander-in-chief of the Continental Army during the Revolutionary War and president of the Constitutional Convention that drafted the Constitution.



George Washington

Washington finished first with 69 votes, followed by his fellow Federalist John Adams of Massachusetts, whose 34 votes propelled him into the vice presidency. (Before ratifying the 12th Amendment in 1804, the candidate who received the most electoral votes became president while the runner-up became vice president.)

Citizenship and Becoming President

The members of the Constitutional Convention envisioned a president born in the good, old United States of America. In Article 2, Section 1, they wrote, “No person except a natural-born citizen... shall be eligible to the office of president.” The convention delegates wanted to avoid taking the chance of a foreign country sending someone to run for our highest political office. Immigrants can become citizens, thus becoming naturalized citizens. However, naturalized citizens cannot become president; only natural-born citizens are eligible.

QUESTIONS

TRUE OR FALSE? Write a *T* or *F* in the space provided.

- ___ 1. Six states had to approve the Constitution before it was effective.
- ___ 2. The Federalists were against the Constitution.
- ___ 3. The authors of the Constitution wrote a document that was easily adapted to change.
- ___ 4. The small states wanted each state to have the same number of representatives.
- ___ 5. The Constitutional Convention adopted the Virginia Plan.
- ___ 6. Fortunately, the Constitution outlawed slavery.
- ___ 7. The Electoral College showed that the Constitutional Convention trusted the people.
- ___ 8. The New Jersey Plan suggested only one house of Congress.
- ___ 9. The New Jersey Plan favored small states, and the Virginia Plan favored large ones.
- ___ 10. Each state gets the same number of votes in the Electoral College.
- ___ 11. Article 2 of the U.S. Constitution provides that only “natural-born” citizens are eligible to become president.
- ___ 12. Immigrants can become citizens.

MATCH THE PERSON TO THE STATEMENT. Write the letter of the statement that matches the person.



Benjamin Franklin ___

Patrick Henry ___



James Madison ___



John Adams ___



Robert Morris ___

Alexander Hamilton ___



- a. First Vice President
- b. Submitted Virginia Plan
- c. NY Delegate & Federalist
- d. Financier of the Revolution
- e. “Smelt a Rat”
- f. Oldest Delegate at Convention

SHORT ANSWER / FILL IN THE BLANKS

- 1. Write a definition of democracy. _____

- 2. Number of the amendment that changed the way we elect U.S. senators. _____
- 3. Name three of the original 13 colonies. _____

- 4. The Constitutional Convention adjourned on what date? _____.
- 5. How many states had to ratify the Constitution before it went into effect? _____

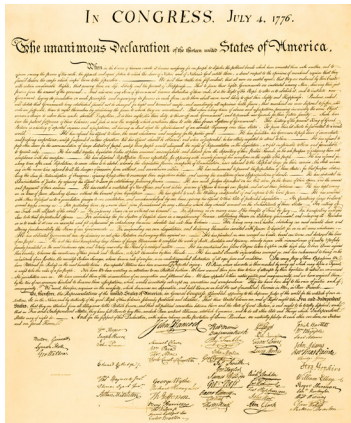

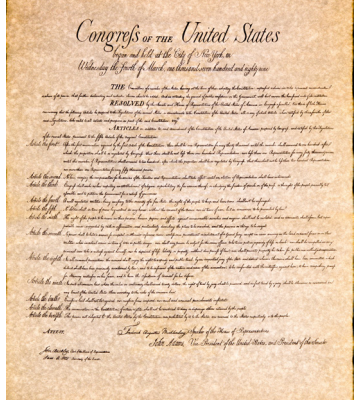
The *Rotunda for the Charters of Freedom* is the permanent home of the Declaration of Independence, the Constitution of the United States, and the Bill of Rights, located in the National Archives Building in Washington, D.C. These historic documents are displayed in a cathedral-like, dimly lit rotunda, which is open to the public. A visit can be both a moving and educational experience, deepening your appreciation for the principles that continue to guide American society.

The nation's Founding Fathers drafted these documents during dramatic, fast-moving events. They form the foundation of the United States and confirm that people are born with certain natural rights, including "Life, Liberty, and the pursuit of happiness," that does not come from presidents, kings, or charters. This nation's founding documents secure these and other rights of the American people.

Preserving the Documents

On December 13, 1952, the Constitution and the Declaration of Independence were sealed in helium-filled cases, placed in wooden crates, and transported by an armored car to the National Archives Exhibition Hall in Washington, D.C. In 2001, the documents were placed in upgraded, state-of-the-art encasements with the latest preservation technology, replacing the original 1950s encasements.

