

Sample Purdue Civics Knowledge Test Items

1. Which of the following is **most** closely associated with the concept of *civic life*?

- A. Campaigning for a school board member.
- B. Going to a museum to see a new art exhibit.
- C. Watching an online documentary about the Civil War.
- D. Collecting travel information about different countries.

2. Which is the **most** direct way the wishes of citizens are represented in the United States government?

- A. Through the efforts of their employers.
- B. By the actions of their elected officials.
- C. Through the work of trade unions.
- D. By the actions of state universities.

3. Why is the Rule of Law an important concept underlying the Constitution of the United States?

- A. It supports the Executive Branch's control of the court system.
- B. It outlines why leaders are more important than citizens in making rules.
- C. It prevents countries from challenging the power of the United States.
- D. It protects all citizens by ensuring no one is above the law.

4. Which of the following defines *unlimited government*?

- A. A government without effective means of restraining its power.
- B. A government with established and respected constraints on its power.
- C. A government that is required to effectively act on input from its citizens.
- D. A government that functions effectively and efficiently in managing citizens.

5. What does it mean to say the Constitution of the United States is the supreme law of the land?

- A. State and local governments do not have the power to write and pass laws.
- B. The federal government controls all laws made at the state and local level.
- C. State and local governments cannot pass laws that conflict with federal laws.
- D. The federal government is also responsible for enforcing state and local laws.

6. Which is a common theme in both the Magna Carta and the Constitution of the United States?

- A. That individual liberty is essential.
- B. That monarchy is the best form of government.
- C. That all men are created equal and there should be no rulers.
- D. That people must overthrow older governments.

7. Which of the following **most** accurately describes a *republic*?

- A. Citizens are required to vote directly on all laws.
- B. Citizens elect representatives to whom they delegate the power to make laws.
- C. States delegate the power to make national laws for the federal government.
- D. The power to make laws belongs only to the citizens and not to the federal government.

8. What is the name given to the first ten amendments to the Constitution of the United States?

- A. The Preamble.
- B. The Equal Protection Clause.
- C. The Bill of Rights.
- D. The Emancipation Proclamation.

9. Which power is held concurrently by the state and national government?

- A. Legislating taxation.
- B. Regulating interstate commerce.
- C. Making treaties with foreign powers.
- D. Coining money.

10. According to the Declaration of Independence, what is the **primary** purpose of government?

- A. To provide an organized system of rule.
- B. To secure the unalienable rights of its citizens.
- C. To ensure all citizens are skilled and productive.
- D. To take responsibility for managing the lives of its citizens.

11. Which statement **best** explains why the framers of the Constitution of the United States adopted a federal system of government?

- A. To create a single government authority to fight the British.
- B. To staff the government with the diverse skill sets of individuals.
- C. To distribute the power of government across levels and branches.
- D. To create a government that was superior to a parliamentary system.

12. A United States Senator is a representative of which branch of government?

- A. Executive
- B. Judicial
- C. Legislative
- D. Military

13. Which of the following individuals has the power to veto a law passed by Congress?

- A. Senator
- B. President
- C. Chief Justice
- D. Major General

14. What is the major role of political parties in the United States?

- A. To create news stories for the media.
- B. To control state election results.
- C. To provide an objective set of facts for voters to review.
- D. To nominate candidates to run in elections.

Use the quote to answer the question.

“Republics . . . derive their strength and vigor from a popular examination into the action of the magistrates . . .” — Benjamin Franklin

15. Based on this quote, what would Benjamin Franklin most likely see as a major role of the press?

- A. To present stories supporting government actions.
- B. To investigate and report on government actions.
- C. To purposely avoiding taking sides on government actions.
- D. To provide continuous criticism of the actions of the president.

16. Which of the following constitutional amendments is primarily focused on the participation of citizens in politics?

- A. The Tenth Amendment.
- B. The Eighteenth Amendment.
- C. The Twenty-Second Amendment.
- D. The Twenty-Sixth Amendment.

17. What do the 14th, 15th and 19th Amendments have in common?

- A. They focus on increasing the participation of citizens in politics.
- B. They outlaw slavery and the holding of slaves.
- C. They specify rules for how amendments can be added.
- D. They protect the rights of citizens to own different types of guns.

Use this information to answer the question.

