

Foundational Civics and Government Knowledge

Civics & Government · Practice Test · 15 Questions

1. Which historical document, ratified in 1788, established the fundamental framework for the United States federal government?

- A) The Declaration of Independence
- B) The Articles of Confederation
- C) The Bill of Rights
- D) The United States Constitution

2. The concept of 'separation of powers' in democratic governments is most closely associated with the writings of which Enlightenment philosopher?

- A) John Locke
- B) Jean-Jacques Rousseau
- C) Baruch Spinoza
- D) Baron de Montesquieu

3. What is the primary role of the legislative branch in most democratic systems?

- A) To interpret laws
- B) To enforce laws
- C) To create laws
- D) To appoint judges

4. In the United States, the power of judicial review, allowing courts to assess the constitutionality of laws, was established by which landmark Supreme Court case?

- A) Marbury v. Madison
- B) McCulloch v. Maryland
- C) Dred Scott v. Sandford
- D) Gideon v. Wainwright

5. The principle of 'checks and balances' is designed to prevent any one branch of government from becoming too powerful by allowing each branch to limit the powers of the others. Which of the following is a prime example of this in the U.S. system?

- A) The President signing a bill into law
- B) The Supreme Court ruling a law unconstitutional
- C) The House of Representatives impeaching a federal official
- D) All of the above

6. What is the fundamental legal principle that protects individuals from being imprisoned without due process of law and the right to be informed of the charges against them?

- A) Habeas Corpus
- B) Stare Decisis
- C) Proportionality
- D) Nullum Crimen Sine Lege

7. The Magna Carta, signed in 1215, is considered a foundational document in the development of constitutional law. What key principle did it help to establish?

- A) The divine right of kings
- B) The supremacy of the monarch over all laws
- C) The idea that the king was not above the law
- D) The right to bear arms

8. In a parliamentary system of government, the executive branch is typically derived from and accountable to which other branch?

- A) The Judiciary
- B) The Legislature
- C) The Military
- D) The Bureaucracy

9. What is the term for a government system where power is divided between a national government and regional governments?

- A) Unitary
- B) Confederation
- C) Federalism
- D) Authoritarianism

10. The Universal Declaration of Human Rights, adopted by the United Nations General Assembly in 1948, outlines fundamental human rights to be universally protected. Which of the following is NOT explicitly listed as a right in the UDHR?

- A) The right to freedom of thought, conscience, and religion
- B) The right to be free from slavery and torture
- C) The right to own personal firearms
- D) The right to work and fair remuneration

11. What amendment to the U.S. Constitution guarantees freedom of speech, religion, the press, assembly, and the right to petition the government?

- A) The Second Amendment
- B) The Fourth Amendment
- C) The First Amendment
- D) The Fourteenth Amendment

12. A government where supreme power is vested in the people and exercised by them directly or indirectly through a system of representation usually involving periodic free elections is known as a:

- A) Monarchy
- B) Oligarchy
- C) Theocracy
- D) Democracy

13. The principle of 'popular sovereignty' means that the authority of a state and its government are created and sustained by the consent of its people, through their elected representatives. Which foundational document prominently asserts this principle?

- A) The Magna Carta
- B) The Declaration of Independence
- C) The Bill of Rights
- D) The Articles of Confederation

14. In the context of international law, what is the primary purpose of the United Nations?

- A) To establish a single world government
- B) To promote peace, security, and cooperation among nations
- C) To enforce global economic sanctions
- D) To mediate all international legal disputes

15. What term describes the legal process by which a non-citizen can become a citizen of a country?

- A) Expatriation
- B) Deportation
- C) Naturalization
- D) Assimilation