While the original, signed Declaration is housed in the Charters of Freedom, 26 other copies are known to exist and are referred to as the *Dunlap BroadSides*. Over 200 copies were initially produced by John Dunlap, a printer in Philadelphia, on the night of July 4, 1776, to spread the news of American Independence. This urgent document was sent to colonial leaders, local governments, military officers, and newspapers.

Document Question	Declaration of Independence	U.S. Constitution	Bill of Rights
<p><i>For the exact wording of each document, read the original transcripts or refer to your pocket guide.</i></p>			
What year was it ratified?	1776	1787	1791
Where was it written?	Philadelphia	Philadelphia	New York City
Why was it written?	To formally announce and justify the American colonies' decision to break away from British rule, outlining principles of individual rights and self-governance.	To replace the ineffective Articles of Confederation with a structured, balanced system of government that could govern effectively, unify the states, and protect freedoms.	To protect citizens' freedoms, address government power concerns, fulfill promises made during ratification, and set a precedent for future amendments.
Who wrote it?	Thomas Jefferson	James Madison	James Madison
How many words in the document?	1,458 words (1 page) including signatures	4,543 words (4 pages) including signatures	760 words (1 page)
What is stated in the Preamble of the document?	"We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness."	"We the People of the United States, in Order to form a more perfect Union, establish Justice, insure domestic Tranquility, provide for the common defence, promote the general Welfare, and secure the Blessings of Liberty to ourselves and our Posterity, do ordain and establish this Constitution for the United States of America."	"The Conventions of a number of the States, having at the time of their adopting the Constitution, expressed a desire, in order to prevent misconstruction or abuse of its powers, that further declaratory and restrictive clauses should be added..."

There have been a total of 27 amendments to the U.S. Constitution, starting with the Bill of Rights, which includes the first ten amendments ratified in 1791. These amendments are organized by number and are grouped into three distinct periods: the *Bill of Rights*, the *Reconstruction Amendments*, and the *Progressive Era Amendments*. A summary of each amendment, along with the year it was adopted, is provided below.

The Bill of Rights - First 10 Amendments

1st Fundamental Rights

Protects five freedoms: religion, speech, the press, the right to assemble, and the right to petition.

1791

2nd Right to Bear Arms

Protects the rights of individual citizens to keep and bear arms. Establishes a militia that is necessary for a free state.

1791

3rd Quartering of Soldiers

Prohibits soldiers from temporarily residing (*quartering*) on private property during peacetime without getting the permission and consent of the owner.

1791

4th Search and Seizure

Protects people's right to privacy, prohibits unreasonable searches and seizures by the government.

1791

5th - Rights of the Accused

Protects people accused of crimes, giving them the right to remain silent, preventing *double jeopardy*, and ensuring due process of law.

1791

6th Fair and Speedy Trial

Gives the accused in criminal cases the right to a speedy and public trial with an impartial jury, and provides legal counsel if needed.

1791

7th Trial by Jury

Guards the right to a jury trial in certain civil cases and prohibits judges in these trials from overruling facts.

1791

8th Cruel Punishment

Prohibits excessive bail, excessive fines, and cruel and unusual punishments, often discussed in cases involving prisons, the death penalty, and bail.

1791

9th Protects Unlisted Rights

People retain rights not listed in the U.S. Constitution. Because they are not specified, they are often referred to as "unenumerated rights."

1791

10th State & People Powers

Power not given to the federal government is given to the people or states (very important for state government).

1791

Reconstruction Amendments

11th Lawsuits Against States

Preserves state sovereignty and emphasizes that states have specific legal protections. Individuals cannot file lawsuits against a state in federal courts.

1795

12th Presidential Elections

Repeals part of Article 2, Section 1, of the Constitution, establishing an improved process for electing the President and Vice President.

1804

13th Ends Slavery

Abolished slavery and involuntary servitude, part of the trio of Civil War amendments that expanded civil rights for Americans.

1865

14th Equal Protection

It was designed to protect the rights of formerly enslaved people and to define citizenship and equal protection under the law.

1868

15th Right to Vote

Protects Americans' right to vote in elections. States cannot prevent a person from voting because of race, creed, or color.

1870

Progressive Era Amendments

16th Federal Income Tax

Establishes Congress's right to impose a federal income tax requiring Americans to file tax returns every year.

1913

17th Election of Senators

Provides for popular election of United States Senators. Repeals part of Article 1, Section 3. In the past, senators were elected by state legislatures.