A driver is stopped by police for speeding. Although there is no sign of other illegal activity, the officer asks the driver to open the trunk of the car so the officer can look inside. The driver refuses the officer's request.

18. The driver's refusal to allow the search is consistent with the rights guaranteed by which amendment to the Constitution of the United States?

- A. Third Amendment.
- B. Fourth Amendment.
- C. Sixth Amendment.
- D. Seventh Amendment.

19. Which right is guaranteed by the Second Amendment of the Constitution of the United States?

- A. The right to a fair trial.
- B. The right to freedom of speech.
- C. The right to keep and bear arms.
- D. The right to vote for public officials.

20. Which activity is **most directly** associated with promoting civic participation?

- A. Sponsoring a foreign exchange student as a host family for a year.
- B. Arranging for a high school class to travel to a foreign country.
- C. Taking elementary students on a tour of a nearby manufacturing plant.
- D. Offering students a chance to participate in a community service project.

21. Which statement about immigration to the United States is **most** accurate?

- A. Immigrants have rarely contributed to American society in art or business.
- B. Immigration has had little cultural or social impact on the United States.
- C. Historically, immigrant groups have rarely tried to integrate into American culture and remain outside the mainstream.
- D. The history and culture of the United States has been significantly impacted by successive waves of immigration.

22. Which of the following was **NOT** a major cause of the American Revolution?

- A. The Seven Years War.
- B. The Boston Tea Party.
- C. The Intolerable Acts.
- D. The Issue of Slavery.

23. Why did the British government look to impose new taxes on the Colonists in the years leading up to the American Revolution?

- A. To provide money to support the integration of Native-Americans into colonial societies.
- B. To help pay costs for defending the colonies during the French and Indian War.
- C. To finance the importation of enslaved people into the southern colonies.
- D. To enrich local merchants who were friendly with the British government.

24. Which of the following was a major cause of the Civil War?

- A. Disagreements over taxation and representation in Congress.
- B. The restrictions on citizens imposed by the Treaty of Ghent
- C. Conflicts regarding the extension of slavery in new states.
- D. The coining of money by the governments of southern states.

25. How did the Supreme Court's decision in *Dred Scott v. Sandford* impact abolitionists in the period before the Civil War?

- A. They were elated that the court found slavery was morally wrong.
- B. It gave momentum to the anti-slavery movement in the United States.
- C. It led to the disbanding of most abolitionist groups across the country.
- D. It created new conflicts between abolitionists and people who were against slavery.

Sample Item Content and Answer Key:

Civics Construct	Civics Content Standard	Sample Item Number	Key
Civic Life, Politics, and Government	1.1 Distinguish between civic life and private life	1	A
	1.2 Identify ways people are represented in government	2	B
	1.3 Define limited government and rule of law	3	D
	1.3 Define limited government and rule of law	4	A
	1.4 Know the purpose of a constitution	5	C
Foundations of the American Political System	2.1 Identify the historical events and documents that led to the Constitution of the United States	6	A
	2.3 Identify distinctive characteristics of American federalism (i.e.,	7	B
	2.4 Identify the different ways the Constitution can be amended and the types and number of amendments that have been added to the Constitution.	8	C
	2.6 Identify separated and shared powers.	9	A
	2.7 Recognize the values and principles of American constitutional democracy.	10	B
How the Government Established by the Constitution Embodies the Purposes, Values, and Principles of American	3.1 Identify how the Constitution of the United States distributed and	11	C
	3.2 Identify the main branches of local, state and national	12	C
	3.3 Recognize how checks and balances influence the making and enforcing of laws.	13	B
	3.5 Identify the role of political parties in the United States.	14	D
	3.6 Identify the role of the free press.	15	B
	The Role of Citizens in American Democracy	4.1 Identify constitutional amendments regarding citizenship and	16
4.1 Identify constitutional amendments regarding citizenship and		17	A
4.2 Identify personal, political, and economic rights of citizens.		18	B
4.2 Identify personal, political, and economic rights of citizens.		19	C
4.3 Identify ways that citizens take part in civic life.		20	D
Important Individuals and Events in the History of the United States	5.1 Recognize the contributions of diverse groups to the political and social development of the United States.	21	D
	5.2 Identify the causes of the American Revolution.	22	D
	5.2 Identify the causes of the American Revolution.	23	B
	5.3 Identify the causes of the Civil War.	24	C
	5.3 Identify the causes of the Civil War.	25	B