1913

18th Prohibition of Alcohol

No alcoholic beverages to be manufactured, bought, or sold in the United States, referred to as *prohibition* (to be later repealed).

1919

19th Women's Right to Vote

Some states had already granted women the right to vote. This amendment provides all women who are U.S. citizens the right to vote in all elections.

1920

20th Lame Ducks

Shortened the "lame duck" period by changing the start dates for presidential and congressional terms to January 20 and January 3, respectively.

1933

21st Repeals Prohibition

The only Amendment that repeals a previous one, namely, the 18th Amendment, ratified in 1919 banning alcoholic beverages.

1933

22nd Presidential Term Limit

No person shall be elected to the office of president more than twice (two terms).

1951

23rd Electoral Votes for DC

Grants the residents of the District of Columbia the right to vote in presidential elections, receiving three electoral votes.

1961

24th Prohibits Poll Tax

The "anti-poll" tax amendment forbids taxing voters before they cast their ballots in national elections.

1964

25th Presidential Succession

If the President is unable to serve, the Vice President takes over. The President nominates a new VP if there is a vacancy, subject to Congressional approval.

1967

26th Vote at Age 18

Lowered the voting age from 21 to 18 for federal and state elections.

1971

27th Congressional Pay

Prohibits Congress from granting itself pay raises mid-term. Any changes to congressional salaries will not take effect until after the next election.

1992

Constitution Day, September 17th

Constitution Day is observed every year on **September 17th** to commemorate the signing of the U.S. Constitution on that day in 1787. It is also known as *Citizenship Day*. As President John F. Kennedy noted in his 1961 Constitution Day proclamation, it is a day for "ceremonies" to "inspire all our citizens to keep the faith of our Founding Fathers and to carry out the ideals of United States citizenship."

“Every bill which shall have passed the House of Representatives and the Senate, shall, before it becomes law, be presented to the President of the United States...” — United States Constitution, Article 1

Powers to make laws are given to Congress, consisting of the Senate and House of Representatives. Our nation needs rules and regulations to protect our safety and ensure our rights as citizens. A description of the lawmaking powers can be found in Article 1 of the Constitution.

In both houses of Congress, business may only be transacted with a *quorum*. A quorum in each house is a majority of its members. A majority is one-half plus one.

How a Bill Becomes Law in Congress

Bills, a term for proposed laws, may start in either chamber of Congress. Bills for *revenue* must begin in the House of Representatives (see Article 1, Section 7). After introducing a bill, it is given a number and usually referred to a *special committee*. There are 16 Senate and 20 House standing committees, plus four special or *select* Senate committees.

Detailed studies are made of the bill in a committee, and hearings may be held. A committee may amend, rewrite, recommend passage, or ignore a bill. It is possible to pass some bills without committee approval, but this seldom happens. Some people feel these committees are too powerful and may keep members of Congress from considering certain laws. Committees are necessary, however, and Congress determines rules controlling their behavior and power.

Thousands of bills are introduced during a session of Congress. Four out of five of these bills have little or no chance of being passed into law. Bills that seem unimportant to the committees are ignored. The bills that are taken seriously may have public hearings. After the committee finishes with a bill, it is reported to the Senate or House favorably or unfavorably. The entire Senate or House then votes on the bill.

The bills from committees are put on a calendar and voted on according to a schedule. Changes to the bill may be made, and a final vote is taken. The bill is sent to the other house of Congress if the vote is favorable.

The same procedure is followed in the other house of Congress. If the other house passes the bill but with changes, a joint committee from both houses is set up to work out a *compromise bill*.

Filibuster

One lawmaking activity unique to the Senate is the *filibuster*. This tactic involves opponents using their right to unlimited debate to delay or block a piece of legislation. Once a bill reaches a vote on the Senate floor, it requires a simple majority of 51 votes to pass after debate ends. Unlike the House, once a senator has the floor in a debate, tradition holds that they can speak as long as they wish. However, there is a catch: before it can reach a vote, some bills require 60 votes (a *cloture vote*) to end the filibuster.

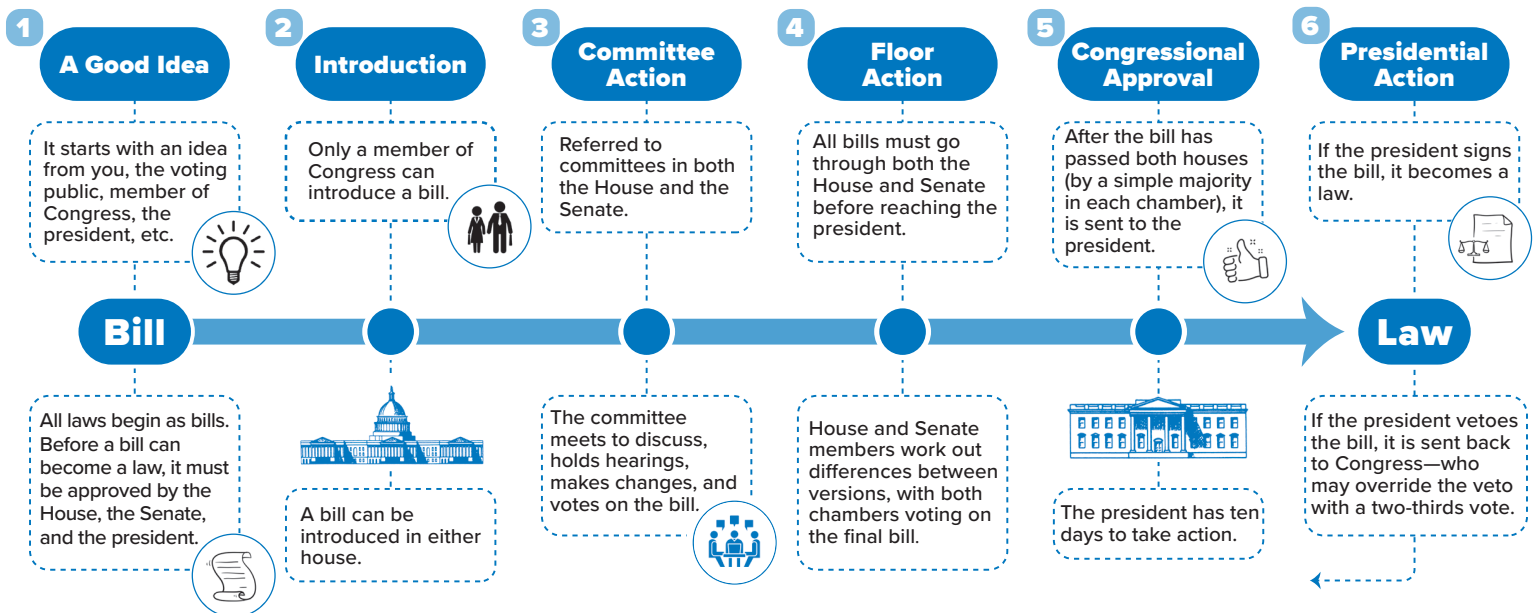
After the bill has passed both houses, it is sent to the president, who may either sign or veto it. This particular duty is in Article 1, Section 7 of the Constitution. If the president signs the bill, it becomes another law of our land. If the president does not sign the bill but vetoes it, the two houses of Congress may try to override the president’s veto by a two-thirds vote in each house. Very few laws are passed this way.

If the president does not act, the bill becomes law automatically in 10 days, provided Congress is still in session. If Congress adjourns before the 10-day period is up and the president has not acted on the bill, it is automatically vetoed. This is called a *pocket veto*.

After Congress (legislative branch) passes a bill and the president (executive branch) signs it, the president

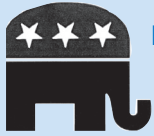
continued

The Path of a Bill



Political Party Symbols

In 1874, a political cartoonist, Thomas Nast, drew the Democrats as represented by a donkey, and the Republicans as represented by an elephant. The symbols stuck, and the parties themselves often use the symbols in advertising.



Elephant = Republican

Donkey = Democrat



QUESTIONS

TRUE OR FALSE? Write a **T** or **F** in the space provided.

- ___ 1. The term Electoral College comes from the Constitution itself.
- ___ 2. Although it was originally expected that a group of electors would actually elect the president and vice president, it became the practice for the electors to vote for the candidate who had the most popular votes.
- ___ 3. Popular vote means the vote of the people.
- ___ 4. There have been no elections in which the candidate with the most popular votes has not become president.

- ___ 5. The writers of the Constitution felt that the voters should directly elect the president and vice president.
- ___ 6. It would be easy to eliminate the Electoral College, only requiring the president's approval.

FILL IN THE BLANKS

- 1. How many electoral votes are there? _____
- 2. How many electoral votes for your state? _____
- 3. What is the minimum number of electoral votes for a state? _____
- 4. Which state has the most electoral votes? _____
- 5. Name a president who was elected without winning the popular vote. _____
- 6. What political party does a donkey represent? _____

SHORT ANSWER

Should the Electoral College be abolished? Give an argument **for** or **against** this system. _____

Executive Branch Fact Sheet

Main Officers	President and Vice President	Cabinet
Salaries	\$400,000 plus expense allowance \$235,100 plus expense allowance	\$246,400
Qualifications	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 35 years old • Natural-born citizen • U.S. resident for 14 years 	Fifteen department officials appointed by the president to aid in running our country
Terms of Office	4 years (may be reelected once)	
Duties	The main duty of the executive branch is to enforce and administer laws. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Controls foreign affairs and domestic powers • Appoints many officials • Grants pardons and reprieves • Prepares budget of the nation • Commander-in-chief of the armed forces • Legislative leader of the political party in power <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Presides over the Senate of the United States • Takes on duties assigned by the president • Succeeds the office of the president 	Department: Key responsibilities <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • State: Foreign affairs • Justice: Chief legal department • Defense: Defense of our country • Interior: Nation's natural resources • Agriculture: Farmers' assistance, food inspection • Labor: Wage earners' assistance • Commerce: Deals with business problems • Treasury: Nation's finances & coining money • Health & Human Services: Health issues • Housing & Urban Development: Urban problems • Transportation: All domestic transportation • Energy: Policies on energy, including conservation • Education: Federal education matters • Veterans Affairs: Matters that deal with veterans • Homeland Security: National security & terrorism
Article Number	Article II of the U.S. Constitution	



The following test will help you prepare for your final Constitution test. It has questions similar to ones you will find on your final. It is suggested you write your answers on a piece of paper so you can take the test multiple times. You will find the correct answers at the bottom of Page 56.

MULTIPLE CHOICE

Write the letter of the correct answer in the space provided.

1. _____ The president may serve how many terms? a. 1 b. 2 c. 3 d. 4
2. _____ What is NOT a rule of the flag code?
a. worn flags should be thrown in trash c. should be displayed on national holidays
b. should be in the front of a parade d. exact likeness should not be used in ads
3. _____ How many amendments have been added to the Constitution? a. 10 b. 21 c. 27 d. 41
4. _____ How many years is the president's term of office? a. 2 b. 4 c. 6 d. 9
5. _____ What is the age requirement to become president? a. 18 b. 21 c. 35 d. 45
6. _____ After a bill has gone through both houses of Congress successfully, it is sent to:
a. the President c. the Speaker of the House
b. the States d. the Supreme Court
7. _____ Which amendment gave women who are citizens the right to vote in all elections?
a. 17th b. 19th c. 22nd d. 27th
8. _____ How many U.S. senators come from each state? a. 1 b. 2 c. 3 d. 4
9. _____ Each state receives at least _____ representative(s) in the U.S. House of Representatives.
a. 1 b. 2 c. 3 d. 4
10. _____ During the Constitutional Convention of 1787, the Great Compromise resolved a conflict over?
a. presidential power c. representation in Congress
b. number of free states d. taxes on imports
11. _____ The president of the Senate is:
a. the President of the United States c. the Secretary of State
b. the Speaker of the House d. the Vice President
12. _____ Which of these rights is NOT an unalienable right from the Declaration of Independence?
a. liberty b. education c. pursuit of happiness d. life
13. _____ The Declaration of Independence was written largely by:
a. Hamilton b. Washington c. Jefferson d. Adams
14. _____ The national budget is presented annually to Congress by the:
a. the Vice President c. the Secretary of State
b. the Governors d. the President
15. _____ There are how many branches of government? a. 1 b. 2 c. 3 d. 4
16. _____ The president takes the oath of office on:
a. January 4th b. January 20th c. November 7th d. September 5th
17. _____ In our First Amendment, which is NOT a "freedom"?
a. freedom of the press c. freedom of speech
b. freedom of employment d. freedom of religion
18. _____ The vote of what group really decides who will be president?
a. Electoral College c. United Nations
b. popular vote by the people d. House of Representatives
19. _____ What is described in Article 1, Section 8, of the Constitution giving Congress broad powers to write laws about new situations?
a. war power b. insight clause c. elastic clause d. inventional clause
20. _____ Which body has the power to borrow money?
a. Congress c. Executive Branch
b. Supreme Court d. State Legislatures

continued

A summary is presented here for an overview and index of the Illinois Constitution. You will find additional details for many of these sections in the upcoming pages of this worktext. The state constitution is also available on the Illinois General Assembly website at www.ilga.gov.

Summary of the 1970 Constitution

Illinois' sixth Constitutional Convention convened in Springfield on December 8, 1969. A total of 116 members, two elected from each senatorial district, met at a nonpartisan convention. They would revise, alter, or amend the 1870 Illinois Constitution. This new constitution was influenced by the Civil Rights movement of the 1950s and 1960s, as well as putting more policies into constitutional law and removing them from legislative control.

After nine months of in-depth study and debate, the members presented their work to the people, a constitution they considered to be workable for 25 years, 50 years, or, as in the case of the 1870 Constitution, 100 years.

Constitutional Convention in Illinois

The Illinois Constitution requires that every 20 years, voters must be given a choice whether or not to call for a new constitutional convention, write a new constitution, or make changes in the old one. In 2008, Illinois voters were asked if they wanted to have a constitutional convention since it had been 20 years since the last formal request. The voters soundly defeated a constitutional convention. That question will be presented again in 2028.

Preamble

The preamble is similar to the preamble in the U.S. Constitution and explains why the Illinois Constitution was written. Below is the wording of the preamble:

"We, the People of the State of Illinois—grateful to Almighty God for the civil, political and religious liberty which He has permitted us to enjoy and seeking His blessing upon our endeavors—in order to provide for the health, safety and welfare of the people; maintain a representative and orderly government; eliminate poverty and inequality; assure legal, social and economic justice; provide opportunity for the fullest development of the individual; insure domestic tranquility; provide for the common defense; and secure the blessings of freedom and liberty to ourselves and our posterity—do ordain and establish this Constitution for the State of Illinois."

Article 1 - Bill of Rights

There are 24 sections of the Illinois Bill of Rights. Many of these sections were based on provisions in the U.S. Constitution. The 14th Amendment to the U.S. Constitution prohibits states from depriving anyone of life, liberty, or property without the due process of law. Some of the Illinois Bill of Rights goes beyond the rights established by our U.S. Constitution.

The topics to the Illinois Bill of Rights in Article 1 are listed below:

- Section 1* Inherent and Inalienable Rights
- Section 2* Due Process and Equal Protection
- Section 3* Religious Freedom
- Section 4* Freedom of Speech
- Section 5* Right to Assembly and Petition
- Section 6* Searches, Seizures, Privacy and Interceptions
- Section 7* Indictment and Preliminary Hearing
- Section 8* Rights after Indictment
- Section 9* Bail and Habeas Corpus
- Section 10* Self-Incrimination and Double Jeopardy
- Section 11* Limitation of Penalties after Conviction
- Section 12* Right to Remedy and Justice
- Section 13* Trial by Jury
- Section 14* Imprisonment for Debt
- Section 15* Right of Eminent Domain
- Section 16* Ex Post Facto Laws and Impairing of Contracts
- Section 17* No Discrimination in the Sale or Rental of Property
- Section 18* No Sex Discrimination
- Section 19* No Discrimination Against Handicapped
- Section 20* Individual Dignity
- Section 21* Quartering of Soldiers
- Section 22* Right to Arms
- Section 23* Fundamental Principles
- Section 24* Rights Retained
- Section 25* Workers' Rights

Article 2 - The Power of the State

Article 2 of the Illinois Constitution divides the state government into three branches: the legislative, the executive, and the judicial. The fundamental principle of separation of powers has existed in state and local governments from the earliest times. Unlike the national

Illinois Constitution Timeline of Key Events

1787	1788	1818	1832	1839	1848	1861
Illinois becomes part of the <i>Northwest Territory</i> through the <i>Ordinance of 1787</i> .	The U.S. Constitution is ratified and becomes the framework of government in the United States.	On December 3, 1818, Illinois became the 21st state, Kaskaskia being the first capital.	The last great Indian uprising in Illinois was the <i>Black Hawk War</i> .	Springfield is the capital's new home, moving from Vandalia, giving a central location.	By the 1840s the original constitution became outdated, a second constitution was approved.	The <i>Civil War</i> begins with Abraham Lincoln President, 620,000 soldiers killed in battle.

The Illinois Constitution

*Present one adopted in 1970.
Illinois voters choose our elected officials.*

Legislative Branch

makes the laws

Illinois General Assembly

Illinois Senate

Illinois House

59
State
Senators

118
State
Representatives

Quick Facts

The Illinois General Assembly is made up of the state Senate and state House of Representatives.

Illinois Senate

- Members:** 59
- Term:** 4 or 2 years
- Term limit:** None
- Salary:** \$93,712
- Qualifications:**
 - ▶ U.S. citizen
 - ▶ At least 21 years old
 - ▶ Resident of district for at least two years

Illinois House

- Members:** 118
- Term:** 2 years
- Term limit:** None
- Salary:** \$93,712
- Qualifications:**
 - ▶ U.S. citizen
 - ▶ At least 21 years old
 - ▶ Resident of district for at least two years

Executive Branch

enforces the laws

Governor

Executive Officers:
Lieutenant Governor
Secretary of State
Attorney General
State Treasurer
Comptroller

Quick Facts

The Illinois Constitution provides for six executive offices.

Executive Officers

- Number:** 6
- Term:** 4 years
- Term limit:** None
- Qualifications:**
 - ▶ U.S. citizen
 - ▶ At least 25 years old
 - ▶ Resident of state for at least three years prior to election

Salaries:

- ▶ Governor: \$226,800
- ▶ Lt. Governor: \$177,400
- ▶ Sec. of State: \$202,100
- ▶ Atty. General: \$202,100
- ▶ State Treasurer: \$177,400
- ▶ Comptroller: \$177,400

Civil Administrative Code Departments:

Provide many state services

Judicial Branch

administers justice

Illinois Supreme Court

Appellate Courts

Circuit Courts

Quick Facts

Illinois Supreme Court

- ▶ *Final court of appeal for state matters*
- Number of judges:** 7
- Term:** 10 years
- Elected by:** voters in the state
- Chief justice:**
 - ▶ Selected by court
 - ▶ Serves three-year term
 - ▶ Supervises state courts

Appellate Courts

- ▶ *Organized within 5 judicial districts*
- Term:** 10 years
- Elected by:** voters in the district
- A panel of three judges hears the appeals and makes a ruling.*

Circuit Courts

- ▶ *Organized within 22 judicial circuits*
- Term:** 6 years
- Elected by:** voters in the circuit
- Associate judges are appointed to four-year terms.*

“The judicial power is vested in a Supreme Court, and Appellate Court, and Circuit Courts.”

— Illinois Constitution, Article 6

The judicial branch of government in Illinois administers justice and interprets the laws. It is composed of a system of courts. The Illinois Constitution defines the courts' responsibilities, the qualifications of judges, and the duties of the three-level court system. The *three-level court system* involves the (1) circuit courts, (2) appellate courts, and (3) the Supreme Court.

Criminal and Civil Cases

All courts handle both *criminal* and *civil* cases. A criminal case involves a violation of a law for which there is a fine or other penalty like a prison sentence or probation. Criminal cases range from relatively minor offenses, such as traffic infractions, to serious ones, such as robbery or murder. These typical crimes are classified as *felonies*, *misdemeanors*, or *infractions*.

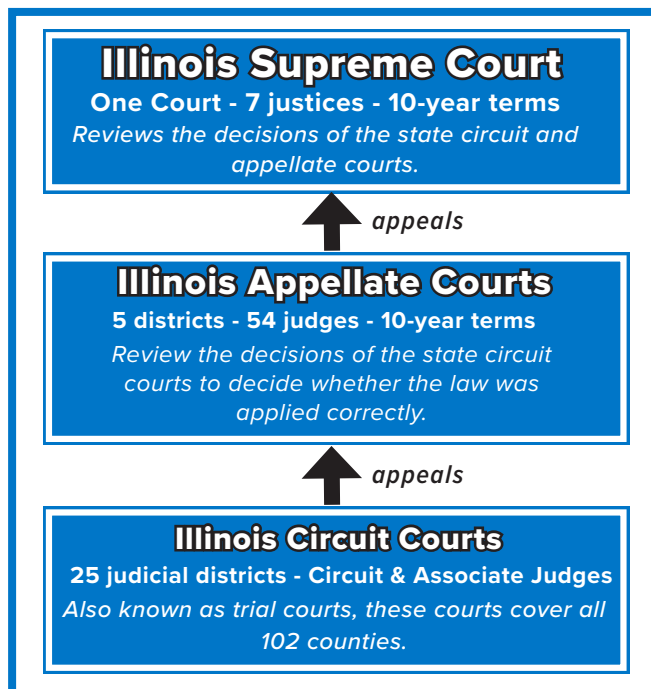
Felonies – Serious crimes that often are punishable by a state prison sentence or even death in the most extreme cases.

Misdemeanors – A lesser offense than a felony. It is punishable by fine or incarceration for less than a year in a city or county jail rather than in a state penitentiary.

Infractions – These are not punishable by jail or prison time but rather by a fine. The most common infractions are traffic violations.

Civil cases are brought against individuals or organizations by other individuals or organizations. In some civil cases, the plaintiff seeks money damages to be paid by the defendant. In other kinds of civil cases, the parties ask the court to take a certain action, such as to dissolve a marriage, decide the custody of minor children, review property rights, or stop someone from doing something.

Now that you are familiar with the type of court cases, it is time to learn more about the courts themselves.



Circuit Court

Circuit courts are the *general trial courts*. They hear all types of cases, from traffic violations to murder arrests. In these courts, cases are heard, and judgments are made. The Illinois Constitution says this court has jurisdiction “...of all justiciable matters...” The judicial process of the state begins here. Most of the work on the state court system takes place in these courts located in 25 *judicial circuits* spread across the state.

Most judicial circuits have *small claims courts*. This civil court is where a plaintiff (person filing the case) can sue someone (a defendant) for \$10,000 or less. It has simplified rules and can go much faster than other cases. Examples of small claim cases include someone damaging something you own and refusing to pay for your loss or someone who owes you money for work you have done but refuses to pay you.

Circuit courts are staffed by *circuit* and *associate* judges. The voters elect circuit court judges to six-year terms. Each judicial district has one *chief judge* selected by the circuit court judges. Associate judges are appointed by the circuit judges to a four-year term and may not rule on more severe cases. The number of judges is provided by law.

Appellate Court

The appellate court hears appeals from the circuit courts. Most cases appealed from the circuit courts are decided here, with few going to the Illinois Supreme Court.

The appellate court is organized into five *judicial districts*. The first meets in Chicago, the second in Elgin, the third in Ottawa, the fourth in Springfield, and the fifth in Mount Vernon. The judges serve 10-year terms, and the number of judges is provided by law. A panel of three judges hears the appeal, and at least two must agree before a decision is made.

Illinois Supreme Court

The highest court in the state is the Illinois Supreme Court. It has the highest authority on the interpretation of state and local laws. Also, it has the power to declare laws from the Illinois General Assembly unconstitutional. The Illinois Supreme Court oversees the entire state court system, monitoring court workload, seeking improvements to the court system, and establishing an administrative office to watch over these lower courts.

The Illinois Supreme Court is required to hear cases from the lower courts that involve constitutional issues or matters of extreme importance. It has *original jurisdiction* (hearing a case for the first time) in the following circumstances:

1. **revenue** - involving taxes;
2. **mandamus** - ordering a public agency or governmental body to perform an act required by law when it has neglected or refused to do so;
3. **habeas corpus** - requiring a person to be brought

continued

This sheet to be filled out when you complete the Illinois unit. The numbers in parentheses gives the page number where the answer or additional information may be found.

1. What year did Illinois become a state? (57,59) _____
2. This ordinance helped Illinois become a state and provided for U.S. expansion. (59) _____
3. Name all the past and present Illinois state capitals. (57) _____

4. How many constitutions has Illinois had? (58) _____ What years, and which constitution, do we currently operate under? (58,60) _____
5. With what movement was Samuel Witwer connected? (58) _____
6. What were the purposes of the 1970 Illinois Constitution? (58,60) _____

7. Name two presidents with Illinois roots. (58) _____
8. What is the main purpose of the legislative branch? (66) _____
9. What is the main body in the state legislative branch? (66) _____
10. Which two chambers does it contain? (66) _____
11. What are the qualifications for becoming a member of the Legislature? (66) _____

12. How many members in the Illinois Senate? (66) _____
13. How many members in the Illinois House of Representatives? (67) _____
14. What is the term (in years) of an Illinois senator? (66) _____
15. What is the term (in years) of an Illinois representative? (67) _____
16. What is the salary of an Illinois senator? (66) _____ A representative? (66) _____
17. What is a quorum in the General Assembly? (66) _____
18. Name one special duty of the state Senate. (66) _____
19. Name one special duty of the state House. (67) _____
20. Who are the officers of the Illinois Senate? (66-67) _____
21. Who are the officers of the Illinois House? (67) _____
22. Explain the lawmaking process in Illinois. (68-69) _____

23. How soon must a bill, passed in both houses, be sent to the governor? (68-69) _____
24. What can the General Assembly do after a veto by the governor? (68-69) _____
25. What are lobbies? (68) _____
26. What are some of the restrictions on the General Assembly? (68) _____

27. What is the main purpose of the executive branch? (70) _____